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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK MAIDS, WIVES, AND BACHELORS ***

MAIDS WIVES AND BACHELORS

BY
AMELIA E. BARR

Author of "Jan Vedder's Wife," "A Bow of Orange Ribbon," etc.

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Maids and Bachelors

WOMEN who have devoted themselves for religious purposes to celibacy have in all ages and countries of the world received honor, but those upon whom celibacy has been forced, either through the influence of untoward circumstances, or as a consequence of some want or folly in themselves, have been objects of most unmerited contempt and dislike. Unmerited, because it may be broadly asserted that until the last generation no woman in secular and social life remained unmarried from desire or from conviction. She was the victim of some natural disadvantage, or some unhappy circumstance beyond her control, and therefore entitled to sympathy, but not to contempt.

Of course, there are many lovely girls who appear to have every advantage for matrimony, and who yet drift into spinsterhood. The majority of this class have probably been imprudent and over-stayed their market. They have dallied with their chances too long. Suddenly they are aware that their beauty is fading. They notice that the suitable marriageable men who hung around them in their youth have gone away, and that their places are filled with mere callow youths. Then they realize their mistakes, and are sorry they have thought being "an awfully silly little thing" and "having a good time" the end of their existence. Heart-aches and disappointments enough follow for their punishment; for they soon divine that when women cease to have men for lovers, and are attended by school-boys, they have written themselves down already as old maids.

Closely allied to these victims of folly or thoughtlessness are the women who remain unmarried because of their excessive vanity—or natural cruelty. "My dear, I was cruel thirty years ago, and no one has asked me since." This confession from an aunt to her niece, though taken from a play, is true enough to tell the real story of many an old maid. Their vanity made them cruel, and their cruelty condemned them to a lonely, loveless life. Close observation, however, among the unmarried women of any one's acquaintance will reveal the fact that it is not from the ranks of silly or cruel women that the majority of old maids come. Men do not, as a rule, dislike silly women; and by a wise provision of nature, they are rather fond of marrying pretty, helpless creatures who cannot help themselves. Neither are cruel women universally unpopular. Some lovers like to be snubbed, and would not value a wife they had not to seek upon their knees. There are, therefore, always chances for the silly and cruel women.

It is the weak, colorless women, who have privately strong prejudices, and publicly no assertion of any kind, that have, even in youth, few opportunities. They either lack the power to love strongly or they lack the power to express their feelings. They have not the courage to take any decided step. They long for advances, and when they are made, recoil from them. They are constitutionally so timid that they fear any step or any condition which is a positive and final change. If marriage had some reservations and uncertainties, some loopholes through which they could drag themselves as a final resort, they would be more sure of their own wishes. These are the Misses Feeble-minds, who cast the reproach upon feminine celibacy.

They feel that in some way they have been misunderstood and wronged, and they come finally to regard all other women as their enemies. They worry and fret themselves continually, and the worry and fret sharpen alike their features and their temper. Then their condition is precisely the one most conducive to complaining and spiteful gossiping; and they fall, in their weakness and longing for sympathy, to that level. Thus to the whole class is given a reputation for malevolent railing which does not by any means belong to it. In fact, married women are generally more venomous than old maids. The words of married women have greater weight, and they do more harm; for they can make suggestions and accusations which an old maid could not make with any propriety. An old maid's gossip is generally without intentional malice; she has nothing to do, and she wants to make herself agreeable; while married women, having plenty else to do, must, as a general thing, talk scandal from pure ill-nature.

There is a large majority of old maids who are to be sincerely respected, and from whose numbers men with sense and intelligence may choose noble wives. They are the pretty, pure, sensible women who have been too modest, and too womanly, to push and scramble in the social ranks. They have dwelt in their own homes, and among their own people, and no one has sought them out. They have seen their youth pass away, and all their innocent desires fade, and they have suffered what few can understand before they reached that calm which no thought of a lover troubles. Sweet faded flowers! How tenderly we ought to regard these gentle victims of those modest household virtues which all men profess to admire, but which few seem desirous to transplant into their own homes.

Another class, somewhat kindred to this, is composed of women who have never found their ideal, and have never allowed themselves to invent for any other man those qualities which would elevate him to their standard. And these women, again, are closely allied to those who remain unmarried because they do not, and will not, conform to conventionalities and social rules. They are clever and odd, and likely to remain odd, especially if they refuse to men—as they are most likely to do—that step or two in advance which is the only way to reconcile them to witty or intellectual women.

These varieties of unmarried women are mainly the victims of natural peculiarities, or of circumstances they are not responsible for. But within the last generation the condition of feminine celibacy has greatly altered. It is a fact that women in this day, considerably, and in

the first glory of their youth, elect themselves to that condition. Some have imbibed from high culture a high conception of the value of life, and of what they ought to do with their lives; and they will not waste the days of their youth in looking for a husband in order to begin their work. Others have strong individuality, and refuse to give up their time into another's keeping. The force of character displayed by such resolutions naturally leads to celibacy. No one but a very weak man would be attracted by women of such vital purpose, and weak men would not be tolerated by such strong women.

The wise and the thoughtful may well give such voluntary old maids the full credit of their purpose, for the generality will not believe in resolutions so much above their own consciences and intelligence. They will still sneer at their condition, and refuse to admit that it is of choice. They will throw at them that wearisome old fable of the fox and the grapes, when they might much more correctly quote Sappho's song of the ripe apples left on the topmost branches of the apple-trees: "Not because they were forgotten of the gatherers, but because *they were out of their reach.*"

In accord with the fresh development, we are told that the number of unmarried women in the country is steadily on the increase. But this increase will not be ranged among the silly, the weak, or the cruel of the sex. It will come from that class of women whose eyes have been opened by the spread of education and refinement; women not afraid to work for themselves, and who indeed have thoughtfully concluded that their own efforts and their own company will be far better for them than the help and company of any man not perfectly in sympathy with them, or their inferior either in moral or mental calibre. For it is not always a duty to marry; but it is always a duty to live up to our highest conception of what is right and noble and elevating.

But from whatever cause the women of the present and future generations remain unmarried, they will have no need to dread the condition, as unmarried women of the previous generations have had good cause to do. Every year finds them more independent. They are constantly invading fresh trades, and stepping up into more important positions. They live in pretty chambers; they dress charmingly; they have a bank account; they go to the opera and the theatres in their own protection; and instead of being the humble poor relations of married sisters and brothers, they are now their equals, their patrons, and their honored guests. Besides which, old maids have begun to write novels; and in them they have given us such exquisite portraits of their order—women so rich in every womanly grace—hat we are almost compelled to believe the unmarried women in our midst to be the salt of the community.

At any rate, we are beginning to shift the blame and the obloquy of the position to the old bachelors, where it rightly belongs; and this is at least a move in the just and proper direction. For old bachelors have no excuse whatever for their condition. If we omit the natural and necessary exceptions, which are few enough, then pure selfishness and cowardice must account for every other case. Their despised old-bachelorhood is all their own fault. They have always had the tremendous privilege of asking for what they wanted; and half the battle was in that privilege. Men don't have wives because they don't ask for them; and they don't ask for them because they don't want them; and in this condition lie their shame and their degradation, and the well-deserved scorn with which the married part of both sexes regard them.

Men are also much more contemptible and useless in their celibacy than are women. An old maid can generally make herself of service to some one. If she is rich, she attaches herself to church work, or to art, or to the children of brothers and sisters. Or she travels all over the world, and writes a book about her adventures. If she is poor, she works hard and saves money; and thus becomes an object of interest and respect in her own set. Or she is nurse and helper for all that need her help in her village, or her church, or her family. At any rate, she never descends to such depths of ennui and selfishness as do the old bachelors who loll about on the club sofas, or who dawdle discontentedly at afternoon teas. An old maid may be troublesome in church business, or particular in household affairs; but it takes an old bachelor to quarrel with waiters and grumble every one insane about his dinner menu. An old maid may gossip, but she will not bore every one to death about her dyspepsia; and if she has to starve others, we may be very certain she would never fall under that tyranny of valets and janitors which are the "sling and arrows" of wealthy, selfish old bachelors.

On the whole, then, the unmarried woman is becoming every year more self-reliant, and more respectable and respected, and the unmarried man more effeminate and contemptible. We look for a day, not far off, when a man will have to become a member of some religious order if he wishes a reputable excuse for his celibacy; and even in secular life it would not be a bad idea to clothe bachelors after forty years of age in a certain uniform. They might also after that age be advised to have their own clubs and recreations; for their assumption of equality with those of their sex who have done their duty as men and citizens is a piece of presumption that married men ought to resent. Men who marry are the honorable progenitors of the future; and their self-denying, busy lives not only bless this generation, but prepare for the next one. The old bachelor is merely a human figure, without duties and without hopes. Nationally and socially, domestically and personally, he is a spoon with nothing in it!

The American Girl

ONE of the most interesting, piquant, and picturesque of all types of feminine humanity is the American girl,—not the hothouse variety, reared for the adornment of luxury, but the every-day, every-where girls that throng the roads leading to the public schools and the normal schools, and who, even, in a higher state of culture fill the halls of learned colleges with a wondrous charm and brightness,—girls who have an aim in life, a mission to fulfil, a home to order, who know the worth of money, who are not ashamed to earn it, and who manage out of limited means to compass all their desires for pretty dresses and summer vacations, and even their pet dream of an ocean voyage and a sight of the Old World.

Physically, these girls enjoy life at its highest point. Look at their flushed cheeks and bright, fearless eyes, and watch their light, swift, even steps. They have no complaint to make of the heat, or the sunshine, or the frost; they have not yet heard of the east wind. Rain does not make them cross; and as for the snow, it throws them into a delicious excitement; while the wind blowing their dresses about them in colored clouds only makes them the more eager to try their strength against it.

That these girls so physically lovely should have the proper mental training is a point of the gravest personal and national importance. And it is the glory of our age that this necessity has been nobly met. For the American girl, "Wisdom has builded her house and hewn out her Seven Pillars;" and as she points to the lofty entrance she cries to all alike, "Go up; the door is open!" If the girls of fifty years ago could have known the privileges of our era how would they have marvelled and rejoiced and desired "to see their day."

But manifold as her privileges are, the American girl generally knows how to use them. She proves daily that the parable of the ten talents did not refer to men only. Indeed, the fault girls are most likely to fall into is the belief that they each and all possess every one of the talents. In reality this is so seldom the case that it is impossible to educate all girls after one pattern; and it is therefore a grand thing for a girl to know just what she can and cannot do. For if she have only five talents there is no advantage to be gained by creating fictitious ones, since the noblest education is that which looks to the development of the natural abilities, whether they be few or many, fashionable or unfashionable.

Ask the majority of people "What is education?" and they will be apt to answer "The improvement of the mind." But this answer does not take us one step beyond the starting-point. Probably the best and most generally useful rule for a girl is a deliberate and conscientious inquiry into her own nature and inclinations as to what she wants to do with her education. When she has faithfully answered the inquiry she is ready to prepare herself for this end. For it is neither necessary nor yet possible that every girl should know everything. Besides which, the growth of individuality has made special knowledge a thing of great value, and on all occasions of importance we are apt to defer to it. If we cross the Atlantic we look for a captain who has a special knowledge of its stormy ways. If we are really ill we go to a specialist on our ailment, no matter what "pathy" we prefer. Special knowledge has a *prima facie* worth, and without inquiry into a subject we are inclined to consider specialists on the subject better informed than those who have not this qualification. Hence the importance of cultivating some one talent to such perfection as will enable a girl, if need be, to turn it into money.

There is another point in the preparation of the American girl for the duties of life which is often undervalued, or even quite ignored; it is the little remembered fact that all our moral and intellectual qualities are very dependent for their value on our surroundings. The old Quakers used to lay great stress upon being "in one's right place." When the right person is in the right place there is sure to be a success in life; failure in this respect is almost certain misfortune; a fine accountant before the mass, a fine lady in the wilderness, are out of their places, and have lost their opportunity. And so educational accomplishments which would bring wealth and honor in a great city may be detrimental to happiness and a drag on duty in an isolated position.

Hence the importance of a girl finding out first of all what she wants to do with her education. For in this day she is by no means cramped in her choice; the most desirable occupations are open to her; she may select from the whole world her arena, and from the fullness thereof her reward. But if her object be a more narrow and conventional one, if all she wishes is to be loved and popular in her own small community, then—if she is wise—she will cultivate only such a happy arrangement of graceful, usual accomplishments as prevail among her class and friends. For a very clever woman cannot be at home with very many people. She is too large for the regular grooves of society; she does not fit into any of its small aims and enjoyments; and though she may have the kindest heart, it is her singularities only that will be taken notice of. If, then, popularity be a girl's desire, she must not obviously cultivate herself, must not lift herself above her surroundings, nor lift her aspirations higher than the aims which all humanity have in common. And it is a very good thing for humanity that so many nice girls are content and happy with such a life object; for the social and domestic graces are those which touch existence the closest, which sweeten its bitter griefs and brighten its dreariest hours.

It would be foolish to assert that the American girl is without faults. Physically and mentally, she may stand on her merits with any women in the world; morally, she has the shortcomings that

are the shadows of her excellences. Principally she is accused of a want of reverence, and setting aside for the present her faults as a daughter, it may be admitted that in general she has little of this quality. But it is largely the consequence of her environments. Reverence is the virtue of ignorance; and the American girl has no toleration for ignorance. She is inquisitive, speculative, and inclined to rely on her own investigations; while the spirit of reverence demands, as its very atmosphere, trust and obedience. It is therefore more just to say that she is so alert and eager herself that when she meets old men and women who have learned nothing from their last fifty years of life, and who therefore can teach her nothing, she does not feel any impulse to offer reverence to mere years. But if gray hairs be honorable, either for matured wisdom, extensive information, or practical piety, she is generally inclined to give that best of all homage, the reverence which springs from knowledge and affection, and which is a much better thing than the mere forms of respect traditionally offered to old age.

It is also said that the American girl is a very vain girl, fond of parading her beauty, freedom, and influence. But vanity is not a bad quality, if it does not run to excess. It is the ounce of leaven in a girl's character, and does a deal of good work for which it seldom gets any credit. For a great deed a great motive is necessary; but how numberless are the small social and domestic kindnesses for which vanity is a sufficient force, and which would be neglected or ill-done without its influence! As long as a girl's vanity does not derive its inspiration from self-love there is no necessity for her to wear sackcloth to humiliate it. We have all known women without vanity, and found them unpleasant people to know.

There is one fault of the American girl which is especially her fault, and which ought not to be encouraged or palliated although it is essentially the shadow of some of her greatest excellences—the fault of being in too great a hurry at all the turning-points of her life. When she is in the nursery she aches to go to school. When she is a schoolgirl, she is impatient to put on long dresses and become a young lady. As soon as this fact is accomplished, she feels there is not a moment to lose in choosing either a career or a husband. She is always in a hurry about the future, and so frequently takes the wrong turn at the great events of life. She leaves school too soon; she leaves home too soon; she does everything at a rush, and does not do it as well as if she “made haste slowly.”

But what a future lies before these charmingly brilliant American girls, if they are able to take the fullest possession of it! The great obstacle in this achievement is the apparently wholesome opinion that education is sufficient. But the very best education will fall short of its privileges if it be not accompanied with that moral training which we call discipline. Discipline is self-denial in all its highest forms; it teaches the excellent mean between license and repression; without it a girl may have plenitude of knowledge, and a lamentable want of sweetness; so that one only second rate on her intellectual side may be a thousand times more lovable than one who is first rate on her intellectual side, but lacks that fine flavor of character which comes from the expansion of noble inward forces, disciplined and directed to good ends.

Every one understands that no character, however intellectual, is worth anything that is not morally healthy; but morality in a woman is not in itself sufficient. She must have in addition all those charming virtues included in that word of many lights and shades and subtle meanings—womanliness; that word which signifies such a variety of things, but never anything but what is sweet and tender and gracious and beautiful.

Dangerous Letter-Writing

YOUNG women are proverbially fond of playing with edged tools, and of all such dangerous playthings a habit of promiscuous, careless letter-writing is the worst; for in most cases the danger is not obvious at the time, and the writer may even have forgotten her imprudence when she has to meet the consequences. The romance, the gush, the having nothing particular to do, the almost insane egotism which makes some young women long to exploit their own hearts, caused poor Madaline Smith to write those foolish letters to a man whose every good quality she had to invent, and who afterwards tortured her with these very letters into a crime which made her stand for months within the shadow of the gallows. She had not patience to await until the real lover came, and then when he did come these fatal letters stood between her and her happiness, and her fair name.

The very instinct which leads to constant letter-writing, goes with a constitutional want of caution, and therefore indicates a necessity for intelligent self-restraint. If young women, when writing letters, would only project themselves into the future and imagine a time when they might be confronted with the lines which they have just penned, many an ill-advised missive would go into the fire instead of into the mail bag. Indeed, if letters at all doubtful in spirit or intent were laid aside until “next morning” many a wrong would be left undone, many a friendship would be preserved unbroken, and many an imprudence be postponed and so uncommitted. If indeed a woman could say truthfully, “This letter is my letter, and if mischief comes of it I alone have the penalty to pay,” expansive correspondence might be less dangerous.

But no one can thus limit folly or sin, and its consequence may even touch those who were not even aware of the writing of the letter.

