

Women's Wages.

I HAVE been looking for some clue to the unsatisfactory relation of woman's work to woman's pay. There are, in reality, two distinct classes of women who are in the field for remunerative employment: those who desire to add to an insufficient income, and those who depend upon themselves absolutely for bread. Both classes call for consideration, and yet the fact of their existence is precisely that in which the difficulty we are considering has its rise. "Women," it is often asserted by their apologists, "are quite as capable as men in many fields of labor; yet for the same work, equally well executed, they receive less pay." That women, under exceptional circumstances, can and do produce work that is equal to, and sometimes superior to, that of men, will be generally conceded; but if they universally did so, if woman's work in the aggregate was equal to that produced by men, then, by the irresistible law of supply and demand, hers would be preferred.

The great governing principle of the labor market is that which exacts the best results for the least expenditure, and all the arguments brought forward against the employment of women in fields at present occupied by men would yield if experience once proved that women, taken as a class, were as efficient as men.

Whatever may have been the case fifty years ago, or may still be true in older civilizations, public opinion in this country now recognizes the right of women to enter upon any field of labor. She has invaded the professions and many branches of business. She is found in factories, in mills, occupying the desk as a clerk, canvassing, teaching, nursing, speculating (unfortunately), and it is not unusual now to find her at the head of large business houses. Where is she not? What then is the meaning of this cry for justice to women who work for a living? Why are women toil-worn, struggling, and dissatisfied? The fault, if fault there be, must be with themselves, either in their physical or mental disability. As regards the former, although unquestionably the disability exists, it has never been prejudicial to women as a class. Mental disability is a far more serious stumbling-block, and one which repeated efforts have been made to overcome. "Women," it has been asserted again and again, "need training," and where training has been possible the results have justified the assertion. Girls trained for special duties in large business establishments have entered the lists with youths of the same age, and have, in many cases, succeeded admirably. Within the last few years, a wide field has opened for them as designers. But there is undoubtedly something which the majority of women lack beyond training, and we are inclined, after much consideration of the successful and non-successful competitors of the labor market, to the conclusion that the real disability of most women lies in the absence of a sense of responsibility.

Of the many who come forward to solicit employment, comparatively few are absolutely and entirely

self-dependent. The ranks are full of applicants who, having a pittance, desire to add to it, and to do so in a "genteel" way, the results in such cases being precisely analogous to those that beset young men seeking careers. The man who succeeds is he who feels impelled by dire necessity to struggle; who feels that upon his success everything depends. Imbued with a sense of responsibility, he strives, and strives successfully: in fact, he is successful in proportion as he has the sense of responsibility.

The same truth, as it appears to us, applies to woman. When she feels a sense of responsibility she does not fail, she succeeds; and for this reason, that, like the man, she sacrifices everything to the one object of success. Can the majority of women do this? When they can, and precisely in the measure that they do, they will compete upon equal terms with men, command equal wages, and work with equal success in every path they enter. For then, and then only, will they realize that it is not their need of employment which entitles them to it, but their capacity to fulfill every obligation, whether of minute detail or of grave moment, in a thorough and worthy manner.

Janet E. Ruutz-Rees.

More Suggestions for a Family Ice-House.

A PRACTICAL experience of many years enables me to modify the suggestions for "A Family Ice-House," in the November CENTURY. In my opinion, the earth should not be excavated at all where the ice-house is to stand, as the lower tiers of ice would rapidly melt, and the drainage would not be so good. The floor should be simply the ground, level with the surrounding surface. In large ice-houses even, the melting is so gradual that the water soaks into the ground, drains being rarely used, since they are apt to be the means of conveying air to the ice. Where the land is low and wet, a drain is dug outside the building, say three feet from it on all sides, and is filled with loose stones. This will dispose of the surface water and drain the ice-house. In constructing the ice-house the uprights, of two by four or two by six inches, must be set about three feet apart, securely spiked to the bottom plank, and braced between. After boarding up inside and out with common boards, and filling the spaces with dry saw-dust, stamping it down as it is being filled, two-inch narrow strips should be nailed perpendicularly on the outside, about six feet apart, and on these should be nailed the clap-boards. Thus an outside air-space will be obtained, through which the hot air will circulate in summer, reducing the temperature. There should be a square ventilator on the roof, with open slats on each side. In packing the ice, place the cakes close to each other, and close to the sides of the building, chinking the spaces between with broken ice as each layer is completed. No saw-dust should be put on before the top layer is in, and then not so much as to cause heating. Ice packed in this way will keep better, and there is less waste.

S. J.