

curious use in Russia, viz., that of conveying negatives of photographs taken in a balloon. The first experiment was made a short time since from the cupola of the Cathedral of Isaac, and the subject photographed was the Winter Palace. The plates were packed in

envelopes impervious to the light, and then tied to the feet of the pigeons, who quickly carried them to the station at Volgovo.

There are not wanting romances which have been brought to a successful issue by means of doves; indeed, there is no knowing in what

phases of human life they have not taken part.

How to rear and train these birds, and what houses they require, will be spoken of later.

(To be continued.)

## THE GIRLS OF TO-DAY.

By A TEMPLAR.



AN article has recently appeared in one of our influential reviews, entitled "The Women of To-day." The authoress is a lady of rank, and the subject of her essay is the terrible demand made upon the time

and strength of those who, like herself, belong to what the society journals delight to call the wealthy and leisured classes.

The title of the essay is, however, so broad and comprehensive that Lady Catherine Milnes Gaskell can hardly have intended her descriptions to apply solely to the "nobility and gentry," but to refer, though in a lesser degree, to that happier and more numerous middle class to which I imagine a great number of the readers of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER are privileged to belong.

Stories of the privations of the poor women-workers in the east of London are, alas! painfully familiar, but a statement in a magazine of authority and importance, that ladies and young girls of education and position are suffering keenly from the exacting social demands made upon them, is a curious and suggestive fact. Hitherto we have been taught to imagine that they only who need to work for their daily bread and butter feel the rush and stress of modern life; but now we are informed that the old order changeth, and that the young ladies of the Happy Valley, who have been nursed in the lap of comfort if not of luxury, and who know nothing of the great problems of existence, are bending under a weight of social duties and requirements with which their grandmothers were happily unacquainted. Such is in brief the charge which the talented essayist brings against the times. It may not be unprofitable to glance at some of the particulars of her complaint, in order that those of my readers who are thus early in life discovering how much is required of them, may be consoled by a ventilation of their grievances, and that others who have not been awakened to the facts, may be brought to a proper sense of their responsibilities.

After alluding to the great revolutions wrought by modern science, and the increased hurry and excitement which have followed in the wake of the railway train and the electric telegraph, Lady Catherine Gaskell tells us that not only has a new standard of perfection been raised for women, but that new requirements have been added to the old code. The pleasant mediocrity of thirty years ago is not sufficient. The young lady who paints must produce pictures of far greater merit than "her aunt's roses entwined with auriculas." Her playing and singing must far excel her mother's rendering of the simple ballads which in days gone by enslaved the captain and charmed an after-dinner circle of elderly friends. She must, we are told, take an active share in charitable and even political work, and for such she must cultivate accurate habits of business. She

must speak fluently and logically in public, and must be able to converse in several languages. She must excel in tennis and cricket, and stalk over heather and turnips like Nimrod himself. If she has the responsibility of a household resting upon her, she must be ready to discharge duties infinitely more varied and complicated than those which were laid upon the ladies of a bygone generation. Housekeeping must be more artistic and refined, and yet faithful attention must be paid to the thousand trifles or "petty things of life," which, if neglected, "place a household in chaos, and make every member uncomfortable."

"The petty burden of daily commonplaces," or what the Rev. John Keble called "the daily round, the common task," however, does not and must not fill up her time. A wider sympathy and larger and broader understanding of life are demanded of her. Men and women are meeting on equal terms, and the keen blade of the critic pays no heed to sex. "Women," says Lady Catherine Gaskell, "have no recognised leisure," and yet with all the manifold interruptions and claims upon them, they must be feminine Admirable Crichtons. This delightful essay, to which an abstract can do but scant justice, concludes with an amusing account of a modern lady who tries to get through some fourteen hours of "work" daily, and while endeavouring to cram in as much play as possible, strives hard to "grow a little soul," and to avoid nervous exhaustion.

Whatever we may think as to the absolute correctness and freedom from exaggeration in the above description of woman's occupations, it cannot be questioned that a vast, and, on the whole, beneficial change has been wrought during the past twenty or thirty years. Young girls are being educated as thoroughly as their brothers; and in many cases with far more satisfactory results. A smattering of French phrases, in the manner of Stratford-atte-Bowe, a little German, which was found useless the instant its fair possessor crossed the French frontier, a little morning exercise on the piano, a few crayon sketches executed by the drawing-master and signed by herself, all these things are happily banished to limbo.

It is, moreover, a subject of rejoicing that our sisters are cultivating broader interests, and acquiring far sounder judgments upon questions of literary and public importance, than did their mothers and grandmothers before them, and this without needing to sacrifice that girlish charm or womanly sweetness which the world would not exchange for all the libraries ever compiled, or for all the accomplishments guaranteed in the prospectus of a finishing school. "The Drawing-room Scrap Book," "The Chaplet of Flowers," "The Amulet," and the other frivolous literary trifles upon which the minds of girls and women a generation or two ago were expected to feed and flourish, have been replaced by books of real worth and permanent interest.