The abuse of letter-writing is one of the greatest trials of the epoch. Distance, which used to be a protection, is now done away with. Every one cries out, and insists upon your listening. They write events while they are only happening. People unknown intrude upon your time and take possession of it. Enmities and friendships thousands of miles away scold or caress; one is exacting, another angry, a third lays upon your conscience obligations which he has invented. For a mere nothing—a yes, or a no—idle, gushing people fire off continual notes and insist upon answers. Now this kind of letter-writing exists only because postage is cheap; if such correspondents had to pay twenty-five cents for giving their opinions, they would not give them at all. It is an impertinence also, for though we may like persons well enough to receive from them a visit, or even to return it, it is a very different thing to be called upon to retire ourselves with pen and ink and note paper, and give away time and interest which we are not inclined to give.

Plenty of girls write very clever letters,—letters that are an echo of their own circle, full of a sweet audacity and an innocent swagger of knowledge of the world and of the human heart that is very engaging. And the temptation to write such letters is very great, especially as both the writer and her friends are apt to imagine them evidence of a large amount of genius. Indeed, some who have a specially bright pen, or else a specially large circle of admirers and flatterers, arrive speedily at the conviction that they can just as easily write a book. So without reason and without results, they get themselves heart-burning and heart-ache and disappointment. For there is absolutely no kindred whatever between this graceful, piquant eloquence *du billet* and the fancy, observation, and experience necessary to successful novel writing.

If a girl really has a vein of true sentiment, she ought not at this day to give it away in letter-writing. There is a safer and more profitable way to use it; she can now take it to market and sell it for pudding, for the magazines and ladies' newspapers. Sentiment and fancy have a commercial value; and instead of sealing them up in a two-cent envelope for an acquaintance,—who is likely very unappreciative, and who perhaps tosses them into the fire with a contemptuous adjective,—she might send them to some long-suffering editor. These men know the depths of the girlish heart in this respect, and they have a patience in searching for the gold among the dross that is not generally believed in. Therefore, if a girl must write, let her send her emotions to the newspapers; an editor is a far more prudent confidant than her very dearest friend.

Really, the day for letter-writing is past. As an art it is dead, as convenience it remains; but it has lost all sentiment. Even Madame de Sévigné could not be charming on a postal card, and for genuine information the general idea is to put it into twenty words and send it by telegraph. So, then, it is a good thing for young women to get over, as soon as possible, the tendency of their years to sentimental letter-writing. They will thus save themselves many a heart-ache in the present and many a fear for the future. For if they do not write letters they cannot feel hurt because they are not answered. They cannot worry because they have said something imprudent. They will not make promises, in the exaltation of composition, which they will either break or hate to keep when they are in their sober senses. They will also preserve their friendships longer, for they will not deprive them altogether of that charm which leaves something to the imagination.

Of course there are yet such things as absolutely necessary letters; and these, in their way, ought to be made as perfect as possible. Fortunately, perfection in this respect is easily attainable, its essentials being evident to all as soon as they are stated. First, a letter which demands or deserves the attention of an answer, ought to have it as promptly as if we were paying a bill. Second, we ought to write distinctly, for bad handwriting represents a very dogged, self-asserting temper,—one, too, which is unfair, because if we put forward our criticisms and angularities in a personal meeting, they can be returned in kind, but to send a letter that is almost unintelligible admits of no reprisal but an answer in some equally provoking scrawl. Even if the writing is only careless, and may be read with a little trouble, we have no right to impose that extra trouble. Third, it is a good thing to write short letters. The cases in which people have written long letters, and not been sorry for having done so, are doubtless very rare. No one will ever be worse for just saying plainly what she has to say and then signing her name to it plainly and in full. For a name half signed is not only a vulgarity, it indicates a character unfinished, uncertain, and hesitating.

There is a kind of correspondence which is a special development of our special civilization, and which it is to be hoped will be carefully avoided by the young woman of the future,—that is, the writing of letters begging autographs. A woman who does this thing has a passion which she ought immediately to arrest and compel to give an account of itself.

If she did so, she would quickly discover that it is a mean passion, masquerading in a character it has no right to, and no sympathy with. An autograph beggar is a natural development, though not a very creditable one. She doubtless began her career of accumulation with collecting birds' eggs in the country, where they could be got for nothing. Butterflies were probably her next ambition. Then perhaps that mysterious craze for postage stamps followed. After such a training, the mania for autographs would come as a matter of course. And the sole and whole motive of the collecting business is nothing at all but the vulgar love of possessing, and especially of possessing what costs nothing.

It is amusing and provoking to notice the air of complaisance with which some of these begging

epistles are suffused. The writers seem incapable of conceiving statesmen, artists, and authors who will not be as pleased to give as they are to ask. But in reality, a man or a woman, however distinguished, who feels a request for his or her autograph to be a compliment, is soaked in self-conceit, and the large majority certainly do look upon such requests as simply impertinent begging letters. The request, indeed, carries an affront with it, no matter how civilly it may be worded, as it is not that particular autograph that is wanted, for the beggars generally prefix as an excuse the bare-faced fact that they have already begged hundreds. Certainly no self-respecting woman will care to put herself among the host of these contemptible seekers after a scrap of paper.

Speaking broadly, a woman's character may be in many respects fairly gauged by her habits on the subject of letter-writing; as fairly, indeed, as we may gauge a man's by his methods of dealing with money. If we know how a man gets money, how he spends it, how he lends it, borrows it, or saves it, we have a perfect measurement for his temper and capabilities. And if we know how a woman deals with her letters, how many she gets, how many she sends, how long or how short they are, if they are sprawly and untidy, or neat and cleanly, and how they are signed and sealed, then we can judge her nature very fairly, for she has written herself down in an open book, and all who wish may read her.

Flirts and Flirtation

FLIRTING is the product of a highly civilized state of society. People in savage, or even illiterate life have no conception of its delicate and indefinable diplomacy. A savage sees a woman "that pleases him well," pays the necessary price for her, and is done with the affair. Jane in the kitchen and John in the field look and love, tell each other the reason why, and get married. "Keeping company," which is their nearest approach to flirtation, has a definite and well-understood end in view, the approaches to which are unequivocal and admit of no other translation.

Flirts are of many kinds. There is the quiet, "still-water" flirt, who leads her captives by tender little sighs and pretty, humble, beseeching ways; who hangs on every word a man says, asks his advice, his advice only, because it is so much better than any one else's. That is her form of the art, and a very effective one it is.

Again, the flirt is demonstrative and daring. She tempts, dazzles, tantalizes her victims by the very boldness with which she approaches that narrow but deep Rubicon dividing flirting from indiscretion. But she seldom crosses it; up to a certain point she advances without hesitation, but at once there is a dead halt, and the flirtee finds that he has been taken a fool's journey.

There are sentimental flirts, sly little pussies, full of sweet confidences and small secrets, and who delight in asking the most suggestive and seductive questions. "Does Willy really believe in love marriages?" or, "Is it better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all?" etc.

Intellectual flirts hover about young poets and writers, or haunt studios and libraries, and doubtless are delightfully distracting to the young ideas shooting in those places.

Everybody knows a variety of the religious flirt,—those demure lilies of the ecclesiastical garden, that grow in the pleasant paths where pious young rectors and eligible saints walk. Perhaps, as their form of flirting takes the shape of votive offerings, district visiting, and choir singing, their perpetual gush of sentiment and hero-worship is advantageous, on the principle that it is an ill wind that blows nobody good.

All of these female varieties have their counterparts among male flirts, and besides, there are some masculine types flagrantly and universally common. Such is the bold, handsome bird of prey, who advances just far enough to raise expectation and then suddenly retires. Or the men who are always *insinuating*, but who never make an honest declaration; who raise vague hopes with admirable skill and poetic backgrounds, and keep women madly and hopefully in love with them by looks and gestures they never give an interpretation to. When they are tired they retire slowly, without quarrel, without explanation; they simply allow their implied promises to die of neglect.

Then there is the prudent flirt, who trifles only with married women; dangles after those subtle, handsome creatures who affect blighted lives and uncomfortable husbands, and who, having married for convenience, are flirting for love. Such women are safe entertainment for the cowardly male flirt, who fears a flirtation that leads perchance to matrimony, but who has no fears about his liability to commit bigamy. There are "fatherly" male flirts, and "brotherly" and "friendly" flirts, but the title is nothing but an agreed-upon centre of operations.

Yet it is difficult to imagine how, in a polished state of society, flirting could be done without. Some sort of preliminary examination into tastes, disposition, and acquirements is necessary before matrimony, and a woman cannot carry a list of her desirable qualities, nor a man advertise his temper and his income. The trouble is that no definite line can be drawn, no scale of moral values can decide where flirting ends and serious attentions begin; and society never

agrees as to what is innocent and what reprehensible.

There are ill-natured people who call every bright, merry girl that is a favorite with gentlemen, that talks, sings, and dances well, a "terrible flirt;" who admit nothing as propriety but what is conventionally correct and insipid. The media of flirting are indeed endless; a clever woman can find in simply *listening* a method of conveying the most delicate flattery and covert admiration. Indeed, flirting in its highest quality is an art requiring the greatest amount of tact and skill, and women who would flirt and be blameless, no matter how vast their materials, must follow Opie's plan and "mix them with brains."

It used to be a maxim that no gentleman could be refused by a lady, because he would never presume beyond the line of her encouragement; therefore it is to be presumed, on this rule, no lady advances further than she is willing to ratify. But such a state of society would be very stupid and formal, and we should miss a very piquant flavor in life, which even very good and great people have not been able to resist.

Upon this rule we must convict Queen Elizabeth as an arrant flirt, and "no lady;" we should be compelled to shake our heads at the fair Thrale and the great Dr. Johnson, at naughty Horace Walpole and Mrs. Hannah More, and to even look with suspicion on George Whitefield and "good Lady Huntingdon."

No, in polished society flirting in a moderate form is an amusement, and an investigation so eminently suited to the present condition of the sexes that a much better one could be better spared. In one case only does it admit of no extenuating circumstances,—that of the married flirt of both sexes.

A flirt may not indeed be an altogether lovely character, even with all her alluring faults; but she is something a great deal nicer than a prude. All men prefer a woman who trusts them, or gayly challenges them to a combat, in which she proposes their capture, to her who affects horror at masculine tastes and ways, and is always expecting them to do some improper, or say some dreadful, thing. Depend upon it, if all the flirts were turned into prudes, society would have gone further to fare worse.

On Falling in Love

"Something there is moves me to love;
and I
Do know I love, but know not how, or
why."

THERE is in love no "wherefore;" and we scarcely expect it. The working-world around must indeed give us an account of their actions, but lovers are not worth much in the way of rendering a reason; for half the charm of love-making lies in the defiance of everything that is reasonable, in asserting the incredible, and in believing the impossible. And surely we may afford ourselves this little bit of glamour in an age judging everything by the unconditional and the positive; we may make little escapades into love-land, when all the old wonder-lands, from the equator to the pole, are being mapped out, and dotted over with railway depots, and ports of entry.

Falling in love is an eminently impractical piece of business, and yet Nature—who is no blunderer—generally introduces the boy and girl into active adult life by this very door. In the depths of this delicious foolishness the boyish heart grows to the measure of manhood; bats and boats and "fellows" are forever deposed, and lovely woman reigns in their stead. To boys, first love is, perhaps, more of an event than to girls, for the latter have become familiar with the routine of love-making long before they are seriously in love. They sing about it in connection with flowers and angels and the moon; they read Moore and Tennyson; they have perhaps been the confidants of elder sisters. They are waiting for their lover, and even inclined to be critical; but the first love of a boy is generally a surprise—he is taken unawares, and surrenders at discretion.

Perhaps it is a good stimulant to faith in general, that in the very outset of it we should believe in such an unreasonable and wonderful thing as first love. Tertullian held some portions of his faith simply "because they were impossible." It is no bad thing for a man to begin life with a grand passion,—to imagine that no one ever loved before him, and that no one who comes after him will ever love to the same degree that he does.

This absolute passion, however, is not nearly so common as it might well be; and Rochefoucauld was not far wrong when he compared it to the ghosts that every one talks about, but very few see. It generally arises out of extreme conditions of circumstances or feelings; its food is contradiction and despair. It is doubtful if Romeo and Juliet would have cared much for each other if the Montagues and Capulets had been friends and allies, and the marriage of their children a necessary State arrangement; and Byron is supported by all reasonable evidence

when he doubtfully inquires:

“If Laura, think you, had been
Petrarch’s wife,
Would he have written sonnets all his
life?”

This excessive passion does not thrive well either in a high state of civilization. “King Cophetua and the Beggar-maid” is the ballad of an age when love really “ruled the court, the camp, the grove.” The nineteenth century is not such an age. At the very best, King Cophetua would now do pretty much as the judge did with regard to Maud Muller. Still no one durst say that even in such a case it was not better to have loved and relinquished than never to have loved at all.

“Better for all that some sweet hope
lies
Deeply buried from human eyes.”

How can love be the be-all and the end-all of life with us, when steam-looms and litigation, railway shares and big bonanzas, cotton and corn, literature and art, politics and dry goods, and a thousand other interests share our affections and attentions? It is impossible that our life should be the mere machinery of a love plot; it is rather a drama in which love is simply one of the *dramatis personæ*.

This fact is well understood, even if not acknowledged in words; the sighs and the fevers, the hoarding of flowers and gloves, the broken hearts and shattered lives, all for the sake of one sweet face, still exist in literature, but not much in life. Lovers of to-day are more given to considering how to make housekeeping as easy as matrimony than to writing sonnets to their mistresses’ eyebrows. The very devotion of ancient times would now be tedious, its long protestations a bore, and we lovers of the nineteenth century would be very apt to yawn in the very face of a sixteenth-century Cupid. Let the modern lover try one of Amadis’ long speeches to his lady, and she would likely answer, “Don’t be tiresome, Jack; let us go to Thomas’ and hear the music and eat an ice-cream.”

Is love, then, in a state of decay? By no means—it has merely accommodated itself to the spirit of the age; and this spirit demands that the lives of men shall be more affected by Hymen than by Cupid. Lovers interest society now solely as possible husbands and wives, fathers and mothers of the republic. Lord Lytton points out this fact as forcibly exemplified in our national dramas. Every one feels the love scenes in a play, the sentimental dialogues of the lovers, fatiguing; but a matrimonial quarrel excites the whole audience, and it sheds its pleasantest tears over their reconciliation. For few persons in any audience ever have made, or ever will make, love as poets do; but the majority have had, or will have, quarrels and reconciliations with their wives.

“Men have died from time to time, and worms have eaten them—but not for love;” and if this was true of Shakespeare’s times, it is doubly so of ours. If there ever was any merit in dying for love, we fail to see it; occasionally a man will wildly admit that he is making a fool of himself for this or that woman, but though we may pity him, we don’t respect him for such a course. Women, still more rarely than men, “make fools of themselves” on this score; and in spite of all poets assert to the contrary, they are eminently reasonable, and their affections bear transplanting.

In other respects we quite ignore the inflation of old love terms. “Our fate,” “our destiny,” etc., resolve themselves into the simplest and most natural of events; a chat on a rainy afternoon, a walk home in the moonlight, mere contiguity for a season, are the agents which often decide our love affairs. And yet, below all this, lies that inexplicable something which seems to place this bit of our lives beyond our wisest thoughts. We can’t fall in love to order, and all our reasoning on the subject resolves itself into a conviction that under certain inexplicable conditions, “it is possible for anybody to fall in love with anybody else.”

Perhaps this is a part of what Artemus Ward calls the “cussedness” of things in general; but at any rate we must admit that if “like attracts like,” it attracts unlike too. The scholar marries the foolish beauty; the beauty marries an ugly man, and admires him. Poverty intensifies itself by marrying poverty; plenty grows plethoric by marrying wealth. But how far love is to blame for these strange attractions, who can tell? Probably a great deal that passes for love is only reflected self-love, the passion to acquire what is generally admired or desired. Thus beautiful women are often married as the most decorous way of gratifying male vanity. A pleasant anecdote, as the Scotch say, *anent* this view, is told of the Duc de Guise, who after a long courtship prevailed on a celebrated beauty to grant him her hand. The lady observing him very restless, asked what ailed him. “Ah, madame,” answered the lover, “I ought to have been off long ago to communicate my good fortune to all my friends.”

But the motives and influences that go to make up so highly complex an emotion as love are beyond even indication, though the subject has been a tempting one to most philosophical writers. Even Comte descends from the positive and unconditional to deify the charmingly erratic feminine principle; Michelet, after forty volumes of history, rests and restores himself by penning a book on love; the pale, religious Pascal, terrified at the vastness of his own questions, comforts himself by an analysis of the same passion; and Herbert Spencer has gone *con amore* into the same subject. But love laughs at philosophy, and delights in making fools of the wise for its sake.

It is easy to construct a theory, but the first touch of a white hand may demolish it; easy to make resolutions, but the first glance of a pair of bright eyes may send them packing. It is easy for men to be philosophers, when they are not lovers; but when once they fall in love there is no distinction then between the fool and the wise man. However, we can be thankful that love no longer demands such outward and visible tokens of slavery as she used to. In this day lovers address their mistresses as women—not goddesses. Indeed we should say now of men who serve women on their knees, “*When they get up, they go away.*”

Engaged To Be Married

“Woo’d and married and a’.
Woo’d and married and a’:
An’ is na she very weel aff
That is woo’d and married and a’?”

