

Perhaps we may cast our eyes backward through the century and consider the progress it has brought to our sex. It seems to me that we owe much that we have gained to our Empress Queen, whose life has been so womanly and yet so strong, whose spirit is so replete with all feminine charms of love and service, and yet quite firm enough to deal with great crises of the State, and whose influence has always been on the side of right, on the side of virtue, on the side of peace. The simple fact of a woman being at the head of affairs has had its weight. The intelligence, the dignity, the power of ruling, the power of decision was accepted gradually by the Queen's Ministers, though the Duke of Wellington wondered how he or Peel would get on with a girl Queen, for "he had no small talk and Peel had no manners." But the Queen valued other characteristics in her Ministers, and her Ministers soon learned to appreciate her great qualities and to admire her woman's natural wit. The women of England rejoiced over the beautiful girl Queen, they fluttered sympathetically over her betrothal and marriage, they hailed with joy the firstborn and they welcomed her other children. Later came the death of the Prince Consort, and the whole nation shed tears and went into mourning for their widowed Queen, so strong were the ties that bound her to her subjects.

A woman's possibilities of education have been gradually growing during the century. The coveted University career is now open to them; and though they may not take a degree, they have the equivalent, and the pleasure and satisfaction that comes from what is termed a liberal education. Many careers are now open to them, and to be doing some sort of work is now looked upon as an added dignity to a woman.

Some of us work from necessity and very many from choice, for there is nothing like work for giving solid interest and an occupation to the mind. This interest seems to me also to have received an indirect stimulus from the Throne. For the Queen is a busy woman, and she and her daughters have found time to think of others and to help them in their sorrows. They have visited the hospitals, and taken an interest in all institutions that help and benefit mankind.

The women of the nation have been strongly influenced by the Royal attitude towards the sorrowing, the sick, and the helpless; and the sympathy that has always come from the Throne has helped the nation's women to realise the fact that they are their sisters' keepers, and that such work is a privilege and a pleasure, and not an additional burden.

The Women's Congress that met in London in June showed plainly the amount of work women are trying to do. It remains for the new century to develop this work and diffuse and yet regulate the power that is forthcoming. The organisation was creditable and the method satisfactory. But it will be part of the work of the new era to perfect so satisfactory a beginning. No doubt the years to come will see very wonderful things effected; but can the next hundred years change the condition of living as this hundred years has done? You who are young cannot realise a life with no trains, a world without steamboats, a land with no telegrams.

The slower, quieter existence of your great-grandmothers or great-great-grandmothers is scarcely conceivable to your minds. The want of newspapers and books, the absence of the penny post, would seem strange to you girls of to-day. Life was then altogether simpler, and its responsibilities were less complicated and more clearly defined, if more dull. Life work was not so much a matter of choice; the path of duty opened upon the girl at once, and she accepted its simple beckonings, and followed unquestioningly a quiet, easy life—at least, so we are inclined to say; but we don't know the yearnings that may have been in those lives, or what were the aspirations of the generation who produced the Waterloo veterans and later on the Crimea and Mutiny heroes.

Perhaps it was a more ideal state of things when the men worked in the world and saved the women from its storms and strife. The tender flower of womanhood is none the better for having to struggle and fight and work unless the struggle arouses her sympathy for her fellow-beings, and then it serves a purpose the value of which we can never gauge. Besides, the first condition of good work must be a level head and a well-ordered mind, and these conditions are strengthened by the sound body, which is a sure foundation.

If the man goes forth to work, the woman has the work of the house, the ministering to his needs of body and mind when at eventide he turns homewards to take his rest and recuperative refreshment in the atmosphere of love and peace that the word "home" seems to picture and to promise; and if a woman cannot build such a nest for a man, then the strength of the nation will decrease. When once there is a falling off of tender vigour, which is the attribute and characteristic of Englishmen and Englishwomen alike, then we may look to our laurels. Looking forward, we become thoughtful. We long to improve, and to grow into the highest and the best both as individuals and as a nation. We want to preserve the home life, and to inculcate that spirit of cohesion and loyalty