The opportunities, moreover, of outdoor

exercise, and the freer association with her brothers' friends, enable the girl of to-day to acquire a healthy body as well as a sound and vigorous mind. At lawn tennis young ladies are often victors over their more muscular opponents, just as in Virgil's epic the fleet Camilla routed some of the bravest paladins of the Pious Æneas. The tedious croquet mallet is naturally discarded for the more energetic racquet, while the prim propriety of our mother's maiden aunt would have been shocked by the frequent spectacle of flannel-clad maidens "wielding the willow," or "trundling the leather" in the cricket field, and stumping their opponents with the zest of a public schoolboy who has just got his eleven.

All these things, I fully admit, are indicative of a profound change in the position of the girls of to-day, but I venture to think that while in the past too little was expected from the gentler sex, and their powers and attainments altogether undervalued, that the tendency of Lady Catherine Gaskell and other writers is to exaggerate this change, and to regard the demand made upon the "women of to-day" as far more severe than it actually is. Girls used to be considered as of inferior social importance to the members of the sterner sex; they now are rightly raised to an equality. Surely it is a little premature to preach a universal "Place aux Dames," and to reverse the usual order of the genders by making the feminine precede in importance the masculine and neuter.

It is hardly necessary to point out, for example, that the power of speaking fluently and idiomatically several languages is rarely possessed by or required from young Englishwomen, however well educated; and the art of holding forth on the public platform is—I was going to say fortunately—a still more rare accomplishment, and one that may possibly be neglected without immediate loss to the community. Young ladies, moreover, while stimulated to long rambles in common-sense garments, may safely leave Lady Gaskell's turnips untrampled, without sacrificing one iota of influence or social advantage.

The fact that I desire to urge is, that girls are required by modern opinion either to be moderate all round performers, or to excel in some special accomplishment or pursuit. The world is not unreasonable, and does not call girls to paramount excellence in all things which make up cultured womanhood, any more than it calls Robert Browning to be a painter, John Millais to be a musician, or William Ewart Gladstone to be a burlesque actor. It asks for the development of latent ability, or, as Carlyle has it, it requires of us that we produce something.

If a maiden give promise of exceptional ability in music, she is required neither by common sense nor by the bogey of society to distinguish herself as a poet. If she devote herself to any of the varied forms of art, and can limn canvases of varied excellence, no demand is made upon her to witch the world with harp or violin. If she dedicate her life to the solving of the perplexing problems of social science,



she may safely leave the acquirement of Lady Gaskell's *several languages*; or if she meddle with those "fluxions or paradoxes" against which Sir Anthony Absolute was warned by Mrs. Malaprop, society does not seek to examine her upon a "supercilious knowledge of accounts," nor condemn her because she fails to attain the highest possible skill in the use of "diabolical instruments." Neither custom nor reason, it is submitted, exacts this tribute of universal excellence from womanhood, but justly claims that she shall be mindful of the responsibility of life, and seek to attain to a broad and generous culture, or, as an alternative, that she shall contribute some special thing that is of unusual worth.

Much depends on the peculiar gifts of each member of your "gentle and joyous" company; and when a maiden has extraordinary and varied ability, society does not limit the output of her intellectual riches, but at the same time does not expect from each the diamonds, rubies, and fine gold which nature has stored in different mines.

What, then, shall we strive to do and to be, in order that we may not seem unworthy of the great change in public sentiment? Either we must cultivate fair general capabilities, or attain definite and special excellence. This is neither more nor less than what is required of our male competitors.

The application of this suggested rule to infinitely varying combinations of facts is not easy. Speaking broadly, however, we seem to arrive at this conclusion, that when young girls have to live by an accomplishment, their maxim must be "this one thing I do;" and the rule will be the same where a special talent is possessed by those who are not thus called upon to earn their own livelihood.

Where, on the contrary, general aptitude exists without particular excellence, the idea of supporting herself by a mediocre accomplishment will be abandoned by a well-advised young lady, and she will seek for an occupation which makes a less anxious claim upon her intellectual or æsthetic resources than literature or art or music, and she will strive to keep her mind expansive and her sympathies active by the pursuits of her well-earned leisure. This course, I venture to urge, should be followed where, instead of daily business, the routine of a household devolves upon the all-round maiden who has no distinguishing accomplishment.

To such a one the path of life will offer no less promise of honour and usefulness, provided she does not steep her whole thoughts and sympathies in the necessary but often fossilising well of daily details. Business or domestic routine may fill a woman's time, but it need not satisfy her intellectual aspirations, or blunt the keen edge of her ambition. It is the all-round girls whose resources are the readiest, whose self-possession is the most ample, whose capacity for work is most elastic, and who, in fine, make the world's wheels to go most smoothly. And it is largely these general lady practitioners, who, trained in the school of detail, and familiarised with organisation, carry forward the splendid philanthropic and charitable enterprises with which the women of to-day are nobly associated. It is with them rather than with their specialist sisters that the responsibility of the future lies.