IT is a beautiful fancy that marriages are ordained in heaven; it is a practical fact that they are made on earth; and that what we call “our destiny,” or “our fate,” is generally the result of favorable opportunities, sympathetic circumstances, or even pleasant contiguity for a season. Hence we always expect after the summer vacation to hear of a number of “engagements.” The news is perennially interesting; we may have seen the parties a thousand times, but their first appearance in their new character excites all our curiosity.

Generally the woman expands and beautifies, rises with the occasion, and puts on new beauty with the confidence of an augmenting wardrobe and an assured position. There is nothing ridiculous in her attitude; her wedding trousseau and marriage presents keep her in a delightful state of triumphant satisfaction, and if she has “done well unto herself,” she feels entitled to the gratitude of her family and the envy of all her female acquaintance.

The case is not so socially pleasant for her accomplice; it is always an awkward thing for a man to announce his engagement. His married friends ask him prosaic questions, and “wish him joy,”—a compliment which of itself implies a doubt; or they tell him he is going to do a wise thing, and treat him in the interval as if he was naturally in a state of semi-lunacy. His bachelor friends receive the news either with a fit of laughter, an expressive, long-drawn whistle, or at best with the assurance that they “consider marriage a good thing, though they are not able to carry out their principles.” But he is soon aware that they regard him virtually as a deserter; they make parties without including him; he drops out of their consultations; he has lost his caste among the order of young men, and has not been admitted among the husbands of the community; he hangs between two states; is not of *that*, nor yet quite of *this*.

Naturally enough, there are a variety of opinions on the subject of prolonging or cutting as short as possible this preliminary stage. Those who regard marriage as a kind of commerce, whose clearing house is St. Thomas’s or St. Bartholomew’s, will, of course, prefer to clinch the contemplated arrangement as soon as possible. Their business is intelligible; there is “no nonsense about them;” and, upon the whole, the sooner they get to ordering dinner and paying taxes the better. Many of us have sat waiting in a dentist’s room with a tooth-ache similar to that which made Burns

“Cast the wee stools owre the meikle;”

and some of us have watched for an editor’s decision with feelings which would gladly have annihilated the interval.

But it is not alone the prosaic and the impatient who are averse to a long engagement: the methodical, whose arrangements it tumbles upside down; the busy, whose time it appropriates; the selfish, who are compelled during it to make continual small sacrifices; the shy, who feel as if all the other relations of life had retired into the background in order to exhibit them as “engaged men;” the greedy, who look upon the expected love-offerings as so much tribute money,—these and many other varieties of lovers would gladly simplify matrimony by reducing its preliminaries to a question and a ceremony. Yet if Love is to have anything like the place in life that it has in poetry; if we really believe that marriage ought to be founded on sympathy of tastes and principles; if we have any faith in that mighty ruler of hearts and lives, a genuine love affair,—we shall not wish to dim the glory of marriage by denying it this sojourn in a veritable enchanted land; for in its atmosphere many fine feelings blossom that never would have birth at all if the niceties of courtship were superseded by the levelling rapidity of marriage. If people are *really* in love they gain more than they lose by a reasonable delay. There is time for the reading and writing of love-letters, one of the sweetest experiences of life; the tongue and pen get familiar with affectionate and noble sentiments; indeed I doubt if there is any finer school for married life than a full course of love-letters. But if the marriage follow immediately on the engagement, all love-letters and all love-making must necessarily have a flavor of furniture and dress, and of “considerations.” I admit that love-making is an unreasonable and impractical

piece of business; but in this lies all its charm. It delights in asserting the incredible and believing the impossible. But, after all, it is in the depths of this delicious foolishness that the heart attains its noblest growth. Life may have many grander hopes and calmer joys in store,—

“But there’s nothing half so sweet in
life
As Love’s young dream.”

Therefore we ought to look with complaisance, if not with approbation, on young people serenely passing through this phase of their existence; but the fact is, we are apt to regard it as a little trial. Lovers are so happy and self-satisfied that they do not understand why everybody else is not in the same supreme condition. If the house is ever so small, they expect a clear room to themselves.

Yet such an engagement, of reasonable length, is to be advised wherever young people are tender and constant in nature, and really in love with each other. I would only ask them to be as little demonstrative in public as possible, and to carry their happiness meekly, for, in any case, they will make large demands on the love, patience, and toleration of their friends. But perhaps one of the greatest advantages of a prolonged engagement is the security it brings against a *mésalliance*. Now, to a man a *mésalliance* is the heaviest weight he can carry through life; but to a woman it is simply destruction.

The best women have an instinctive wish to marry a man superior to themselves in some way or other; for their honor is in their husbands, and their status in society is determined by his. A woman who, for a passing fancy, marries a man in any way her inferior wrongs herself, her family, and her whole life; for the “grossness of his nature” will most probably drag her to his level. Now and then a woman of great force of character may lift her husband upward, but she accepts such a labor at the peril of her own higher life. Should she find it equally impossible to lift him to her level or to sink to his, what remains? Life-long regrets, bitter shame and self-reproach, or a forcible setting of herself free. But the latter, like all severe remedies, carries desperation instead of hope, with it. Never can she quite regain her maiden place; an *aura* of a doubtful kind fetters and influences her in every effort or relation of her future life.

In the early glamour of a love affair, women do not see these things, but fathers and mothers do; they know that “the world is *not* well lost for love,” and they have a right to protest against such folly. In an imprudent love affair, every day is so much gained; therefore when this foolishness is bound up in the heart of a youth or a maiden, the best of all plans is to arrange for time,—as long an engagement as possible.

But I will suppose that all my unmarried readers have found proper mates who will stand the test of parental wisdom and a fairly long and exacting engagement, and that after some happy months they will not only be “woo’d,” but “married and a’.” Now begins their real life, and for the woman the first step is *renunciation*. She must give up with a good grace the exaggeration and romance of love-making, and accept in its place that far better tenderness which is the repose of passion, and which springs from the tranquil depths of a man’s best nature.

The warmest-hearted and most unselfish women soon learn to accept quiet trust and the loyalty of a loving life as the calmest and happiest condition of marriage; and the men who are sensible enough to rely on the good sense of such wives sail round the gushing adorers, both for true affection and comfortable tranquillity.

Just let a young wife remember that her husband necessarily is under a certain amount of bondage all day; that his interests compel him to look pleasant under all circumstances to offend none, to say no hasty word, and she will see that when he reaches his own fireside he wants most of all to have this strain removed to be at ease; but this he cannot be if he is continually afraid of wounding his wife’s sensibilities by forgetting some outward and visible token of his affection for her. Besides, she pays him but a poor compliment in refusing to believe what he does not continually assert; and by fretting for what it is unreasonable to desire she deeply wrongs herself, for—

“A woman moved is like a fountain
troubled,
Muddy, ill-seeming, thick, bereft of
beauty.”

Shall our Daughters have Dowries?

THOSE who occupy themselves reading that writing on the wall which we call “signs of the times” may ponder awhile the question which Mr. Messinger puts with such plaintive appeal to the parents of this generation: “Shall our daughters have dowries?” But in the very commencement of his argument he abandons the case he has voluntarily taken up, and enters a plea, not for the daughters, but for the young men who may wish to marry the

daughters. Also in urging upon parents the duty of endowing their daughters he seems to have lost sight of the fact that "dowry," in its very spirit and intention, does not propose to care for the husband, but is solely in the interest of the wife.

He asserts, doubtless with accuracy, that the average income of young men is \$1,100 a year, and he finds in this fact a sufficient reason for the decrease of marriage among them. It is no reason at all; for a large and sensible proportion of young men do marry and live happily and respectably on \$1,100 a year, and those who cannot do so are very clearly portrayed by Mr. Messinger, and very little respected by any sensible young woman.

But it is not to be believed that they form any preponderating or influential part of that army of young men who are the to-morrow of our great republic. Let any reader count, from such young men as are known to him, the number who would divide their \$1,100 as Mr. Messinger supposes them to do:—

Dress for self and wife \$600
Apartments 400
Amusements 100

I venture to say the proportion would be very small indeed.

For the majority of young men know that nothing worth having is lost in the sharing. They meet in their own circle some modest, home-making girl whom they love so truly that they can tell her exactly what their income is, and then they find out that their own ideas of economy were crude and extravagant compared with the wondrous ways and means which reveal themselves to a loving woman's comprehension of the subject. The Oranges, Rutherford, and every suburb of New York are full of pretty little homes supported without worry, and with infinite happiness, upon \$1,100 a year, and perhaps, indeed, upon less money.

The difficulty with the class of young men whose case Mr. Messinger pleads is one deserving of no sympathy. It is a difficulty evoked by vanity and self-conceit, of which Fashion and Mrs. Grundy are the bugbears. Why should a young man capable of making only \$1,100 a year expect to marry a girl whose parents are rich enough to guard her "from every wind of heaven, lest it visit her face too roughly"? "Is it fair treatment of the expected husband," Mr. Messinger asks, that a girl "should be habituated to live without work and then be handed over to her husband with nothing but her clothing and bric-à-brac?" Yes, it is quite fair treatment. If the husband with his \$1,100 a year elects to marry a girl not habituated to work, he does it of his own choice: the father of the girl is probably not at all desirous of his alliance; then why should the father deprive himself of the results of his own labor and economy to undo the folly and vanity of the young man's selection? As for the girl, if she has deliberately preferred her lover to her father, mother, home, and to all the advantages of wealth, she has the desire of her heart. It may be quite fair that she should have this desire, but it may be very unfair that her father, mother, and perhaps her brothers and sisters, should be robbed to make her desire less self-sacrificing to her. For if the young man with his poverty is acceptable to both the daughter and her parents, the latter may be safely trusted to do all that is right in the circumstances.

The most objectionable part of Mr. Messinger's argument is the servile and mercenary aspect in which it places marriage. "What equality can exist," he asks, "where one (the man) supplies all the means of subsistence and performs all the labor?" That a husband should provide the means of subsistence is the very Magna Charta of honorable marriage; and nine hundred and ninety-nine men out of a thousand so accept it. It is the precise point on which all true husbands feel the most keenly sensitive. They want no other man—no matter what his relationship or friendship—to support their wives. And under no circumstances does the husband perform all the labor resulting from a marriage. That he may be a true man, a father and a citizen, it is necessary that he have a home; and in the care of the home, in the bringing-forth and the bringing-up of the family, in the constant demands upon her love and sympathy, the wife performs a never-ceasing multitude of duties that tax her heart and her body in every direction,—a labor of love in comparison with which her husband's daily routine over his "entries" or his "orders" is a trifling drain of vitality. For a wife and mother must keep every faculty and feeling "at attention;" but a clerk over his ledger keeps a dozen faculties on the premises to do the work of one. And in behalf of all true and trusted wives I deny in totality the idea that they go to their husbands with "painful shrinking" for the money necessary to carry on the mutual home, or that there is in any beloved wife's heart the most fleeting thought of "dependence." Mr. Messinger does a great and shameful wrong to the majority of husbands and wives by such an assertion.

Indeed, this gentleman's experience seems to have been an unusually sad one, nine out of ten of his friends having died in early middle age from the undue expenditure of nerve and vital force in their efforts to provide for their families in what they doubtless considered a suitable manner; and he evidently thinks that if their wives had been dowered this result would probably have been averted. It is extremely improbable. The wife's small income would far more likely have led to a still more extravagant way of living; for the genius of the American is to live for to-day and take care for the morrow when the morrow comes.

In many respects it is the genius of the age. Old forms of thought and action are in a state of transition. No one can tell what to-morrow may bring forth. The social conditions which inspired the fathers of the past to save for their posterity are passing away; and I speak from knowledge when I assert that they were often conditions of domestic misery and wrong, and that growing children suffered much under them. Suppose a father has two daughters and three sons; must he curtail the daughters in the education and pleasures of their youth, must he limit the three

boys at home and at college, in order to give a sum of money to some unknown young man who will doubtless vow that his daughter's heart and person are more than all the world to him? If she be not more than all the world to him, he has no right to marry her; and if she be, what can be added to a gift so precious?

The tendency of the time is to dishonor marriage in every way; but the deepest wrong, the most degrading element that can be introduced, is to make it dependent upon dowries or any other financial consideration. We must remember also that in England, where dowry has been a custom, it was one not particularly affecting those classes whose daughters are likely to marry clerks upon small salaries. It was the provision made by landed gentry for their daughters, and they exacted in return an equally suitable settlement from the expectant husband. If the father gave a sum of money to the bride, the bridegroom generally gave the dower-house, with the furniture, silver, linen, etc., which would make it a proper home for her widowhood. Many a marriage has been broken off because the bridegroom would not make such settlements as the father considered the dower demanded.

Mr. Messinger acknowledges that the cost of living was never so small as at this day, and that the difficulty in the way of young men marrying is "purely one of insane imitation and competition." But there is no necessity for this insane competition; and why provide an unusual and special remedy for what is purely optional? Nobody compels the young husband to live as if his income was \$11,000 instead of \$1,100. Of his own free will he sacrifices his life to his vanity, and there is no justice in attempting his relief by dowering his perhaps equally guilty wife out of the results of another man's industry and economy.

Dowry is an antiquated provision for daughters, behind the genius of the age, incompatible with the dignity of American men and the intelligence and freedom of American women. Besides, there are very likely to be two, three, four, or more daughters in a house; how could a man of moderate means save for all of them? And what would become of the sons? The father who gives his children a loving, sensible mother, who provides them with a comfortable home, and who educates fully all their special faculties, and teaches them the cunning in their ten fingers, dowers his daughters far better than if he gave them money. He has funded for them a provision that neither a bad husband nor an evil fate can squander. He has done his full duty, and every good girl will thankfully so accept it.

As for the young men who could imagine themselves spending, out of \$1,100, \$700 upon dress and amusements, neither the world, nor any sensible woman in it, will be the worse for their celibacy. For if they take a wife, it will doubtless be some would-be stylish, foolish virgin, whose soft hands are of no earthly use except as ring-stands and glove-stretchers. It is such marriages that are failures. It is in such pretentious homes that love and moderate means cannot live happily together. It is in such weak hands that Pandora's box shuts, not on hope, but on despair.

The brave, sensible youth does not fear to face life and all its obligations on \$1,100 a year. With love it is enough to begin with. Hope, ambition, industry, good fortune, are his sureties for the future. However well educated he may be, he knows that in his own class he will find lovely women equally well educated. They may be teaching, clerking, sewing, but they are his peers. He has no idea of marrying a young lady accustomed to servants and luxury, and the question of dower never occurs to him. The good girl who supplements his industry by her economy, who cheers him with her sympathy, who shares all his thoughts and feelings, and crowns his life with love and consolation, has all the dowry he wants. And this is an opinion founded on a long life of observation,—an opinion that fire cannot burn out of me.

The Ring Upon the Finger

RINGS were probably the first ornaments ever worn, though in the earliest ages they had a meaning far beyond mere adornment. The stories of Judah and Tamar, of Pharaoh and Joseph, of Ahasuerus and Haman, show that as pledges of good faith, as marks of favor, and as tokens of authority, they were the recognized symbols. The fashion was an Eastern one, for the Jews were familiar with it before their sojourn in Egypt; indeed, it may have been one of those primeval customs which Shem, Ham, and Japhet saved from the wreck of an earlier world. Certainly the people of Syria and the lords of Palestine and Tyre used rings in the earliest times; and it is remarkable that they bore the same emblem which ancient Mexican rings bear,—the constellation of Pisces. As an ornament, however, the ring is least important; it is an emblem. The charmed circle has potency and romance.

Great faith in all ages has been placed in charmed rings. Greeks and Romans possessed them, and the Scandinavian nations had a superstitious faith in such amulets; indeed, as chronicles declare, it is hard to compute how much William was indebted for his victory over Harold to the influence of the ring he wore, which had been blessed and hallowed. As curative agencies, rings have also played a curious part. Until the Georgian era, rings blessed by the King or Queen on Good Friday were thought to control epilepsy and other complaints, and something of this secret power is still acknowledged by the superstitious, who wear around their necks rings or

coins that have been blessed. Rings have also been agencies for death, as well as for life. In all ages they have been receptacles for subtle poisons, and thus Hannibal and Demosthenes armed themselves against an extremity of evil fortune.

In the life of the English Queen Elizabeth, rings had an extraordinary importance. She was notified of her ascension to the throne by the presentation of Mary's ring. The withholding of the ring sent by Essex caused her to die in a passion of remorse and re-awakened affection; and no sooner was the great struggle over than her ring was taken from her scarcely cold finger and flung out of the window to Sir John Harrington, who hastened over the Border with it to the Scottish James.

There are some curious traditions regarding the stones usually set in rings. The ruby or carbuncle was thought to guard against illness. The sapphire was the favorite of churchmen, and was thought to inspire pure desires. Epiphanes says the first tables of the Law were written on sapphires. The emerald bestowed cheerfulness and increased wealth. The opal was said to make a man invisible, the jacinth to procure sleep, and the turquoise to appease quarrels between man and wife. Things are much changed, however, since heathen sages and Rosicrucian alchemists defined the qualities and powers of gems. We have commercial "rings" now, which laugh emerald ones to scorn as means of procuring wealth. If the opal could make a man invisible, it might be popular on the first of a month, but we have better narcotics than the jacinth, while the elaborateness of our women's toilets gives husbands manifold opportunities of peace-making, quite as successful as the turquoise.

