

The American Magazine

381 FOURTH AVENUE

NEW YORK

EDITORIAL ROOMS

My dear Miss Eberle:-

I am glad you sent me the letter you did for analysis. It rises the eternal question that I take it every man and woman has to face who looks at all seriously at life. What are you going to chose:-

"To do exclusively what you want to do, or

"To want to do what circumstances seem to make it the decent and right thing for you to do".

What this amounts to I take it is:-

Are you going to decide to develop through the conventional and interesting channels which our systems for education and cultivation have pointed out for the best?, or

Are you going to try to develop through the always crooked and frequently hard and interesting paths that your particular life opens?

Your correspondent it is clear from her letter might have sent herself to college and to Europe. She undoubtedly would have become a prosperous, self-supporting, professional woman. She would have paid for this a longer list of opportunities to serve others than comes to most of us. She chooses deliberately enough it seems though with serious misgivings and a little resentment to giving up her opportunities for service and here is her record: *which resulted from her decision:-*

She has been able to make the life of a sick mother more tolerable. The mother and father gone, she is enabled to make a home for her younger brothers and sisters, and to educate them to take care of themselves. She is able to shelter and make comfortable the last years of a grandmother, who otherwise would have been desolate, perhaps in a poor house. She is even able to get ahead of a cyclone, for she had the money to repair the home it had done its best to tear to pieces. She is able to bring up her little sister in whom she evidently takes the greatest pride - who is to her like a daughter. If this is not successful living then I do not know what can be called so. Of course, it is not easy living; of course it has meant the sacrifice of ambitions, much ease. But she herself says that in spite of all disappointments and hardships it has not been unhappy. Of course, it could not have been unhappy unless she were a confirmed whiner. For no-one who is protecting and guarding others; who

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is successful in making a home for others, can be unhappy. I should call this as fruitful a career as I know. Certainly, compared to the career of women who devote themselves entirely to self-cultivation without any effort to use for others what they are able to acquire, it is a rich and important life.

Sincerely yours