Miss S. or the same American call attention to the fact that women have not found themselves intelligent enough to arrange their own domestic work—housekeeping—on a satisfactory business basis. This is doubtless true, but so much a change falls in the category of these changes which seem to indite a whole community it would perhaps be more helpful to ask why women haven't been able to solve their housekeeping difficulties rather than to deplore their failure.

For seven years I have been doing housework, combining the functions of both a general servant and many more. I know many friends who are also mothers and housekeepers. In talking with these friends I have often tried to find out if they are contented in their work. They are not always. Always I discover the same difficulty; it is the financial side of the question that causes dissatisfaction with their position.

House work is usually paid work, so for the great majority of women who are forced to do it, it will remain until society becomes conscious of and seeks to remedy the unfair industrial situation under which women suffer.

Let us consider the wife of the average laboring man. Her family can spend—statistics show it—no more than 500 a year. If she has four or five children the most
least as hard as her husband does and in her job probably fourteen hours a day. As we pay him what she really earns, and we can pay him under our present industrial system. To be sure, the disposition the husband's money, i.e. what she can get of it, for the bare necessities of life, is merely to live this existing power is not at all equivalent to getting from society a fair return for her long hours of patient service. If he were among the world's indispensable laborers, it is said that the harder he works the less money she gets. This class of women make up the majority of American home-workers. Their work is not said anything that can change the financial aspect of their situation, and work so poorly paid that their wages can never be lifted into the plane of a standardized business.

So much for the laboring men's wives. Counting out the small percentage of women who live as parasites on prosperous male relatives or husbands, the rest of our housekeepers are middle-class people. Some are wives; some are paid employees. If the former, they often work as hard as laboring men's wives. If they have more money to spend they have higher standards of living and their financial worry is often more acute than their poorer sisters'. Their circumstances are, so far family necessities; no one can deny them a fair amount for their labor; moreover, in this class, the
at least

wife, while her children are small, commonly works a
great deal harder than her husband, for she belongs to
the white shirt class among men workers, while she
frequently performs the most unpleasant manual drudgery
year in and year out.

When a middle class woman employs a servant
the escape from drudgery is in her purse is surely strict-
ened. No wonder she pays the lowest feasible wage, and
considering the ineluctable unpleasantness of the work it
is no wonder that the most incompetent class of girls only
apply for such positions.

Where is the money to come from to pay a fair wage
for that work which is at once the hardest, the most
exacting, the longest in hours per day and the most indus-
ferable of any disagreeable labor that is performed?

Women who are thinking of these things, I mean
normal women—potential mothers, who are reluctant to
become voluntarily sterile—are not living their husbands
they are only beginning to ask society why it should be
taken for granted that Motherhood and Maternity should
be synonymous terms and whether it is a good thing
for society that they should be.

Ellen Key is entirely right when she maintains
that the rearing of children is the most important work in
the world for women; she is right, too, when she insists that the state should pay the home-working mother for the service she renders her country when she runs a healthy family; and not until society pays her adequately will the dignity of her special work be established and the performing of her household drudgery be lifted to a legitimate place in the world's industries.

Mrs. H. C. Y.

May 30/12

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Miss