The Jews first used it in marriage. For this purpose they required it to have a certain value, and to be finally and fully purchased. If it was bought on credit, or taken as a gift, its power was destroyed. The Christian Church early adopted the custom of the marriage ring. It was placed first on the thumb, in the name of the "Father;" then removed to the first finger, in the name of the "Son;" to the third with the name of the "Holy Ghost;" and the "Amen" fixed its place on the fourth.

Rings were also the emblem of spiritual marriage and dignity as early as the third century. In the Romish Church the Episcopal ring is of gold set with a rich gem. The Pope has two rings, one bearing the likeness of St. Peter, used for ordinary business; the other bearing a cross, and the heads of both Peter and Paul, and the reigning Pope's name and arms. It is used only for Bulls, and is broken at the death of the Pontiff; and a new one given by the city of Rome to his successor. These rings of spiritual office were frequently worn on the thumb, and when the tomb of Bede was opened in May, 1831, a large thumb-ring was found where the right hand had fallen to dust.

The ring has been used not only for carnal and spiritual weddings, but also for commercial ones. For six hundred years the Doges of Venice married, with a gold ring, the Adriatic and its rich commerce to their city on the sea. As an emblem of delegated or transmitted power, the ring has also played a remarkable part in human affairs. Pharaoh and Ahasuerus in Biblical records are examples. Alexander transferred his kingdom to Perdicas with his ring. When Cæsar received the head of Pompey, he also received his ring, and when Richard the Second resigned his crown to Henry of Lancaster, he did so by giving him his ring. The coronation ring of England is of gold, in which is set a large violet ruby, carved with the cross of St. George. The custom of engraving sacred emblems upon rings for common wear was angrily reproved by so early a sage as Pythagoras; and this heathen's delicacy about sacred things is commended to the notice of those women of our own day, who toss the holy symbol of our faith around the toilet tables, and wear it in very unconsecrated places.

However, I have said enough to prove that the ring upon our finger is a link between us and the centuries beyond the flood. We cannot escape this tremendous solidarity of the human race. We are part of all that has been, and the generations that follow us will look back to us and say, "They were our fathers, and we are their heirs, and lo, we are all one!"

Flirting Wives

IF some good and thoughtful woman who died fifty years ago could return to this world, what in our present life would most astonish her? Would it be the wonders of steam, electricity, and science; the tyranny of the working classes, or the autocracy of servants? No! It would be the amazing development of her own sex,—the preaching, lecturing, political women; the women who are doctors and lawyers; who lose and win money on horses, or in stocks and real estate; the women who talk slang, and think it an accomplishment; who imitate men's attire and manners; who do their athletic exercises in public; and, perhaps more astonishing than all, the women who make marriage the cloak for much profitable post-nuptial flirtation.

For her own sex engaged in business, she might find excuses or even admiration; and even for the unfeminine girls of the era, she might plead Mrs. Poyser's opinion, that "the women are made to suit the men." But for young wives notorious for their flirting and their "followers," she could have nothing but unqualified scorn and condemnation. For the sentiment demanding

absolute fidelity in a wife may be said to have the force of a human instinct; in all ages it has exacted from her an avoidance of the very appearance of evil. Therefore a good woman in the presence of a frivolous flirting wife feels as if a law of nature were being broken before her eyes; since behind the wife stands the possible mother, and the claims of family, race, and caste, as well as of conjugal honor, are all in her keeping.

Without any exaggeration it may be said that wife-errantry is now as common as knight-errantry once was. The young men of to-day have discovered the personal advantage and safety there is in the society of another man's wife. They transpose an old proverb, and practically say: "Fools marry, and wise men follow their wives." For, if the husband be only complacent, it is such a safe thing to flirt with a pretty wife. Young girls are dangerous and might lure them into matrimony; but they have no fear of bigamy. They can whisper sweet words to a gay, married flirt; they can walk, and talk, and dance, and ride with her; they can lounge in her dusky drawing-room or in her opera box, and no one will ask them the reason why, or make any suggestion about their "intentions."

How far this custom affects the morals of the woman is not at first obvious; but we must insist on this recognized premise: "Society has laid down positive rules regarding the modesty of women, and apart from these rules it is hard to believe modesty can exist. For all conventional social laws are founded on principles of good morals and good sense; and to violate them without a sufficient reason destroys nicety of feeling, sweetness of mind, and self-respect." It is no excuse to say that propriety is old-maidish, and that men like smart women, or that no harm is intended by their flirtations. The question is: Can married women preserve their delicacy of thought and their nobleness of manner; can they be truly loyal to their husbands and to themselves throughout the different phases of a recognized flirtation? It is an impossible thing.

Suppose a beautiful girl to be wooed and won by a man in every way suitable to her desires. She has accepted his love and his name, and vowed to cleave to him, and to him only, till death parts them. The wooing has been mainly done in full dress, at balls and operas, or in hours tingling with the expectancy of such conditions. The aroma of roses, the rustle of silks and laces, the notes of music, the taste of bon-bons and sparkling wines, were the atmosphere; and the days and weeks went by to the sense of flying feet in a ballroom, or to enchanted loiterings in greenhouses, and behind palms and flowers on decorated stairways.

The young wife is unwilling to believe that marriage has other and graver duties. She has been taught to live in the present only, and she is, therefore, cynical and apathetic concerning all things but dress and amusements. The husband has to return to business, which has been somewhat neglected; arrears of duty are to be met. He feels it necessary to attend to the question of supplies; he is, likely, a little embarrassed by the long holiday of wooing and honeymooning, and he would be grateful for some retrenchment and retirement, for the purpose of home-making.

The young wife has no such intentions; she resents and contradicts them on every occasion; and after the first pang of disappointment is over, he finds it the most prudent and comfortable plan to be indifferent to her continued frivolity. He is perhaps even flattered to find her so much admired; perhaps, in his heart, rather thankful to be relieved from the trouble of admiring her. As for any graver thoughts, he concludes that his wife is no worse than A's and B's and C's wives; that she is quite able to take care of herself, and that in a multitude of adorers there is safety.

Thus, in a majority of cases, begins the career of the married flirt. But the character is not a corollary of marriage, if the proper conditions were present when the wife was a young woman. There is no salvation in the Order of Matrimony; no miracles are wrought at the altar of Grace Church, or at St. Thomas's. She that is frivolous, giddy, and selfish is likely to continue frivolous, giddy, and selfish; and marriage merely supplies her with a wider field and greater opportunities for the indulgence of her vanity and greed.

She re-enters society with every advantage of youth, beauty, wealth, and liberty; released from the disabilities under which unmarried girls lie; armed with new powers to dazzle and to conquer. No longer a competitor for a matrimonial prize, she is a rival ten times more dangerous than she was. Setting aside the wrong done to the sacredness of the connubial relation, she now becomes the most subtle enemy to the prospects of all the unmarried girls in her set. What is the bud to the perfect rose? The timid, blushing maiden pales and subsides before the married siren who has the audacity and charm of a conscious intelligence. It is not without good reason that special balls and parties have come into fashion for social buds; they are the necessary sequence to the predominance of married sirens, with whom in a mixed society no young girl can cope. They have the floor and the partners; they monopolize all the attention, and their pleasure is of the greatest importance. And their pleasure is to flirt—to flirt in all places and at all hours.

In vain will some young aspirant to marriage display in the presence of the married flirt her pretty accomplishments. She may sing her songs, and play her mandolin never so sweetly, but the young men slip away with some one or other of the piquant brides of the past year. And in the privacy of the smoking-room it is the brides, and not the young girls, who are talked about—what dresses they wear or are likely to wear, how their hair is done, the history of the jewels which adorn them, and the clever things they have said or implied.

Before we condemn too much the society girls of the time, we ought to consider the new enemy who stands in the way of their advancement to marriage. Is it not quite natural that the most courageous girls should refuse the secondary place to which married flirts assign them, and

endeavor to meet these invaders with their own weapons? If so, much of the forwardness of the present young girl is traceable to the necessity forced upon her by these married competitors. For it is a fact that young men go to the latter for advice and sympathy. They tell them about the girls they like, and their fancies are nipped in the bud. For the married flirt's first instinct is to divest all other women of that air of romance with which the nobility and chivalry of men have invested womanhood for centuries. So she points out with a pitiless exactness all the small arts which other women use; and is not only a rival to some young girl, but a traitor to her whole sex.

And yet she is not only tolerated but indulged. People giving entertainments know that their success will be in a large measure dependent upon the number of beautiful young wives present. They know the situation is all wrong, but they are sure they cannot either fight the wrong, or put it right; and in the meantime their particular ball will not increase the evil very much. Not fifty years ago it was the young beauties that were considered and looked after, and the gentlemen asked to an entertainment were asked with reference to the unmarried girls; for it was understood that any married women present would, of course, be wrapped up in their own husbands. Then a wife accepting attentions from one young man after another would have aroused the contempt and disapproval of every man and woman present.

Vanity in the first place leads young wives to flirting, but grosser motives soon follow. For whatever other experiences matrimony brings, it generally stimulates a woman's love of money; and the married siren soon makes her "followers" understand that she is "a very practical little woman, and does not care for a sonnet, or a serenade, or a bouquet of fresh flowers." A summer's cruise in a fine yacht, a seat on a coach, an opera box, a jewel, dinners, drives, and luncheons, are the blackmail which the married flirt expects, in return for her sighs, sentiment, and advice.

It is indeed curious to note the change of fashion in this respect. Let any one turn over the novels of half a century ago, and he will see that the favorite plan for compromising a woman's honor was to induce her to accept the loan of money, or the gift of jewels. If the unfortunate heroine did so, no novelist would have dared to offer an apology for her. But this age of luxury and laxity has exploded the scrupulous delicacy of the Evelinas and Cecelias of the old tales, and the splendidly free feminine Uhlans of our modern society laugh to scorn the prim modesty of the Richardsonian standard. They assert, if not in words yet by their actions, the right of a woman to make her fascinations serviceable to her.

Some married women contend that their flirtations are absolutely innocent friendships. But in all stations of society it is a dangerous thing for two people of the opposite sex to chant together the litany of the church of Plato. The two who could do it safely would be the very two who would never dream of such an imprudence. Those who enter into "friendships" of this kind, with what they think are the most innocent intentions, should sharply arrest themselves as soon as they are "talked about." For in social judgments, the dictum that "people talked about generally get what they deserve" is true, however unjust it may appear to be.

Another class of married flirts scorn to make any apology, or any pretence of mere friendship. They stand upon the emancipation of women, and the right of one sex to as much liberty as the other. This kind of siren boldly says, "she does not intend to be a slave like her mother, and her grand-mother. She does not propose to tie herself, either to a house or a cradle." She travels, she lives in yachts and hotels, and she does not include a nursery in her plans. She talks of elective affinities, natural emotions of the heart, and contrasts the opportunities of such conditions with the limitations and the monotony of domestic relations. She makes herself valueless for the very highest natural duties of womanhood, and then talks of her enfranchisement! Yes, she has her freedom, and what does it mean? More dresses and jewelry, more visits and journeys; while the whole world of parental duties and domestic tendernesses lies in ruins at her feet.

The relegation of the married flirt to her proper sphere and duties is beyond the power of any single individual. Society could make the necessary protest, but it does not; for if Society is anything, it is non-interfering. It looks well to it that the outside, the general public appearance of its members is respectable; with faults not found out it does not trouble itself. A charge must be definitely made before it feels any necessity to take cognizance of it. And Society knows well that these married sirens draw like magnets. Besides, each entertainer declares: "I am not my sister's keeper, nor am I her Inquisitor or Confessor. If her husband tolerates the pretty woman's vagaries, what right have I, what right has any one, to say a word about her?"

But it is a fact that, if Society frowned on wives who arrogate to themselves the privileges both of young girls and of wives, the custom would become stale and offensive. If it would cease to recognize young married women who are on the terms with their husbands described by Millamant in "The Way of the World,"—"as strange as if they had been married a long time, and as well bred as if they had never been married at all,"—young married women would behave themselves better. It is generally thought that Mr. Congreve wrote his plays for a very dissolute age; in reality, they seem to have been written for a decorous, rather strait-laced generation, if we compare it with our own.

Mothers-in-Law

MOTHERS-IN-LAW are the mothers for whom there is no law, no justice, no sympathy, nor yet that share of fair play which an average American is willing to grant, even to an open adversary. Every petty punster, every silly witling, considers them as a ready-made joke; and the wonder and the pity of it is that abuse so unmerited and so long continued has called forth no champions from that sex which owes so much to woman, in every relation of life.

The condition of mother-in-law is one full of pathos and self-abnegation, and all the reproach attached to it comes from those whose selfishness and egotism ought to render their testimony of small value. A young man, for instance, falls in love with a girl who appears to him the sum of all perfections,—perfections, partly inherited from, and partly cultivated by, the mother at whose side she has lived for twenty years. She is the delight of her mother's heart, she fills all her hopes and dreams for the future; and the girl herself, believes that nothing can separate her from a mother so dear and so devoted.

While the man is wooing the daughter, this wondrous capability for an absorbing affection strikes him as a very pretty thing. In the first place, it keeps the mother on his side; in the second, he looks forward to supplying this capability with a strictly personal object. At this stage his future mother-in-law is a very pleasant person, for he is uncomfortably conscious of the Beloved One's father and brothers. He is then thankful for any encouragement she may give him. He gladly takes counsel with her; flatters her opinions, makes her presents, and so works upon her womanly instincts concerning love affairs that she stands by his side when he has to "speak to papa," and through her favor and tact the rough places are made smooth, and the crooked places plain. Until the marriage is over, and the longed-for girl his wife, there is no one so important in the lover's eyes as the girl's mother.

Suddenly all is changed. When the young people return from the bridal trip there is a different tone and a different atmosphere. The young husband is now in his own house, and spreading himself like a peacock in full feather. He thinks "mamma" too interfering. He resents the familiarity with which she speaks to *his* wife. He feels as if her speculation about their future movements was an impertinence. He says without a blush that her visit was "a bore." And the bride, being flattered by his desire for no company but her own, admits that "dear mamma is fussy and effusive." Both have forgotten the days in which the young husband was a great deal of a bore to his mother-in-law,—when indeed it was very hard for her to tolerate his presence; and both have forgotten how she, to secure their happiness, sacrificed her own wishes and prejudices.

How often does this poor mother go to see her child before she realizes she is a bore? How many snubs and heart-aches does she bear ere she comprehends the position? She hopes against despair. She weeps, and wipes her tears away; she tries again, only to be again wounded. Her own husband frets a little with her, and then with a touch of anger at his ungrateful child, advises the mother "to let her alone." But by and by there is a baby, and she can no longer keep away. She has a world of loving cares about the child and its mother. She is sure no one can take her place now. She is very much mistaken. The baby is a new kind of baby; there has never been one quite such a perfect pattern before; and the parents—exalted above measure at the perfection they alone are responsible for—regard her pride and delight as some infringement of their new honors and responsibilities. Happiness has only hardened them; and after a little, the mother and the mother-in-law understands her loss, and humbly refrains from interfering. Or, if she has an imprudent tongue, she speaks unadvisedly with it, and her words bite home, and the "mother" is forgotten, and the "in-law" remains, to barb every ill-natured word and account for every selfish unkindness.

Of course, in a relationship which admits of endless varieties, this description fits only a certain number. But it is a very large number; for there are few families who will not be able to recall some such case among their members or their acquaintances. Still, many daughters do more virtuously, and cherish a loyal affection for their old home. If they are wise and loving and specially unselfish, they will likely carry their matrimonial bark safely through those narrow shallows which separate the two households. But the trouble is that newly married people are both selfish and foolish. They feel themselves to be the only persons of consequence, and think that all things ought to be arranged for their pleasure. The solemn majesty of the young wife's housekeeping is not to be criticised, qualified, or inspected; the new-made householder does not believe that the "earth is the Lord's," or even the children of men's; it is all his own. And their friends tacitly agree to smile at this egotism awhile, because all the world really does love a lover; and every one is willing to grant the bride and bridegroom some short respite from the dreary cares and every-day business of life.

Two points are remarkable in this persistent antagonism to the mother-in-law. The first is that the husband who is often specially vindictive against his wife's mother has very little to say against her male relatives. If the girl he marries is motherless, he does not quarrel with his father-in-law; though he may be quite as interfering as any mother-in-law could be. Yet if the girl, instead of being motherless, is fatherless, the husband at once begins to show his love for his wife by a systematic disrespect towards her mother. Yet perhaps a month previously he had considered her a very amiable lady, he had shown her many courtesies, he had asked her advice about all the details of his marriage. What makes him, a little later, accuse her of every domestic fault? How is it that she has suddenly become "so self-opinionated"? Never before had

he discovered that she treats his wife like a child, and himself as an appendage. And how does he manage to make his bride also feel that "dear mamma is trying, and so unable to understand things." It is a mystery that ends, however, in the mother-in-law being made to feel that her new relative totally disapproves of her. The truth is, the lover was afraid of the men of his wife's family before marriage. They might seriously have interfered with his intentions. After marriage he knows they will be civil to him for the sake of his wife. Then, the women of the family were useful to him before marriage, after it he can do without them. He has got the woman he was so eager to get by any means, and he wishes to have her entirely. A smile, or a word, or an act of kindness to any one else, is so much taken from his rights. He desires not only to usurp her present and her future, but also her past.