in the household that shall make the server and the served as one in the main interests of life. Should everyone be placed upon the same level to-morrow, the year's experience would find some masters and *some servants*—some men richer than when they started, and some men poorer. We cannot all lead, but most of us can follow, and to follow well and to obey perfectly is no mean lot. Splits, sub-divisions, self-assertions are not the noblest signs of self-development. At the present time, in the closing night of this century, the cry of self-culture, self-development, self! self! self! has rung out till one wonders if the personal element should be so much considered. In the dawn we seem to see that a better understanding must come between the capitalist and the worker; that the nations of the earth must unite in a truer bond of peace and trust; that the women, while advancing and improving and strengthening their intelligence, shall yet preserve that sweetness and grace that makes them beautiful and restful in all ages, and that the banner they shall carry uplifted for ever shall be the banner of goodness.

Civilisation has its snares, culture its pitfalls. While life goes on there is no exemption from temptation.

With the girls who turn a smiling young face towards New Year's Day, 1900, lie grave responsibilities. If the women make the men—and I hold that they do, and even further, that the making of the nations lies indirectly in their hands—then are you not bound to rise to these calls and be and do your level best?

Circumstances you cannot control, but you can control yourselves. You can be the best you know. You can act as your good fairy prompts; you can learn to discriminate between the worthy and the unworthy types of action, and make for what your conscience says is right. You can determine not to soil the fair vision of this dawning century, but as the years roll past you can learn to be stronger to bear the sunshine of the century's day. Be those days dull, be they sunny, be they stormy, come what may, resolve to do your devoir as the knights of old. There are no surer guides for youthful conduct than knightly, manly virtues. The spirit of such upright vigour can be cherished in the most delicate woman's heart. The dawn is all promise full of the palpitating joys of what is to come, suggestive of light and love, and all things beautiful which the duller day may or may not consummate. That is not the point for our practical consideration, but let our youth be armed for the work of the life of the dawning century with goodness, patience, belief, and hope.

COOKERY RECIPES.

BUTTERED EGGS.

Ingredients.—Three eggs, one ounce of butter, pepper and salt.

Method.—Melt the butter in a small saucepan, beat the eggs with the pepper and salt, and stir them into the saucepan. Stir over the fire until set, and serve quickly on buttered toast.

TO MAKE COFFEE.

Method.—Allow twice as much coffee as tea to each person, heat the coffee-pot and put the coffee in the steamer. Pour in sufficient boiling water, and let it run through.

TO BLANCH PARSLEY.

Method.—Wash the parsley and pick off the stalks; dry it and chop slightly; put in a cloth and wring out under the tap, and then finish chopping.

RABBIT CROQUETTES.

Ingredients.—Quarter of a pound of cooked rabbit meat, two ounces of cooked ham, two ounces of button mushrooms, one gill of gravy, one ounce of flour, one ounce of butter, one teaspoonful of chopped parsley, pepper and salt, some crushed vermicelli, egg, deep fat for frying.

Method.—Mince the rabbit, ham and mushrooms finely and mix with the parsley, pepper and salt. Melt the butter in a small saucepan, stir in the flour and fry it a good dark brown; stir in the gravy and let it boil, add the rabbit, ham, mushrooms, and parsley well mixed and spread on a plate to get cold. Divide into equal portions and roll each into the shape of a cork; brush with egg and roll in crushed vermicelli, put in a fry basket and fry in deep fat a golden brown; drain well and dish in a pile. Garnish with fried parsley.

AMBER SNOW.

Ingredients.—One pound of apples, two ounces of butter, three ounces of loaf sugar, the rind of half a lemon, two eggs, two tablespoonfuls of sponge-cake crumbs, a few strips of flaky pastry.

Method.—Pare, slice and core the apples and cook them to a pulp in a saucepan with the butter, sugar and grated lemon rind, rub this all through a hair sieve; line the sides of a pint pie-dish with the flaky pastry, separate the whites and yolks of the eggs and beat the yolks into the apple mixture, pour this into the pie-dish and bake in a moderate oven until set. Beat the whites to a stiff froth with two tablespoonfuls of castor sugar and a little lemon juice and heap on the top, return to the oven for a few minutes until it has taken a pale fawn colour. Serve hot or cold.