

## THE GIRLS OF TO-DAY.

By ONE OF THEM.



**D**URING the last few years it has been the fashion for people of all sorts and conditions to busy themselves about us and our position; they have given their opinions of us very freely, they have discussed our capabilities, or rather incapacities, together with our future prospects very much as though we were marionettes, without souls or brains or hands.

We have looked in vain among these opinions for some practical benefit to be derived from a study of them, but what we

have noted is a sort of compassion for us that we should have been born into the world at all, and that our being here is a cruelty to our brothers and fathers; for if we are stupid, they must keep us, and if we are clever, we rob them of their situations, and must keep them; but that which hurts us most is the opinion that we are useless lumber in the dear old homes.

We beg to differ on every point: in the first place, we join heartily in the General Thanksgiving, and thank God for our creation and preservation as for great blessings, and this we do every day of our lives. And in the dear homes, however poor they be, we feel and know we have definite places, and that when we leave them, it will mean sorrow to the dear parents.

If any among us are idle, and a good many of us are credited with this disease, we are rebuked; if, on the contrary, we are industrious and earn an independent livelihood, we are abused for taking the bread out of our brothers' mouths.

If we do not work, we are told that we cannot make good wives; and if we do work, that we shall be unable to make our husbands happy because they want companions more or less frivolous when they have been at work all day. Alas! we should be thoroughly deserving of all the compassion showered upon us from time to time, if we were moved one iota from our steady purposes by all the conflicting advice and opinions offered us.

It is our determination not to be objects of compassion, neither will we be useless lumber in our homes, neither will we arrange our lives

with the one purpose of entrapping men to marry us.

We did not ask to come into the world but were sent here by a loving Father, and whatever our position we are thankful for being here, otherwise we should have known nothing of a Heavenly Father's love and glory and majesty. We should not have known the meaning of being His children.

And as to our earthly parents, there are very few indeed who would be glad to get rid of us, be they ever so poor, and as a rule we feel so sure of their love and help that we should not believe it even if they themselves told us they wished we had never been born: but enough of this. The fact remains that we are born and that God created us male and female; and what is more, He created us with powers for a purpose, and He surely expects us to use them, otherwise our hands, our brains, our heads, our hearts, might have been omitted.

Are we to be sorry that it is now quite rare to find, among us girls, one that sits down all day reading novels with a pet dog in her lap which she from time to time caresses, or that a girl willing to work is deterred from it by the fear of lowering her position thereby?

We are convinced that work is good for us; we are better for it physically, mentally and spiritually. We are altogether happier for it, and we object to being compassionated for doing that which our talents fit us for.

No girl will be the worse for a little money in the Savings Bank, but it will go doubly as far if she has placed it there out of her own earnings and not out of her father's.

We look round upon many families we know, and wherever we see a girl petted and thought too pretty or too delicate or too anything else to work, she is invariably discontented and unhappy—and why? Because she is not fulfilling her mission in the world.

If, as people say, we are robbing our brothers of their work, it must be because we take more pains with the work and do it better than they. Therefore let them look to it.

There is work for everybody; if not in one way, then in another. A lady whom some of us know was once very rich, and when her husband died she found herself quite poor, and would have been obliged to live upon her friends but for one gift she possessed, and peculiar as it was, she resolved to use it. It was that of mending clothes and linen, which she could do beautifully. She made her position known to several families who gladly engaged her on stated days in the month from nine in the morning till six in the evening, and

needless to say, she is proving the greatest comfort possible to mothers of large families. For some years now she has kept herself not only independent, but able to put by a little for old age or sickness, and no one thinks of looking down upon her because she is doing the one thing she knew she could do well. In the same way a clergyman's daughter deprived of means had to face the world for herself and little sister, and knew that no one could clean or trim lamps better than she. So she at once made this accomplishment known, and she is getting a very tolerable income in this way without any loss of self-respect.

Working does not make us less womanly or less helpful in our homes or less affectionate to our parents, or, depend upon it, God would not have given us the capacity and the ability to work.

Who is the strength and the brightness of the home—the busy or the idle girl? The one who uses her brains or the one who lets them rust?

If people will interfere with us at all, let them try to build us up in vigorous, healthful work, teaching us that however humble the work we do, we give it dignity by doing it to the best of our ability.

Many of us girls belonging to the so-called upper class are extremely clever in dressmaking and millinery. Should we not prove benefactors to the small tradesmen and servant classes, if we could take rooms in various parishes where they could bring their materials and get them made up prettily and cheaply? As it is now, their dresses and bonnets are in wretched taste and badly made, and at a sum greatly in excess of what they can afford.

We have come to the conclusion that we shall live better lives and longer lives if we work well and cheerfully at that which falls to our lot. The nation will be the better for our influence and example, and our brothers cannot and will not be content to smoke and dawdle away their time at clubs and music halls while we, their sisters, are earnestly working.

Looking at things all round, we come to the conclusion that there is plenty of work to do, not only for our fathers and brothers but for us girls also. Out of this work we will select that which we can do best, whether it be nursing, teaching, book-keeping, mending, lamp-cleaning, dressmaking, or anything else. At the same time we will endeavour to hold fast by those attributes of modesty, gentleness and patience which belong to good women, and while we enrich the home with our earnings, we will try to be its sunlight and its ornament.

## VARIETIES.

## DON'T FRET!

If you've each day good food in sight,  
If you can sleep eight hours at night,  
With appetite to send you to it,  
And have the bed on which to do it—  
If now and then a holiday  
Of simple pleasure comes your way,  
You have far more than many get—  
Don't fret!

**MOST PROBABLE.**—The probability is that things are neither as black as they are painted, nor as white as they are whitewashed.

## "WE SHOULD MOVE."

*Teacher (to new scholar):* "Now, Mary, I'll give you a sum. Supposing your father owed the butcher £3, and 50s. to the baker, £5 to the coal merchant, £4 to the landlord—"

*Mary (confidentially):* "We should move."

**AN INDUCEMENT.**—It is said that very few ladies continue their piano-playing long after marriage. This announcement is made in order to encourage young men to enter on matrimony!

## INDEPENDENT OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

Girls who find themselves inclined to exaggerate the importance of their surroundings would do well to remember these words of a wise divine:—

"Christians might avoid much trouble if they would only believe God is able to make them happy in Himself, independently of all circumstances."

**IN PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS.**—Happiness is like a kitten's tail—hard to catch, but there's plenty of fun in chasing it.