The other remarkable point is the unjust shifting of all the mother-in-law's shortcomings to the shoulders of the wife's mother; this is especially unjust, because not only the newspapers of the day, but also the private knowledge of every individual, furnishes abundant testimony that it is not the wife's mother, but the husband's mother, who is at the bottom of nine-tenths of the domestic misery arising from this source. The wife's mother with small encouragement will like, even love, the man who has chosen her daughter above all other women. The husband's mother never really likes her son's wife. And young wives are apt to forget how bitterly hard it is for a mother to give her son up, at once and forever, to a girl whom she does not like in any way. Perhaps hitherto the son and mother have been every one, and everything to each other, and it is only human that the latter should have to battle fiercely and constantly with an involuntary jealousy, and a cruel quicksightedness for small faults in his wife. It is only human that she should try to make trouble, and enjoy the fact that her son is less happy with his wife than he was with her, and that he comes to her for comfort in his disappointment. The love of a mother is often a very jealous love; and a jealous mother is just as unreasonable as a jealous wife; she can make life bitterly hard for her son's wife, and, to do her justice, she very often does so. Then if the wife—wounded and imprudent—goes to her own mother with her sorrows and wrongs, it is the natural attitude of the husband to shift the blame from his own mother to his wife's mother. There are indeed so many ways by which this misery can enter a household that it is impossible to define them; for there is just variety enough in every case to give an individuality of suffering to each.

What, then, is to be done? Let us admit at once that our relations do give us half the pain and sorrow we suffer in life; but each may do something to reduce the liability. We may remember that all such quarrels come from excess of love, and that a quarrel springing from love is more hopeful than one springing from hate. As mothers-in-law, we may tell ourselves that when our children are married we no longer have the first right in them. The young people must be left to make the best of their life, and we must never interfere, nor ever give advice until it is asked for. Another irritation, little suspected, is the palpable forcing forward of the new relationship. On both sides it is well to be in no hurry to claim it. A girl takes a man for better or for worse, but does not therefore take all his relations. Love for her husband does not include admiration for all within his kindred; nor will it, until the millennium makes all tempers perfect. And, again, a man does not like to be dragooned into a filial feeling for his wife's family. Many a man would like his new relatives better if they left him with a sense of perfect freedom in the matter.

The main point is that men should put a stop to a traditional abuse that affects every woman in every household. They can do it! Many an honest, manly fellow would burn with shame if he would only consider how often he has not only permitted, but also joined in, the silly, unjust laughter which miserable punsters and negro minstrels and disappointed lovers and other incapables fling at the women of his own household. For if a man is married, or ever hopes to be married, his own mother is, or must be, a mother-in-law. If he has sisters their destiny will likely put them in the same position. The fairest young bride has the prospect before her; the baby daughter in the cradle may live to think her own mother a bore, or to think some other mother one, if there is not a better understanding about a relationship which is far indeed from being a laughable one. On the contrary, the initiation to it is generally a sacrifice, made with infinite heart-ache and anxiety, and with many sorrowful tears.

In the theatres, in the little circles of which every man's home is the centre, in all places where thoughtless fools turn women and motherhood into ridicule, it is in the power of two or three good men to make the habit derogatory and unfashionable. They can cease to laugh at the wretched little jokes, and treat with contempt the vulgar spirit that repeats them. For the men who say bitter things about mothers-in-law are either selfish egotists, who have called trouble to themselves from this source, or they are moral imbeciles, repeating like parrots fatuous jests whose meaning and wickedness they do not even understand.

Good and Bad Mothers

THE difference between good and bad mothers is so vast and so far-reaching that it is no exaggeration to say that the good mothers of this generation are building the homes of the next generation, and that the bad mothers are building the prisons. For out of families

nations are made; and if the father be the head and the hands of a family, the mother is the heart. No office in the world is so honorable as hers, no priesthood so holy, no influence so sweet and strong and lasting.

For this tremendous responsibility mother-love has always been sufficient. The most ignorant women have trusted to it; and the most learned have found it potential when all their theories failed. And neither sage men nor wise women will ever devise anything to take the place of mother-love in the rearing of children. If there be other good things present, it glorifies them; if there be no other good thing—it is sufficient. For mother-love is the spirit of self-sacrifice even unto death, and self-sacrifice is the meat and drink of all true and pure affection.

Still, this momentous condition supposes some central influence, some obligation on the child's part which will reciprocate it; and this central influence is found to be in *obedience*. There was once a child in Jewry who was called "wonderful," and yet the most significant fact recorded of his boyhood is that he "was subject unto his parents." Indeed nothing else is told of the child, and we are left to conclude that in the pregnant fact of his boyish obedience lay the secret of his future perfect manhood. Unselfish love in the mother! cheerful obedience in the children! in whatever home these forces are constantly operative, that home cannot be a failure. And mother-love is not of the right kind, nor of the highest trend, unless it compels this obedience.

The assertion that affectionate firmness and even wholesome chastisement is unnecessary with our advanced civilization is a specious and dangerous one. The children of to-day have as many rudimentary vices as they had in the days of the patriarchs; as a general thing they are self-willed and inclined to evil from their cradles; greedy without a blush, and ready to lie as soon as they discover the use of language. A good mother does not shut her eyes to these facts; she accepts her child as imperfect, and trains it with never-ceasing love and care for its highest duties. She does not call impudence "smartness," nor insubordination "high spirit," nor selfishness "knowing how to take care of itself," nor lying and dishonesty "sharpness." She knows, if the child is to be father to the man, what kind of a man such a child will make.

How to manage young children; how to strengthen them physically; how best to awaken their intellects, engage their affections, and win their confidence; how to make home the sweetest spot on earth, a place of love, order, and repose, a temple of purity where innocence is respected, and where no one is permitted to talk of indecent subjects or to read indecent books,—these are the duties of a good mother; and her position, if so filled, is one of dignity and grave importance. For it is on the hearthstone she gives the fine healthy initial touch to her sons and daughters that is not effaced through life, and that makes them blessed in their generation.

There is another duty, a very sacred one, which some mothers, however good in all other respects, either thoughtlessly or with mistaken ideas, delegate to others, the religious training of their children. No Sunday-school and no church can do it for them. The child that learns "Our Father" at its mother's knee, that hears from mother's lips the heroic and tender stories of the Bible, has a wellspring of religious faith in his soul that no after life, however hard and fast and destructive, can dry up. It is inconceivable, then, how a mother can permit any other woman to deprive her of an influence over her children nothing can destroy; of a memory in their lives so sweet that when every other memory is withered and approaching decay, it will still be fresh and green,—yes, even to the grave's mouth. Family! Country! Humanity! these three, but the greatest of the three is Family; and the heart of the family is the good mother. Happy the children who have one! With them

"faith in womankind
Beats with their blood, and trust in all things
high
Comes easy to them."

But if the grand essential to a good mother be self-denying, self-effacing love, this is a bad era for its development. Selfishness and self-seeking is the spirit of the time, and its chilling poison has infected womanhood, and touched even the sacred principle of maternity. In some women it assumes the form of a duty. They feel their own mental culture to be of supreme importance; they wish to attend lectures, and take lessons, and give themselves to some special study. Or the enslaved condition of their own sex troubles them; they bear on their minds the oppressed shop-girls of America, or the secluded odalisques in some Eastern seraglio, or they have ecclesiastic proclivities and take the chair at church meetings, or political ones, and deliver lectures before their special club on women's disabilities. In these and many other ways they put the natural mission of womanhood aside as an animal instinct, not conducive to their mental development.

Now, no one will object to women's devoting themselves to works of religion and charity; but this devotion should come before marriage. If they have assumed the position of wifehood, it is a monstrous thing to hold themselves degraded by its consequences, or to consider the care of children a waste of their own life. The world can do without learned women, but it cannot do without good wives and mothers; and when married women prefer to be social ornaments and intellectual amateurs, they may be called philanthropists and scholars, but they are nevertheless moral failures, and bad mothers.

Society has put maternity out of fashion also, and considering the average society woman, it is perhaps just as well. No children are more forlorn and more to be pitied than the waifs of the woman whose life is given up to what she calls "pleasure." Humbler-born babies are nursed at their mother's breast and cradled in her loving arms. She teaches them to walk and to read. In

all their pain she soothes them; in all their joys she has a part; in all their wrongs "mother" is an ever-present help and comforter. The child of the fashionable woman is too often committed at once to the care of some stranger, who for a few dollars a month is expected to perform the mother's duty for her. If it does not suck the vitiated, probably diseased, milk of some peasant, it has the bottle and india-rubber mouthpiece, when the woman in charge chooses to give it. But she is often in a temper, or sleepy, or the milk is not prepared, or she is in the midst of a comfortable gossip, or she is dressing or feeding herself, and it is not to be expected she will put any sixteen-dollar-a-month baby before her own comfort or pleasure.

The child cannot complain of hunger, it can only cry, and very likely may be struck for crying. What these neglected little ones suffer from thirst is a matter painful to inquire into. The nurse, accustomed to drink her tea and her beer at all hours, does not, herself patronize cold water, and she never imagines the child needs it. Many a baby, after being tortured for hours with a feverish, consuming thirst, passes into the doctor's hands before the trouble is recognized. But if the child's own mother had been nursing it she would not have been long in finding out the cause of its impatient, urgent fretfulness.

Let any tender-hearted woman go into the parks and watch one of these unhappy children in the care of its nurse. The hot sun beats down on the small upturned face, and the ignorant creature in charge goes on with her flirtation, or her gossip, or her novel. The child may be at shrieking point from lying long in one position, but there is no one to comprehend its necessity. During those awful hours in which its teeth force their way through hot and swollen gums—hours which would bring from adults unwritable exclamations—the forsaken little sufferer is at the mercy of some sleepy, self-indulgent woman, who has no love for it. Why, indeed, should she? If it were a matter of catechism, how many educated women would be capable of nursing good-naturedly for weeks a fretful, sick child not their own?

As for these neglected babies of pleasure-seeking women, they suffer terribly, but then their mothers are having what they consider a perfectly lovely time, posing at the opera or gyrating in some ballroom, exquisitely dressed, and laughing as lightly as if there were no painful echoes from their neglected nurseries. For no nurse is apt to complain of her baby, she knows her business and her interest too well for that; she prefers to speak comfortable words, and vows the "little darling grows better and better every hour, God bless it!" and, so assured, the mother goes airily away, telling herself that her nurse is a perfect treasure. Whatever other nurses may do, she knows that her nurse is reliable. The fact is that, even where there are children in a nursery able to complain of the wrongs and cruelties they have to endure, they very seldom dare to do so. Mamma is a dear, beautiful lady, very far off; nurse is an ever-present power, capable of making them suffer still more. And mamma does not like to hear tales, she always appears annoyed at anything against nurse. They look into their mother's face with eyes full of their sad story, if she only had the heart to understand; but they dare not speak, and very soon they are remanded back to their cruel keeper with a kiss, and an injunction to "be good, and do as nurse tells them."

Consider the women to whom this class of mothers delegate their high office,—an office for which hardly any love or wisdom is sufficient. It would scarcely be possible in the whole world to find any persons more unfit for it. Taking this class as a whole, these very mothers are never tired of expatiating upon its gross immorality, deceitfulness, greed, and dishonesty; yet they do not hesitate to leave the very lives of their children in the charge of these women, whose first lessons to them are lying and deceit. It is a hideous system, and how hideous must that life called "pleasure" be that can thus put aside love, reason, conscience, and break to pieces a natural law so strong that in its purity it frequently proves more powerful than the law of self-preservation. Writing on this subject, Frederick James Grant, F. R. C. S., in his bold and original book, "From Our Dead Selves," tells of a fashionable mother who put her first child out to nurse, and who, when her second died at birth and was brought to her bedside in its coffin, was entirely interested—not in the child—but in the pretty lining and covering of the coffin. For it is one of the startling facts of this condition of motherhood that the poor infant left to some dreadful shrew, body and soul, has the very best care taken of its frills and coats and of the wraps in its baby carriage. For these things will be seen by other people's servants and commented on, and are therefore worthy of attention.

It is a strange state of society which tolerates this awful transfer of duty, and society will have the bill to pay as well as the cruel mother. These neglected children, whatever their birth, come really from the dangerous classes, and have a likelihood to drift there. For the first moral training of a child is the most important of all, and in these cases it is given by women gross both through ignorance and vice; whose relatives are very likely at the same time living in suspicious localities, or in prison wards. And, naturally enough, their first lessons to the children under them are to lie, to deceive, to commit small pilferings, and not be found out. They are ordered not to carry tales out of the nursery, or let mamma know what nurse does not want known. Bad language, bad habits, hatred, petty conciliations, meanness of every kind, are in the curriculum of any nursery left in the care of the women usually found in them.

No one need imagine that the evil thus wrought can be eradicated in future years by a higher class of teachers. The vicious seed is sown; it is next to impossible to go through the field of a child's mind and gather it up again. It has taken root, and unless it can be crowded out by a nobler growth, the harvest is certain. The mother, then, who prefers pleasure and society to her children, whom she hands over to wicked and cruel nurses, is herself wicked and cruel. She may stand before the world as the personification of refinement and delicacy and elegance, but she is really no better than her substitute; and she has no right to expect that her children will be

better. In some favorable cases there may come a redeeming power in future years, but in the main they will drift downward to their first moral impressions; and when they have become bad and unhappy men and women, they will not scruple to say, "From our mother cometh our misery." These are hard truths, yet one-half has not been told. For if it were not for the abounding number of good mothers, both rich and poor, this class of women would undermine all virtue, and everything lovely and of good report.

There was once an idea that mothers were the antiseptic quality in society, that they preserved its moral tone, by insisting that the language used and the subjects discussed before them should be such as were suitable for virtuous women. But there is one kind of bad mother to whom questionable subjects seem highly suitable. She discusses them without reserve in the presence of her daughters, and she makes her drawing-room the forum for women with queer domestic views, for "Physical Culture" women, and such-like characters. The things our grandmothers went down to their graves without knowing she talks about in unmistakable terms before unmarried girls. A certain mother who boldly defended her opinion that "girls should not be kept ignorant as a means for keeping them innocent," permitted her own daughter to be present during all the unsavory scandal of Vanity Fair. The child learned to watch with interest the doings of women of many seasons, and to listen with composure to very questionable stories. Before she was twelve years old she had become suspicious of the conduct of every woman, and when her teacher one day asked her, "Who was Moses?" she answered promptly, "The son of Pharaoh's daughter." "Not the son," corrected the teacher, "the adopted son. Pharaoh's daughter found him in the river Nile." "So she said," replied this premature woman,—suspicions of women's actions and a ready assumption of the very worst motives for them, being the lessons she had deduced from knowledge imparted before mind and experience were capable of receiving it.

It is often said that "ignorance is not innocence." True, but neither is knowledge innocence; it is most frequently the first step of guiltiness. What good can come of little children knowing the things which belong to maturity? Is any girl sweeter or even safer for knowing about the undercurrent of filth below the glittering crust of gilded society? The Chinese quarter is a fact, yet is there a mother who would like her daughter to visit it? But if it is not fit to visit, it is not fit to talk about. No one is ever the better for knowing of evil, unless they can do something to remedy it.

A good mother will shield her children from the consequences of their own ignorance, physical and moral, and she will just as carefully shield them from knowledge which is hurtful because premature,—just as fruit green and unripe is hurtful. And no guardianship is too close for this end. Mothers will generally admit this fact as regards the children of other people, but as to their own brood they cradle themselves in a generous belief of its incorruptibility. Their girls would never do as other girls do; and their girls are consequently permitted a license which they would think dangerous for any but their own daughters. Then some day there is a paragraph in one of the papers, and the men blame the man, and the women blame the girl, and all the time the mother is probably the guiltiest of the parties. She has stimulated her daughter's imagination in childhood, she has left her to the choice of her companions in youth, she has trusted her sacred duty to circumstances, she has indulged a vague hope concerning the honor and virtue of humanity, and thus satisfied her indolent neglect. But what right had she to expect that men would revere the treasure she herself left unguarded?

For there has been no special race made for this era; what Adam, Jacob, Samson, and David were, what Eve, Sarah, Rachel, Jael, and Bathsheba were, the men and women of to-day are, in all their essentials. Circumstances only have made them to differ; and nature laughs at circumstances, and goes back at any crisis to her first principles. Indeed, the good mother of to-day, instead of relaxing, must increase her care over her children. For never since the world began has youth been so catered to, never has it been surrounded by so many open temptations, never so much flattered, and yet at the same time never have the reins of discipline been so far relaxed. Now the spirit we evoke we must control, or else we must become its slave. If we are no longer to reverence the gray hairs of age; if young men are to drive the chariot of the sun, and young women are to be allowed to strip the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, then it is high time some system of education was invented which will put old heads upon young shoulders. Alas, this can never be, for education is a long and composite process, made up of home influences, surrounding circumstances, and early associations. When books and schools and teachers shall have done all they possibly can, high above every Gamaliel will sit the good mother,—the first influence, the first teacher, the first friend, and the last.

