January 9th, 1911

Mrs. M. S. Liddell,
21 Whittier Place, Irvington,
Indianapolis, Ind.

Dear Mrs. Liddell:

The Editor of The American Magazine has given me your letter of New Year's day. I think you do not quite understand me. Certainly I have expressed myself badly if I have led you to believe that I think the uneasiness of men and women under the limitations of their lives is unjustifiable. I certainly do not. The world has been made increasingly better through the efforts of its restless, pushing inhabitants. The Woman's Movement, as we call it, certainly grew out of a justified dissatisfaction. It was born of a consciousness of new obligations, of the necessity of a new mode of life if those obligations were to be met. It has had to fight its way as every other new movement in the world of men or women has to fight its way. I am far from saying that we should have no uneasy women. What I do mean to imply, however, is that our present day uneasy women in her effort to realize her new ambitions has largely looked outside of herself, has imitated men's system of education, his methods of work and of life, and in doing this is in danger of losing sight of the great fact that true development comes along the line of one's own nature, and not along the line of the nature of a different being. An educational system which would grow out of the actual woman's life is what I believe that we need. It is imitation that I fear, not development. It is missing the natural taskbin imitating somebody elses task that we seem to me to be in danger of. And it is the expression of this idea that I am trying to get at in these articles. It is a little difficult in the limited space that I have to say all that is desirable. Human words are, after all, a very defective medium. At least I know them to be so in my hands. I certainly should be the first to regret any seeming lack of sympathy with woman in her efforts to enlarge her life and to render greater service to society.

I think you are wrong, too, in feeling that I do not recognize the part that the militant woman has played in the opening of that larger life to women which, as you rightly say, I myself have benefited from. I tried in this very article to which you object to express the idea that the militant woman had kept alive the notions of progress with which we started in this democracy as perhaps they could not have been kept alive without her. In earlier articles in this magazine I have tried repeatedly to express this idea. Believe me, I am not so unsympathetic as I may seem to you. I am only trying to set down what seems to me to be some dangerous tendencies. It seems to me that this is a right thing to do. There never has been yet in the world's history any great liberal movement that did not make its grave mistakes, that did not lose its way by following wrong roads and taking up with false leaders. Where everyone interested in these movements sees or thinks he sees a mistake in tendency, it is certainly his duty, if he is loyal to this cause to try to express his fear. This is all I am trying to do. After all, no one of us is going to settle the woman question. We can only

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add our little mite and hope, as I believe we both do, that with the years woman will become a more effective as well as happier member of society.

Very sincerely yours,

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