Manuscript: American Women Takes an Inventory

Tarbell, Ida M.

http://hdl.handle.net/10456/38444

©Allegheny College. All rights reserved.

All materials in the Allegheny College DSpace Repository are subject to college policies and Title 17 of the U.S. Code.
Memo for Revision for Disillusionment of Women:

Make a new title -

AMERICAN WOMEN TAKES AN INVENTORY

At the end of a period, a decade, a generation, a century, there is always a call for a 'dust of accounts' like that of the status of women, this estimating how much of what they set out to do has been done in the period and re-examinations selected.

It is just about twenty years ago that given suffrage they set out to make over the world. It is just about a hundred years ago since they set out with determination to secure for themselves the privileges with which they expected to look over their place in the world. This has been done in both cases with some impressive results.

This is what they have been busy estimating in the last months with some impressive results.

Roughly speaking the outcome of this balancing of their books gives material for two demonstrations. The first is:

That the rank and file of women in all of those human activities to which they sought a hundred years ago freer access with the right to use the necessary tools, has enormously increased. No matter what the field we may say that as far as the rank and file is concerned, they are there, there in surprising numbers.

The second demonstration is most disconcerting to the militant educated woman is that in several most important
fields of activity, although they are there, they are not there in proportional numbers. In some cases it looks as if they are loosing their footage.

    Take a look at the facts in the case. It looks as if it is hasty, but I am convinced significant as far as it goes. See Page 7 of manuscript - begin last paragraph, "Compare what women are doing today, etc."
and left anemic, making great concerns of them.

There is Mrs. Knox, a brilliant and beautiful example of what can be done with an industry. We can say that women are there in mechanical and clerical pursuits in vast numbers of the rank and file.

See Page 10 beginning "In the field of business"

Particularly in the field of business, particularly in the manufacturing and handling of food and clothing, women are particularly active. They have become in these departments numerically the chief sellers. And my impression is that they are coming to the top in larger numbers in the food and clothing industries than in any other. And this is natural. It is the field in which they have had the longest experience. They have had to feed and clothe the race largely, and they bring not only to the food and clothing industries but to all large industries where they penetrate an executive ability, etc., etc. (See Page 10
Dissillusionment of Women —

In the field of clerical work and clerical factory operations women swarm in vast numbers and in increasing numbers, and they are good and trustworthy workers on the whole. They are not a fixed quantity. They persist in shifting — marry — and that maids-in-the-back lessons their economic value. In clerical work today the census gives us That is a tremendous advance in the last two generations, say, since the census of 1900. They As operatives they are the hope of all advance business practices, of scientific filing, use of the dictaphone, use of the extraordinary automatic machine for counting, reckoning, etc.

They not only run these machines, but they take an integral part in making them. Take any great factory of automatic machines like the cash register and women, skilled in manipulation and frequently to great devotion to their machines, do percent of the work.

And though they may shift oftener than men the percentage of those who rise is small but it proves the point that they can rise. As fine instructors, heads of departments, as I have ever found in years of factory visiting have been women. If the number were small they proved the point that women can come to the top in industrial factories. They even come to the top as heads of plants, taking over businesses that husbands have died
Set the account then in all fields and the rank and file is a grand showing all things considered. Women have penetrated everywhere and are holding their own in the army of workers. But it is the rank and file, not the top, which has made the most brilliant progress.