Unequal Marriages

IF there is a mistake peculiarly fatal to a young man's or a girl's future, it is that supreme act of social destruction called a *mésalliance*. Indeed it is not measurable by any of the usual conditions of life, and death itself would be a kindness compared with the long misery of some kinds of *mésalliances*. They may arise from inequalities of birth, differences in religious

faith, or great discrepancies in age; but whatever their occasion, they are always a far-reaching and irretrievable mistake; the mistake *par excellence* of any life.

An unequal marriage is not only the most fatal blunder of life, it is also the most common one; and although it is not very easy for a man to ruin himself with a single act, a foolish marriage will afford him at least one decided way. In regard to men's *mésalliances*, they cannot be said to be specially the temptation of youth. Foolish old men who marry their cooks, and foolish young men who burden themselves with some Casino divinity, keep up a very steady average. But the young man's mistake is much the worst of the two; for he has his whole life before him, and has probably made no provision against such a social suicide.

If an old man marries beneath his station and culture, he believes he is getting the wife he most desires; and if he is disappointed, he is at any rate near the end of life, and he either has no children to suffer from his folly, or they have already grown beyond its most painful reach. But a young man who binds himself to a woman who is every way beneath his own station, education, and professional ambition, is in a different case. In a very short time the disillusion of those senses begins under which he permitted mere physical beauty to bind him; and he knows that, as far as his future progress is concerned, he has put a millstone about his neck.

The effect of a social *mésalliance* on a girl is still worse. In the first place, it ought to be so; for she has to sin against the natural instinct of a good woman, which is always to marry above herself, an instinct which is, both physiologically and socially, noble. For a woman is less than a woman who does not consider the consequence of marriage, and provide in every way possible to her the best father for her offspring. And if she marries beneath herself socially, the almost certain presumption is that the social status of her husband is the measure of his intellectual abilities, and of his personal refinement also. And when a woman considers herself only in her marriage, and has no care for the circumstances to which she may doom her unborn children, she is an incarnation of animal selfishness.

Without stopping to analyze the sources of its disapproval, this is undoubtedly an instinctive motive for the persistent cold shouldering which society gives girls who degrade themselves by a *mésalliance*. It is obvious to every one that she has sinned against herself, her family, her class, and the highest instincts of her sex. Women have no pardon for such sinners; for they see not only the present wrong, they look forward also to the possible children of such a union. They understand that they will have to suffer all the limitations of poverty when they ought to have had all the advantages of wealth. They may possibly inherit their father's vulgar tastes and tendencies, or they may have to endure the misery of fine tastes without any opportunity to gratify them. For this premeditated sin against motherhood and against posterity, good women find it hard to tolerate the offender; for they know that a woman's honor is in her husband, and that her social station and her social life is determined by his.

When a girl is guilty of a *mésalliance*, it is sometimes said in extenuation that "she has married a man of noble disposition; and it is better to marry a poor, ignorant man, with a noble disposition, than a rich man who is selfish and vicious." If the alternative was a positive one, yes, but there is no need to make a choice between these characters. Men of refined habits and manners and good education may also have noble dispositions; and poor, ill-bred men have not always noble ones; at any rate, a good woman will always find in her own class just as good men as she will find in a class below her own.

All this danger is evident to parents. They know how fleeting passion and fancy are; and they rightly conceive that it is their duty by all possible means to prevent their daughter making an unworthy marriage. How far parents may lawfully interfere is a question not yet decided, nor yet easy to decide. The American idea of marriage is, theoretically, that every soul finds its companion soul, and lives happily ever after; and in this romantic search for a companion soul, young girls are allowed to roam about society, just when their instincts are the strongest and their reason the weakest. The French theory—to which the English is akin somewhat—is that a mother's knowledge is better than a girl's fancy; and that the wisdom that has hitherto chosen her teachers, physicians, spiritual guides, and companions, that has guided her through sickness and health, is not likely to fail in selecting the man most suitable for her husband.

This latter theory supposes women to love naturally any personable man who is their own, and who is kind to them; that is, if she has a virgin heart, and comes in this state from her lessons to her marriage duties. The American theory supposes girls to love by sympathy, and through soul attraction and personal attraction; consequently, our girls are let loose early—too early—to choose among a variety of Wills and Franks and Charlies; and the natural result is a great number of what are called "love matches" to which it must be acknowledged *mésalliances* are too often the corollary. Between these two theories, it is impossible to make a positive selection; for the bad of each is so bad, and the good of each so good that both alike are capable of the most unqualified praise and blame. It may, however, be safely asserted that the confidence every American girl has in her own power to choose her own husband helps to lessen the danger and to keep things right. For an honorable girl may be trusted with her own honor; and a dishonorable one, amid a number to choose from, may peradventure fare better than she deserves; for Fortune does sometimes bring in the bark that is not steered.

Most girls make *mésalliances* in sheer thoughtlessness, or through self-will, or in that youthful passion for romance which thinks it fine to lose their world for love. Foolish novels are as often to blame for their social crime as foolish men,—novels which are an apotheosis of love at any cost! Love against every domestic and social obligation! Love in spite of all prudent thought of meat and money matters! Love in a cottage, and nightingales and honeysuckles to pay the rent!

And if parents object to their daughter marrying ruin, then they are represented as monsters of cruelty; while the girl who flies stealthily to her misery, and breaks every moral tie to do so, is idealized into an angel of truth and suffering.

In real life what are parents to do with a daughter whose romantic folly has made her marry their groom or their footman? We have outlived the inexorable passions of our ancestors, and their undying loves and hatreds, sacrifices and revenges. Our social code tolerates no passion swallowing up all the rest; and we must be content with a decent expression of feeling. What their daughter has done they cannot undo; nor can they relieve her from the social consequences of her act. She has chosen to put their servant above and before them, and to humiliate her whole family, that she may please her low-born lover and herself, and she has therefore no right to any more consideration than she has given. Her parents may not cease to love her, and they may spare her all reproaches, knowing that her punishment is certain; but they cannot, for the sake of their other children, treat her socially above the station she has chosen. She has become the wife of a servant, and they cannot accept her husband as their equal nor can they insult their friends by introducing him to them. How wretched is the position she has put herself in; for if the man she married be naturally a low man, he will probably drag her to his level by the "grossness of his nature." If she be a woman of strong character she may lift her husband upward, but she accepts such a labor at the peril of her own higher life. And if she finds it impossible either to lift him to her level or to sink herself to his level, what then remains? Life-long regrets, bitter shame and self-reproach, or else a forcible setting of herself free. But the latter remedy carries desperation instead of hope with it. Never can she quite regain her maiden place, and an *aura* of a doubtful kind influences every effort of her future life.

After all, though men have not the reputation of being romantic, it is certain that in the matter of unequal marriage, they are more frequently imprudent than women. There is some possibility of lifting a low-born woman to the level of a cultivated man, and men dare this possibility far more frequently than is generally supposed. Perhaps after a long season they find the fine ladies with whom they have flirted and danced a weariness; and in this mood they are suddenly taken with some simple, unfashionable girl, who does not know either how to dress, or flirt, or dance. So they make the grave error of thinking that because fine ladies are insupportable, women who are not fine ladies will be sweet and companionable. But if the one be a blank, will that prove the other a prize? The dulness or folly of a polite woman is bad enough; but the dulness and folly of an uneducated woman is worse. Very soon they find this out, and then comes indifference, neglect, cruelty, and all the misery that attends two ruined lives.

The result of unequal marriage in both sexes is certain wretchedness, and this verdict is not to be altered by its exceptions, however brilliant they may seem to be. For when a man of means and education marries an uneducated girl of low birth, or a woman of apparent culture and high social position marries her servant, and the marriages are reasonably happy, then it may be positively said, "*There has been no mésalliance.*" The husband and wife were unequal only in their externals. The real characters of both must have been vulgar and naturally low and underbred.

It is folly to talk of two beings unequally married "growing together," or of "time welding their differences," and making things comfortable. Habit indeed reconciles us to much suffering, and to many trials; but an unequal marriage is a trial no one has any business to have. It is without excuse, and therefore without comfort. When the Almighty decrees us a martyrdom he blends his peace and consolations therewith; but when we torture ourselves our sufferings rage like a conflagration. Perhaps the chain may be worn, as a tight shoe is worn into shape until it no longer lames; but oh, the misery in the process! And even in such case the resigned sufferer has no credit in his patience; quite the contrary, for he knows as well as others know, though submission to what God ordains is the very height of energy and nobility, submission to the mistakes we ourselves make is the very climax of cowardice and weakness.

Discontented Women

DISCONTENT is a vice six thousand years old, and it will be eternal; because it is in the race. Every human being has a complaining side, but discontent is bound up in the heart of woman; it is her original sin. For if the first woman had been satisfied with her conditions, if she had not aspired to be "as gods," and hankered after unlawful knowledge, Satan would hardly have thought it worth his while to discuss her rights and wrongs with her. That unhappy controversy has never ceased; and, with or without reason woman has been perpetually subject to discontent with her conditions, and, according to her nature, has been moved by its influence. Some it has made peevish, some plaintive, some ambitious, some reckless, while a noble majority have found in its very control that serene composure and cheerfulness which is granted to those who conquer, rather than to those who inherit.

But, with all its variations of influence and activity, there has never been a time in the world's history when female discontent has assumed so much and demanded so much as at the present

day; and both the satisfied and the dissatisfied woman may well pause to consider whether the fierce fever of unrest which has possessed so large a number of the sex is not rather a delirium than a conviction; whether indeed they are not just as foolishly impatient to get out of their Eden, as was the woman Eve six thousand years ago.

We may premise, in order to clear the way, that there is a noble discontent which has a great work to do in the world; a discontent which is the antidote to conceit and self-satisfaction, and which urges the worker of every kind continually to realize a higher ideal. Springing from Regret and Desire, between these two sighs, all horizons lift; and the very passion of its longing gives to those who feel this divine discontent the power to overleap whatever separates them from their hope and their aspiration.

Having acknowledged so much in favor of discontent, we may now consider some of the most objectionable forms in which it has attacked certain women of our own generation. In the van of these malcontents are the women dissatisfied with their home duties. One of the saddest domestic features of the day is the disrepute into which housekeeping has fallen; for that is a woman's first natural duty and answers to the needs of her best nature. It is by no means necessary that she should be a Cinderella among the ashes, or a Nausicaa washing linen, or a Penelope forever at her needle, but all women of intelligence now understand that good cooking is a liberal science, and that there is a most intimate connection between food and virtue, and food and health, and food and thought. Indeed, many things are called crimes that are not as bad as the savagery of an Irish cook or the messes of a fourth-rate confectioner.

It must be noted that this revolt of certain women against housekeeping is not a revolt against their husbands; it is simply a revolt against their duties. They consider housework hard and monotonous and inferior, and confess with a cynical frankness that they prefer to engross paper, or dabble in art, or embroider pillow-shams, or sell goods, or in some way make money to pay servants who will cook their husband's dinner and nurse their babies for them. And they believe that in this way they show themselves to have superior minds, and ask credit for a deed which ought to cover them with shame. For actions speak louder than words, and what does such action say? In the first place, it asserts that any stranger—even a young uneducated peasant girl hired for a few dollars a month—is able to perform the duties of the house-mistress and the mother. In the second place, it substitutes a poor ambition for love, and hand service for heart service. In the third place, it is a visible abasement of the loftiest duties of womanhood to the capacity of the lowest-paid service. A wife and mother cannot thus absolve her own soul; she simply disgraces and traduces her holiest work.

Suppose even that housekeeping is hard and monotonous, it is not more so than men's work in the city. The first lesson a business man has to learn is to do pleasantly what he does not like to do. All regular, useful work must be monotonous, but love ought to make it easy; and at any rate the tedium of housework is not any greater than the tedium of office work. As for housekeeping being degrading, that is the veriest nonsense. Home is a little royalty; and if the housewife and mother be of elements finely mixed and loftily educated, all the more she will regard the cold-mutton question of importance, and consider the quality of the soup, and the quantity of chutnee in the curry, as requiring her best attention. It is only the weakest, silliest women who cannot lift their work to the level of their thoughts, and so ennoble both.

There are other types of the discontented wife, with whom we are all too familiar: for instance, the wife who is stunned and miserable because she discovers that marriage is not a lasting picnic; who cannot realize that the husband must be different from the lover, and spends her days in impotent whining. She is always being neglected, and always taking offence; she has an insatiable craving for attentions, and needs continual assurances of affection, wasting her time and feelings in getting up pathetic scenes of accusation, which finally weary, and then alienate her husband. Her own fault! There is nothing a man hates more than a woman going sobbing and complaining about the house with red eyes; unless it be a woman with whom he must live in a perpetual fool's paradise of perfection.

There are also discontented wives, who goad their husbands into extravagant expenditure, and urge them to projects from which they would naturally recoil. There are others, whose social ambitions slay their domestic ones, and who strain every nerve, in season and out of season, and lose all their self-respect, for a few crumbs of contemptuous patronage from some person of greater wealth than their own. Some wives fret if they have no children, others just as much if children come. In the first case, they are disappointed; in the second, inconvenienced; and in both, discontented. Some lead themselves and others wretched lives because they have not three times as many servants as are necessary; a still greater number because they cannot compass a life of constant amusement and excitement.

A very disagreeable kind of discontented woman is the wife who, instead of having a God to love and worship, makes a god of her religion, alienates love for an ecclesiastical idea, or neglects her own flesh and blood to carry the religious needs of the world; forgetting that the good wife keeps her sentiments very close to her own heart and hearth. But perhaps the majority of discontented wives have no special thing to complain of; they fret because they are "so dull." If they took the trouble to look for the cause of this "dulness," they would find it in the want of some definite plan of life, and some vigorous aim or object. Of course any aim implies limitation, but limitation implies both virtue and pleasure. Without rule and law, not even the games of children could exist, and the more strictly the rules of a game are obeyed, the greater the satisfaction. A wife's duty is subject to the same conditions. If aimless, plaintive women would make strict laws for their households, and lay out some possible vigorous plan for their own lives, they would find that those who love and work have no leisure for complaining.

But from whatever cause domestic discontent springs, it makes the home full of idleness, ennui, and vagrant imaginations, or of fierce extravagance, and passionate love of amusement. And as a wife holds the happiness of many in her hands, discontent with her destiny is peculiarly wicked. If it is resented, she gets what she deserves; if it is quietly endured, her shame is the greater. For nothing does so much honor to a wife as her patience; and nothing does her so little honor as the patience of her husband. And however great his patience may be, she will not escape personal injury; since none are to be held innocent who do harm even to their own soul and body. Besides, it is the inflexible order of things that voluntary faults are followed by inevitable pain.

Married women, however, are by no means the only complainers. There is a great army of discontents who, having no men to care for them, are clamoring, and with justice, for their share of the world's work and wages. Such women have a perfect right to make a way for themselves, in whatever direction they best can. Brains are of no sex or condition, and at any rate, there is no use arguing either their ability or their right, for necessity has taken the matter beyond the reach of controversy. Thousands of women have now to choose between work, charity, or starvation, for the young man of to-day is not a marrying man. He has but puny passions, and his love is such a very languid preference that he cannot think of making any sacrifice for it. So women do not marry, they work; and as the world will take good work from whoever will give it, the world's custom is flowing to them by a natural law.

Now, earnest, practical women-workers are blessed, and a blessing; but the discontented among them, by much talking and little doing, continually put back the cause they say they wish to advance. No women are in the main so discontented as women-workers. They go into the arena, and, fettered by old ideas belonging to a different condition, they are not willing to be subject to the laws of the arena. They want, at the same time, the courtesy claimed by weakness and the honor due to prowess. They complain of the higher wages given to men, forgetting that the first article of equal payment is equal worth and work. They know nothing about what Carlyle calls "the silences;" and the babble of their small beginnings is, to the busy world, irritating and contemptible. It never seems to occur to discontented working-women that the best way to get what they want is to act, and not to talk. One silent woman who quietly calculates her chances and achieves success does more for her sex than any amount of pamphleteering and lecturing. For nothing is more certain than that good work, either from man or woman, will find a market; and that bad work will be refused by all but those disposed to give charity and pay for it.

The discontent of working-women is understandable, but it is a wide jump from the woman discontented about her work or wages to the woman discontented about her political position. Of all the shrill complainers that vex the ears of mortals, there are none so foolish as the women who have discovered that the founders of our republic left their work half finished, and that the better half remains for them to do. While more practical and sensible women are trying to put their kitchens, nurseries, and drawing-rooms in order, and to clothe themselves rationally, this class of discontents are dabbling in the gravest national and economic questions. Possessed by a restless discontent with their appointed sphere and its duties, and forcing themselves to the front in order to ventilate their theories and show the quality of their brains, they demand the right of suffrage as the symbol and guarantee of all other rights.