The peculiar peril which besets the girl of special gifts lurks at the very fountain whence she draws her strength. Concentration of purpose is indispensable for success, but it is prone to tempt its possessor to narrow and

restricted views of life. Let my readers who are resolutely cultivating the gift that is in them, remember that the world does not revolve on an axle of their own fashioning, nor the sun shine through the window of their studio alone. Let them remember that while good work is demanded of them by Him who has given them ready brains and facile fingers, yet that honours are dearly won at the price of a narrowed culture and of one-sided views of life.

One final word to those maidens who, having neither general aptitude nor special talent, have lost confidence in themselves. They possibly have had no educational advantages; or it may be that their minds are flabby and non-retentive, and that, like poor Smike, they learn with difficulty. To such the dying words of the great German poet have a peculiar message: "We bid you hope!"

The facilities for self-education are greater, and the methods of study more rational, than at any former period, and though your task may be tedious and your progress slow, you will at least escape Dr. Johnson's reproach of being an "un-idea'd" set of girls, and you will be saving yourselves from that complete mental slackness and emptiness which is one of the saddest of all conditions.

You will not be carried forward perhaps on the foremost waves of the flood tide of culture and learning; but you will be spared the humiliation of drifting backwards on the ebb of ignorance.

Forward in hope is the watchword of to-day. Let the dawn of the twentieth century bring to the girls of England a just appreciation of their position and privileges, and a wise understanding of the responsibilities which are laid upon them.

## ORDERS FOR WOMEN.

By SOPHIA F. A. CAULFEILD.

### PART II.

#### THE ORDER OF THE GARTER.

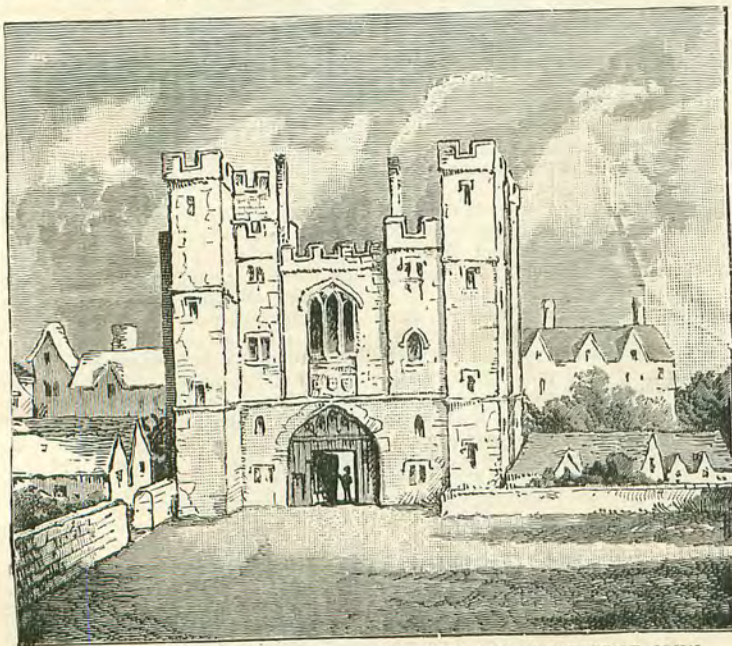
PERHAPS some of my young readers will be a little startled at seeing the name of the

ancient and illustrious Order above named in connection with those conferred on women. But in a country where sex forms no barrier to the wearing of the crown itself, nor to the

Sovereign of investiture with this same Order, a feeling of surprise might well be awakened on the contrary side of the question; the more so, as it is clear that in the first instance women were specially intended to participate in the honours which it conferred, and did so participate from the time of John of Gaunt to that of Henry VII., when the last Lady Chevalière of the Order was his mother, Margaret Beaumont, Countess of Richmond.

An attempt has since that time been made to restore to women a distinction of which they had been deprived for no ostensible reason, and whether hereafter restored to them or not, still, as having been originally theirs, it must be included amongst those conferred on women.

Before entering into the subject of this special Order, it may be well to refer to the question of Orders of Knighthood in connection with women, over and above the distinction of wearing a badge, and belonging to a religious or civil order specially designed for themselves. I quote from a work entitled "An Accurate and Historical Account of all the Orders of Knighthood," by an Officer of the Chancery of the "Order of St. Joachim," and dedicated to Lord Nelson. ". . . I think it necessary to consider the persons who may be honoured with this reward of virtue. They are called *Equites* (knights), whether they be males or females. . . . That persons of both sexes may be distinguished by the Order of Knighthood, nobody will deny. . . . But to be a candidate for the distinction of an Order, a noble and ancient descent is required." (See "Prefatory Discourse, re-



THE ANCIENT GATEWAY OF THE PRIORY OF THE ORDER OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM, CLERKENWELL.  
(From a print of the Sixteenth Century.)