This is their cardinal point, though it naturally follows that the right to elect contains the right to be elected. If this result be gained, even women whose minds are not taken up with the things of the State, but who are simply housewives and mothers, may easily predicate a few of such results as are particularly plain to the feminine intellect and observation. The first of these would be an entirely new set of agitators, who would use means quite foreign to male intelligence. For instance, every favorite priest and preacher would gain enormously in influence and power; for the ecclesiastical zeal which now expends itself in fairs and testimonials would then expend itself in the securing of votes in whatever direction they were instructed to secure them. It might even end in the introduction of the clerical element into our great political Council Chambers,—the bishops in the House of Lords would be a sufficient precedent,—and a great many women would really believe that the charming rhetoric of the pulpit would infuse a higher tone in legislative assemblies.

Again, most women would be in favor of helping any picturesque nationality, without regard to the Monroe doctrine, or the state of the finances, or the needs of the market. Most women would think it a good action to sacrifice their party for a friend. Most women would change their politics, if they saw it to be their interest to do so, without a moment's hesitation. Most women would refuse the primary obligation on which all franchises rest,—that is, to defend their country by force of arms, if necessary. And if a majority of women passed a law which the majority of men felt themselves justified in resisting by physical force, what would women do? Such a position in sequence of female suffrage is not beyond probability, and yet if it happened, not only one law, but *all* law would be in danger. No one denies that women have suffered, and do yet suffer, from grave political and social disabilities, but during the last fifty years much has been continually done for their relief, and there is no question but that the future will give all that can be reasonably desired. Time and Justice are friends, though there are many moments that are opposed to Justice. But all such innovations should imitate Time, which does not wrench and tear, but detaches and wears slowly away. Development, growth, completion, is the natural and best advancement. We do not progress by going over precipices, nor re-model and improve our houses by digging under the foundations.

Finally, women cannot get behind or beyond their nature, and their nature is to substitute

sentiment for reason,—a sweet and not unlovely characteristic in womanly ways and places; yet reason, on the whole, is considered a desirable necessity in politics. At the Chicago Fair, and at other convocations, it has been proven that the strongest-minded women, though familiar with platforms, and deep in the “dismal science” of political economy, when it came to disputing, were no more philosophical than the simplest housewife. Tears and hysteria came just as naturally to them as if the whole world wagged by impulse only; yet a public meeting in which feeling and tears superseded reason and argument would in no event inspire either confidence or respect. Women may cease to be women, but they can never learn to be men, and feminine softness and grace can never do the work of the virile virtues of men. Very fortunately this class of discontented women have not yet been able to endanger existing conditions by combinations analogous to trades-unions; nor is it likely they ever will; because it is doubtful if women, under any circumstances, could combine at all. Certain qualities are necessary for combination, and these qualities are represented in women by their opposites.

Considering discontented women of all kinds individually, it is evident that they must be dull women. They see only the dull side of things, and naturally fall into a monotonous way of expressing themselves. They have also the habit of complaining, a habit which quickens only the lower intellect. Where is there a more discontented creature than a good watch-dog? He is forever looking for some infringement of his rights; and an approaching step or a distant bark drives him into a fury of protest. Discontented women are always egotists; they view everything in regard to themselves, and have therefore the defective sympathies that belong to low organizations. They never win confidence, for their discontent breeds distrust and doubt, and however clever they may naturally be, an obtrusive self, with its train of likings and dislikings, obscures their judgment, and they take false views of people and things. For this reason, it is almost a hopeless effort to show them how little people generally care about their grievances; for they have thought about themselves so long and so much that they cannot conceive of any other subject interesting the rest of the world. We may even admit that the women discontented on public subjects are often women of great intelligence, clever women with plenty of brains. Is that the best? Who does not love far more than mere cleverness that sweetness of temper, that sunny, contented disposition, which goes through the world with a smile and a kind word for every one? It is one of the richest gifts of heaven; it is, according to Bishop Wilson, “nine-tenths of Christianity.”

Fortunately, the vast majority of women have been loyal to their sex and their vocation. In every community the makers and keepers of homes are the dominant power; and these strictures can apply only to two classes,—first, the married women who neglect husband, children, and homes, for the foolish *éclat* of the club and the platform, or for any assumed obligation, social, intellectual or political, which conflicts with their domestic duties; secondly, the unmarried women who, having comfortable homes and loving protectors, are discontented with their happy secluded security and rush into weak art, or feeble literature, or dubious singing and acting, because their vanity and restless immorality lead them into the market place, or on to the stage. Not one of such women has been driven afield by indisputable genius. Any work they have done would have been better done by some unprotected, experienced woman already in the fields they have invaded. And the indifference of this class to the money value of their labor has made it difficult for the women working because they must work or starve, to get a fair price for their work. It is the baldest effrontery for this class of rich discontents to affect sympathy with Woman’s Progress. Nothing can excuse their intrusion into the labor market but unquestioned genius and super-excellence of work; and this has not yet been shown in any single case.

The one unanswerable excuse for woman’s entrance into active public life of any kind is *need*, and, alas, need is growing daily, as marriage becomes continually rarer, and more women are left adrift in the world without helpers and protectors. But this is a subject too large to enter on here, though in the beginning it sprung from discontented women, preferring the work and duties of men to their own work and duties. Have they found the battle of life any more ennobling in masculine professions than in their old feminine household ways? Is work done in the world for strangers any less tiresome and monotonous than work done in the house for father and mother, husband and children? If they answer truly, they will reply, “The home duties were the easiest, the safest, and the happiest.”

Of course all discontented women will be indignant at any criticism of their conduct. They expect every one to consider their feelings without examining their motives. Paddling in the turbid maelstrom of life, and dabbling in politics and the most unsavory social questions, they still think men, at least, ought to regard them as the Sacred Sex. But women are not sacred by grace of sex, if they voluntarily abdicate its limitations and its modesties, and make a public display of unsexed sensibilities and unabashed familiarity with subjects they have nothing to do with. If men criticise such women with asperity it is not to be wondered at; they have so long idealized women that they find it hard to speak moderately. They excuse them too much, or else they are too indignant at their follies, and unjust and angry in their denunciation. Women must be criticised by women; then they will hear the bare, uncompromising truth, and be the better for it.

In conclusion, it must be conceded that some of the modern discontent of women must be laid to unconscious influence. In every age there is a kind of atmosphere which we call “the spirit of the times,” and which, while it lasts, deceives as to the importance and truth of its dominant opinions. Many women have doubtless thus caught the fever of discontent by mere contact, but such have only to reflect a little, and discover that, on the whole, they have done quite as well in life as they have any right to expect. Then those who are married will find marriage and the

care of it, and the love of it, quite able to satisfy all their desires; and such as really need to work will perceive that the great secret of content abides in the unconscious acceptance of life and the fulfilment of its duties,—a happiness serious and universal, but full of comfort and help. Thus they will cease to vary from the kindly race of women, and through the doors of Love, Hope, and Labor, join that happy multitude who have never discovered that life is a thing to be discontented with.

Women on Horseback

EVERY woman ought to know how to ride. It is the most healthy of exercises; and in a life of vicissitudes she may some day find it the only method of travel—perchance the only method of saving her life.

The first element of enjoying horse exercise is good riding. Good riding is an affair of skill, a collection of trifles, which, if thoroughly mastered, makes the rider feel thoroughly secure.

A man or a boy may learn to ride by practice; that is, he may tumble off and on until experience not only gives him confidence, but security and even elegance. It is not so with a woman. Her seat is artificial; she must be taught how to keep it; for though she may have a father or brother who has “good hands,” and who can show her how to handle reins and humor her horse’s mouth, he cannot teach her to sit in her saddle because he cannot sit in it himself.

The horse which a lady rides should be up to her weight, well-trained, and docile, for a woman on horseback has little to help her but her hand and her whip. If the flap of the saddle be large, the pressure of the left leg is almost useless, and the folds of her riding dress very often interfere with the discipline of the spur.

The whip is therefore her chief reliance, and its management is of great importance. As it is really to supply the place of a man’s right leg and spur, it should be stiff and real, however light and ornamental. The skin of the hippopotamus makes one both light and severe. There is little difficulty in using it on the right side of the horse, but to use it on the near side is a matter of both skill and caution. Remember, first, never to strike a horse over any part of the head or neck; second, if necessary to strike him on the forehead, quietly lift the whip to an upright position, then let it firmly and suddenly descend along the shoulder and instantly return to the upright position; third, to strike the near hindquarter properly requires a firm and graceful seat. Pass the right hand gently behind the waist, as far as possible, without distorting in the least the position of the body, and strike by holding the whip between the first two fingers and thumb. This action ought to be performed without disturbing either the position or action of the bridle hand.

As the riding dress of a gentleman should never be groomish, so that of a lady should never be fast or flashy. The hat should sit tightly to the head, for the hands are needed for reins and whip, and cannot safely be continually occupied in its adjustment. The plainer it is, the more ladylike; but if plumes are used, then those of the cock, pheasant, peacock, or heron, are most suitable. The habit, if for real use, may be lined a foot deep with leather. In English hunting counties light vests are sometimes worn in bright weather, and in winter, over-jackets of sealskin. It is well to remember that it is the chest and back which need double protection, both during and after hard riding. Skirts are seriously in the way. The snug flannel under-dress and the pantalets of the same cloth as the habit are all that is necessary. Light, high boots are a great comfort in riding long distances, and almost equally good are gaiters of heavy cloth, velvet, or corduroy.

The saddle ought always to have what is called the hunting-horn on the left side; yet however common it is in the North, I never saw it on a saddle in Texas during ten years. The right-hand pommel is in the way, and the best saddles have now only a flat projection in its place. It prevents the rider from putting the right hand as low as a restive horse requires it, and young and timid riders are apt to get a habit of leaning on it.

The value of the hunting pommel is very great. If the horse leaps suddenly up, it holds down the left knee, and makes it a fulcrum to keep the right one in its proper place. In riding down steep places it prevents sliding forward, and assists greatly in managing a hard puller. A rider cannot be thrown on it, and it renders it next to impossible that she should be thrown on the other pommel; besides, it gives the habit and figure a much finer appearance.

But it is necessary for every lady to have this pommel as carefully fitted to her person as her habit is. Not only see the saddle in progress, but *sit on it*. A chance saddle may seem to suit; so also, if a No. 4 shoe is worn, a ready-made 4 may be wearable; but as a shoe made to fit the wearer’s foot is always best, so also is a saddle that is adjusted to the rider’s proportions.

A stirrup may be an advantage, if the foot is likely to weary; but since the general introduction of the third pommel it is not necessary to a woman in the way that it is to a man. A woman, also, is very apt to make it a lever for “wriggling” about in her saddle,—a habit that is not only very ungraceful, but which gives many a horse a sore back, which a firm, quiet seat never does.

Reins should not be given to a learner; her first lessons should be on a led horse. The best horsewomen in England have been taught how to walk, canter, gallop, trot, and leap without the assistance of reins. I do not advocate the plan for general use, but I do know that learners are apt to acquire the habit of holding on by the bridle.

When the hand is trusted with reins, hold them in both hands. One bridle and two hands are far better than two bridles and one hand. The practice of one-handed riding originated in military schools; for a trooper has a sword or lance to carry, and riding-schools have usually been kept by old soldiers. But who attempts to turn a horse in harness with one hand? Don't hold the reins as if you were afraid of letting them go again, for this not only gives a "dead" hand, but compels the rider's body to follow the vagaries of the horse's head. Lightly and smoothly, "as if they were a worsted thread," hold the reins; and from the time the horse is in motion till the ride is finished, never cease a gentle sympathetic feeling upon the mouth. Women generally attain a "good hand" easier than men. In the first place, it is partly natural and spontaneous; in the second, they do not rely so much upon their physical strength and courage. A man in the pride of his youth is apt to despise this manipulation.

Many riders say it is better for a woman to use only the curb; but if she does this, all chance of learning "hand" is gone. I say, let her use the reins in both hands, slackening or tightening according to the pace she wishes, and the horse's eagerness. If she succeeds in this, and never keeps "a dead pull," she is a long way toward being a good horsewoman. As to turning, there is no better rule than Colonel Greenwood's simple maxim: "When you wish to turn to the right, pull the right-hand rein stronger than the left"—and *vice versa*.

All women should learn to canter before learning to trot. It is a much easier pace, and helps to give confidence. To canter *with the right foreleg leading*, make an extra bearing on the right rein, and a strong pressure with the left leg, heel, or spur; at the same time bring the whip across the near forehand of the horse. If he hesitates, pass the hand behind the waist and strike the near hindquarter.

To canter *with the left foreleg leading*, the extra bearing must be made on the left rein, by turning up the little finger toward the right shoulder, and using the whip on the right shoulder or flank. Never permit the horse to choose which foreleg shall lead; make him subject to your will and hand; and it is a good plan to change the leading leg when in a canter. In all movements remember to keep the bridle arm close to the body, and do not throw the elbow outward. The movements of the hand must come from the wrist alone, and the bearings on the horse's mouth be made by gently turning upward the little finger, at the same time keeping the hand firmly closed upon the reins.

The horse is urged to trot by bearing equally on both reins, and using the whip gently on the *right* flank. Sit well down in the saddle, and rise and fall with the action of the horse, springing lightly from the in-step and the knee. Nothing is uglier than rising too high, and besides its awkward, ungraceful appearance, it endangers the position. If the horse strikes into a canter of his own accord, bring him at once to a halt and begin again, or bear strongly on both reins till he resumes his trot, or else break the canter by bearing strongly on the rein opposite to his leading leg. Always begin at a gentle pace, and never trot a moment after either fear or fatigue is felt.

The horsemanship of a lady is never complete until she has learned to leap; for even if she intend nothing beyond a canter in the park, horses will leap at times without permission. When a horse rises to a leap, lean *well forward*, and bear gently on the mouth. When he makes the spring, strike the right flank (if necessary). As he descends, *lean backward*, pressing the leg firmly against the hunting pommel, and bearing the bridle strongly on the mouth. Collect the horse with the whip, and urge him forward at speed.

I shall now say a few words about mounting and dismounting, though every tyro imagines these to be the easiest of actions. In mounting, stand close to the horse, with the right hand on the middle pommel, the whip in the left hand, and the left hand on the groom's right shoulder. Do not scramble, but spring, into the saddle; sit well down, and let the right leg hang over the pommel *a little back*, for if the foot pokes out, the hold is not firm. Lean rather back than forward, firm and close from the hips downward, flexible from the hips upward. The reins must be held apart a little above the level of the knee. In dismounting, first take the right leg from its pommel, then the left from the stirrup. See that the dress is clear from all the pommels, especially the hunting one; let the reins fall on the horse's neck, place the left hand on the right arm of the groom, and the right hand on the hunting-pommel, and descend to the ground on the balls of the feet.

I have one more subject to notice. It is this: If a woman is to go out riding, no matter who may be her chaperon, nor whether it be in the park or the hunting field, she ought to know *how to take care of herself*; not with obtrusive independence, but with that modest, unassuming confidence which is the result of a perfect acquaintance with all that the situation demands.

WE may be pardoned, perhaps, for judging the living according to our humor, but the dead, at least, we should judge only with our reason. Become eternal, we should endeavor to measure them with the eternal rule of justice. If we did this, how many characters having now an immortality of ill, would secure a more favorable verdict. For twenty-three centuries Xanthippe has been regarded as the type of everything unlovely in womanhood and wifeness. We forget all the other Grecian matrons of Periclean times, to remember this poor wife with scorn. Yet if we would bestow half the careful scrutiny on an accurate analysis of her position which is given to other texts of classical writers, we might find her worthy of our sympathy more than scorn.

In the "Memorabilia" of Xenophon (II.2) Socrates is represented as pointing out to his eldest son, Lamprocles, the duty of paying a respectful attention to a mother who loved him so much better than any one else, and he calls him a "wretch" who should neglect it. Indeed, the picture he draws of the maternal relation is one of the finest things in ancient literature. Would Socrates have urged respect and obedience towards a mother unworthy of it? Would Lamprocles have received the fatherly flogging and reproof as meekly as he did if he had not been sensible of his error? And if there had been anything incongruous in Socrates demanding for Xanthippe Lamprocles' respect and obedience, would not Xenophon have noticed it? But it is not to philosophers and fathers we appeal for Xanthippe; mothers and housewives must judge her. When she married Socrates he was a sculptor, and, according to report, a very fair one,—not, perhaps, a Phidias, but one doing good, serviceable, paying work. He had a house in Athens, and people paid rent and went to market then as now; and he had a wife and family whom it is evident he ought to support. Doubtless Xanthippe was a good housekeeper,—women with sharp tempers usually have that compensation,—but who can keep house amiably upon nothing? Mr. Grote tells us that Socrates relinquished his paying profession and devoted himself to teaching, "excluding all other business to the neglect of all means of fortune."

If he had taken money for teaching, perhaps Xanthippe might not have opposed him so much; but he would neither ask nor receive reward. The fact probably was, Socrates had a delight in talking, and he preferred talking to business. Whatever *we* may think of his "talks," Xanthippe did not likely consider them anything wonderful. Nothing but a jury of women whose husbands have "missions," and neglect everything for them, could fairly judge Xanthippe on this point. It is of no use for us to say, "Socrates was such a great man, such a divine teacher;" Xanthippe did not know it, and a great many of the wisest and greatest of the Athenians had no more sense in this respect than she had. Aristophanes regularly turned him into sport for the theatres. What Christian wife would like that? Comic plays were written about him, and the gamins under the porticos ridiculed him. If he had been honored, Xanthippe would have forgiven his self-imposed poverty; but to be poor, and laughed at! Doubtless he deserved a good portion of the curtain lectures he got.

Then Xanthippe had another cause of complaint in which she will be sure of the sympathy of all wives. Socrates did not share in its full bitterness the poverty to which he condemned his family. While she was eating her pulse and olives at home, he was dining with Athenian nobles, and drinking wine by the side of the brilliant Aspasia or the fascinating Theodite.

We see Socrates, "splendid through the shades of time," as a great moral teacher; but many of the Athenians of his day laughed at him, and very few admired him. At any rate he did not provide for the wants of his household, and even a bachelor like Saint Paul severely condemns such a one. Certainly the men of Athens did not admire Socrates, and probably the women of Xanthippe's acquaintance sympathized with her,—to a woman of her temperament a very great aggravation. It may be said all this is special pleading, but when we have knocked at the door of certain truths in vain, we should try and get into them by the window.

The Favorites of Men

IT may be taken as a rule that women who are favorites with men are very seldom favorites with their own sex. Wherever women congregate, and other women are under discussion, men's favorites are named with that tone of disapproval and disdain which infers something not quite proper—something undesirable in the position. If specific charges are made, the "favorite" will probably be called "an artful little flirt," or she will be "sly" or "fast." Matrons will wonder what the men see in her face or figure; and the young girls will deplore her manners, or rather her want of manners; or they will mercifully "hope there is nothing really wrong in her freedom and boldness, but—" and the sigh and shrug will deny the charitable hope with all the emphasis necessary for her condemnation. For if a girl is a favorite with the men of her own set, she is naturally disliked by the women, since she attracts to herself far more than her share of admiration; and the admiration of men, whether women acknowledge it or not, is the desire and delight of the feminine heart, just as the love of women is the desire and delight of the

masculine heart.

In their social intercourse two kinds of women please men: the bright, pert woman, who says such things and does such things as no other woman would dare to say and do, and who is therefore very amusing; and the sympathetic woman who admires and perhaps loves them. But these two great classes have wide and indefinite varieties, and the bright little woman with her innocent audaciousness, and the graceful, swan-necked angel, with her fine feelings and her softly spoken compliments, are but types of species that have infinite peculiarities, and distinctions. The two women, sitting quietly in the same room and dressed in the same orthodox fashion, may not appear to be radically different, but as soon as conversation and dancing commence, the one, in a frankly outspoken way, says just what she thinks, and charms in the most undisguised manner, while the other must be looked for in retired corners, quiet and demure, listening with pensive adoration to her companion's cleverness, and flirting in that insidious way which sets other women's cheeks burning with indignation.

An absolutely womanly ideal for the purposes of flirtation or of platonic friendship—if such an emotion exists—is not supposable; for man is himself so many-sided that the woman who is perfect in one's estimation would be uninteresting in another's. It is, however, very certain that the women men flirt with are not the women men marry. Their social favorites, are not the matrimonial favorites, and therefore it is not a good thing for a girl's settlement that she should get the reputation of being a "gentlemen's favorite." It is rather a position to be avoided, for the brightest or sweetest girl with this character will likely pass her best years in charming all without being able to fix one lover to her side for life. This is the secret of the great number of plain married women whom every one counts among his acquaintances.

The position of a favorite is no easy one. She has to cultivate many qualities which should be put to better use and bring her more satisfactory results. She must have discrimination enough to value flirting at its proper value; for if she confounds love-making with love, and takes everything *au grand sérieux*, her reputation as a safe favorite would be seriously endangered. In her flirtations she must never permit herself to show whether she be hit or not. She must never suffer a fop to have any occasion for a boast. She must avoid every circumstance which would allow a feminine rival an opportunity for a sneer. She must be able to give and take cheerfully, to conceal every social wound and slight, and to be deaf to every disagreeable thing. In short, she must be armed at every point, and never lay down her arms, and never be off watch. It is therefore a position whose requirements, if translated into active business life, would employ the utmost resources of a fertile and energetic man.

And what are the general results of talents so varied and so industriously employed? As a usual thing, the gentlemen's favorite dances and flirts her way from a brilliant girlhood to a fretful, neglected *femme passée*. She has in the meantime had the mortification of seeing the plain girls whom she despised become honored wives and mothers, and possibly leaders in that set of the social world of which she still makes one of the rank and file of spinsterhood. Her disappointments, in spite of her careful concealment of them, tell upon her physique. She sees the waning of her power, and the approaches of that winter of discontent which wasted opportunities are sure to bring.

Spurred with a sense of haste by some unhappy slight, she perhaps unadvisedly marries a man who ten years previously would not have ventured to clasp her shoe-buckle. If he happens to possess a firm will and a strong character, he will try to pull her sharply up to his mark, and there will be endless frictions and reprisals, with all their possible results. If he is some old lover, weak in purpose, fatuous and brainless in his admiration, then the foolish flirting virgin will likely become a foolish flirting wife; and a miserable complaisance will bring forth its natural outgrowth of contempt and dislike, and perhaps culminate in some flagrant social misdemeanor.

To be a favorite with men is not, then, a desirable honor for any woman. They will admire her loveliness, sun themselves in her smiles, and catch a little ephemeral pleasure and glory in her favor; but they will not marry her. And the reason, though not very evident to a thoughtless girl, is at least a very real and powerful one. It is because such a girl *never touches them on their best side*, and never reveals in herself that womanly nature which a man knows instinctively is the foundation of wifely value,—that nature which expresses itself in service for love's sake, as a very necessity of its being.

On the contrary, a "favorite" leans all to one side, and that side is herself. She is overbearing and exacting in the most trivial matters of outward homage. She will be served on the bended knee, and her service is a hard and ungrateful one. And this is the truth about such homage: men may be compelled to kneel to a woman's whims for a short time, but when they do find courage to rise to their feet they go away forever.

So that, after all, the estimate of women for those of their own sex who are favorites of a great number of men is a very just one. It is neither unfair nor untrue in its essentials, for in this world we can only judge actions by their consequences; and the consequences of a long career of general admiration do not justify honorable mention of the belle of many seasons. She can hardly escape the results of her social experience. She must of necessity become false and artificial. She cannot avoid a morbid jealousy of her own rights, and a painful jealousy of the successes of those who have passed her in the matrimonial career.

Nor can she, as these qualities strengthen, by any means conceal their presence. Every attribute of our nature has its distinctive atmosphere; it is subtle and invisible as the perfume of a plant, but it makes itself distinctly present,—even when we are careful to permit no

translation of the feeling into action. Men are not analyzers or inquirers into character, as a general rule, but the bright ways and witty conversation of their favorite does not deceive them. Sooner or later they are sensitive to the restlessness, disappointment, envy, and hatred, which couches beneath the smiles and sparkle. They may put the knowledge away at the time, but when they are alone they will eventually admit and understand it all.

And the saddest part of this situation is that they are not at all astonished at what their hearts reveal to them. They know that they have expected nothing better, nothing more permanently valuable. They tell themselves frankly that in this woman's society they never looked for imperishable virtues; she was only a pretty *passe-temps*—a woman suitable for life's laughter, but not for its noblest duties and discipline.

For when good men want to marry, they seek a woman for what *she is*, not for what she looks. They want a gentlewoman of blameless honor, who will love her husband, and neither be reluctant to have children nor to bring them up at her knees; who will care for her house duties and her husband's comfort and welfare as if these things were an Eleventh Commandment. And such women, fair and cultured enough to make any home happy, are not difficult to find. However peculiar and individual a man may be, there are very few in a generation who cannot convince some good woman that their peculiarities are abnormal genius, or refined moral sensitiveness, or some other great and rare excellency.

Therefore, before a girl commits herself to a course of frivolity and time-pleasing, which will fasten on her such a misnomer as a "favorite" of men, let her carefully ponder the close of such a career. For, having once obtained this reputation, she will find it very hard to rid herself of its consequences. And it is, alas, very likely that many girls enter this career thoughtlessly, and not until they are entangled in it find out that they have made a mistake with their life. Then they are wretched in the conditions they have surrounded themselves with, and yet are afraid to leave them. Their popularity is odious to them. They stretch out their hands to their wasted youth, and their future appalls them. They weep, for they think it is too late to retrieve their errors.

No! It is never too late to lift up the head and the heart! It is always the right hour to become noble and truthful and courageous once more! In short, there is yet a Divine help for those who seek it; and in that strength all may turn back and recapture their best selves. While life lasts there is no such time as "too late!" And oh, the good that fact does one!

Mothers of Great and Good Men

WOMEN are apt to complain that their lot is without influence. On the contrary, their lot is full of dignity and importance. If they do not lead armies, if they are not state officers, or Congressional orators, they mould the souls and minds of men who do, and are; and give the initial touch that lasts through life. The conviction of the mother's influence over the fate of her children is old as the race itself; ancient history abounds with examples; and even the destinies of the gods are represented as in its power. It was the mothers of ancient Rome that made ancient Rome great; it was the Spartan mothers that made the Spartan heroes. Those sons went out conquerors whose mothers armed them with the command, "With your shield, or on it, my son!"

The power of the mother in forming the character of the child is beyond calculation. Can any time separate the name of Monica from that of her son Augustine? Never despairing, even when her son was deep sunk in profligacy, watching, pleading, praying with such tears and fervor that the Bishop of Carthage cried out in admiration, "Go thy way; it is impossible that the son of these tears should perish!" And she lived to see the child of her love all that her heart desired. Nor are there in all literature more noble passages than those which St. Augustine consecrates to the memory of a parent whom all ages have crowned with the loftiest graces of motherhood.

Bishop Hall says of his mother, "She was a woman of rare sanctity." And from her he derived that devoted spirit and prayerful dignity which gave him such unbounded influence in the church to which his life was consecrated. The "divine George Herbert" owed to his mother a still greater debt, and the famous John Newton proposes himself as "an example for the encouragement of mothers to do their duty faithfully to their children." Every one is familiar with the picture which represents Dr. Doddridge's mother teaching him, before he could read, the Old and New Testament history from the painted tiles in the chimney corner. Crowley, Thomson, Campbell, Goethe, Victor Hugo, Schiller and the Schlegels, Canning, Lord Brougham, Curran, and hundreds of our great men may say with Pierre Vidal:

"If aught of goodness or of grace
Be mine, hers be the glory;
She led me on in wisdom's path
And set the light before me."

Perhaps there was never a more wonderful example of maternal influence than that of the Wesleys' mother. To use her own words, she cared for her children as "one who works together with God in the saving of a soul." She never considered herself absolved from this care, and her letters to her sons when they were men are the wonder of all who read them. Another prominent instance is that of Madame Bonaparte over her son Napoleon. This is what he says of her: "She suffered nothing but what was grand and elevated to take root in our souls. She abhorred lying, and passed over none of our faults." How large a part the mother of Washington played in the formation of her son's character, we have only to turn to Irving's "Life of Washington" to see. And it was her greatest honor and reward when the world was echoing with his renown, to listen and calmly reply, "He has been a good son, and he has done his duty as a man."

John Quincy Adams owed everything to his mother. The cradle hymns of his childhood were songs of liberty, and as soon as he could lisp his prayers she taught him to say Collins' noble lines, "How sleep the brave who sink to rest." No finer late instance of the influence of a mother in the formation of character can be adduced than that of Gerald Massey. His mother roused in him his hatred of wrong, his love of liberty, his pride in honest, hard-working poverty; and Massey, in his later days of honor and comfort, often spoke with pride of those years when his mother taught her children to live in honest independence on rather less than a dollar and a half a week. The similar instance of President Garfield and his mother is too well known to need more than mention.

There can be no doubt of the illimitable influence of the mother in the formation of her child's character. The stern, passionate piety of Mrs. Wesley made saints and preachers of her children; the ambition and bravery of Madame Bonaparte moulded her son into a soldier, and the beautiful union of these qualities helped to form the hero beloved of all lands,—George Washington. I do not say that mothers can give genius to their sons; but all mothers can do for their children what Monica did for Augustine, what Madame Bonaparte did for Napoleon, what Mrs. Washington did for her son George, what Gerald Massey's mother did for him, what ten thousands of good mothers all over the world are doing this day,—patiently moulding, hour by hour, year by year, that cumulative force which we call character. And if mothers do this duty honestly, whether their sons are private citizens or public men, they will "rise up and call them blessed."

Domestic Work for Women

TO that class of women who toil not, neither spin, and who, like contented ravens, are fed they know not how nor whence, it is superfluous to speak of domestic service; for their housekeeping consists in "giving orders," and their marketing is represented by tradesmen's wagons and buff-colored pass-books. Yet I am far from inferring that, because they can financially afford to be idle, they have a right to be so. They surely owe to the world some free gift of labor, else it would be hard to see why they came into it. Not for ornaments certainly, since Parian marble and painted canvas would be both more economical and satisfactory; not for housewives, for their houses are in the hands of servants; not for mothers, for they universally grumble at the advent and responsibility of children.

But to the large majority of women, domestic service ought to be a high moral question, especially to those who are the wives of men striving to keep up on limited incomes the reality and the appearance of a prosperous home; all the more necessary, perhaps, because the appearance is the condition on which the reality is possible.

Too often a false notion that usefulness and elegance are incompatible, that it is "unladylike" to be in their kitchens, or come in contact with the baker and butcher, makes them abrogate the highest honors of wifehood. Or perhaps they have the misfortune to be the children of those tender parents who are permitted without loss of reputation to educate their daughters for drawing-room ornaments in their youth, and yet do nothing to *insure* them against a middle age of struggle and privation, and an old age of misery.

To such I would speak candidly—not without thought—not without practical knowledge of what I say—not without strong hopes that I may influence many warm, thoughtless hearts, who only need to be once alive to a responsibility in order to feel straitened and burdened until they assume and fulfil it.

Is it fair, then, is it just, kind, or honorable, that the husband day after day should be bound to the wheel of a monotonous occupation, and the wife fritter away the results in frivolity or suffer them to be wasted in extravagant and yet unsatisfactory housekeeping? Supposing the magnificent affection of the husband makes him willing to coin his life into dollars, in order that the wife may live and dress and visit according to her ideal, ought she to accept an offering that has in it so strong an odor of human sacrifice?

Even if it be necessary to keep up a certain style, it is still in the wife's power to make the husband's service for this end a reasonable one. Personal supervision of the marketing will save

twenty per cent, and I am afraid to say how much might be saved from actual waste in the kitchen by the same means; and this is but the beginning.

Yet saving is only one item in the wife's lawful domestic service; if her husband is to be a permanently successful man, she must take care of his digestion. It may seem derogatory to thought, enterprise, and virtue to assert that eating has anything to do with them. I cannot help the condition; I only know that it exists, and that she is but a poor wife who ignores the fact.

The days when men stuck to their "roast and boiled" as firmly as to their creed are, of necessity, disappearing. The fervid life we are all leading demands food that can be assimilated with the least possible detriment to, or expenditure of, the vital powers. "Thoughts that burn" are no poetic fancy; the planning, the calculating that a business man performs during the day literally burns up the material of conscious life. It is the wife's duty to replenish the fires of intellect and energy by fuel that the enfeebled vitality can convert most easily into the elements necessary to repair the waste.

The idea that it is derogatory for cultivated brains and white hands to investigate the stock-jar and the stew-pan is a very mistaken one. The daintiest lady I ever knew, the wife of a merchant who is one of our princes, sees personally every day to the preparation of her husband's dinner and its artistic and appetizing arrangement on the table. I have not the smallest doubt that the nourishing soups, the delicately prepared meats, the delicious desserts, are the secret of many a clear-headed business transaction, household investments that make possible the far-famed commercial ones. This mysterious relationship between what we *eat* and what we *do* was dimly perceived by Dr. Johnson when he said that "a man who did not care for his dinner would care for nothing else."

Artistic cooking derogatory! Why, it is a science, an art, as sure to follow a high state of civilization as the fine arts do. No persons of fine feelings can be indifferent to what they eat, any more than to what they wear, or what their household surroundings are. A man may be compelled by circumstances to swallow half-cooked bloody beef and boiled paste dumplings, and yet it may be as repugnant to him as it would be to wear a scarlet belcher neckerchief, a brass watch-chain, and a cotton-velvet coat. Yet his wife may be ignorant or indifferent; he is too much occupied with other matters to "make a fuss about it," and so he shuts his eyes, opens his mouth, and takes whatever his cook pleases to send him. I do not like to be uncharitable, but somehow I can't help thinking that a wife who permits this kind of thing is unworthy of her wedding ring.

Let her take a volume of F. W. Johnston's "Domestic Chemistry" in her hand, and go down into her kitchen. She will be in a far higher region of romance than Miss Braddon can take her into. She will learn that it is her province to renew her husband physically and mentally by dexterously depositing the right kind of nutriment upon the inward, invisible frame. The wonders of science shall supersede then, for her, the wonders of romance. To feed the sacred fire of life will become a noble office; she will count it as honorable, in its place, to make a fine soup or a delicate Charlotte Russe as to play a Beethoven sonata or read a German classic.

Truly, I think that it is almost a sin for a housekeeper with all her senses to be ignorant of the laws of chemistry affecting food. Yet the subject is so large and complicated that I can only indicate its importance; but I am sure that women of affection and intelligence who may now for the first time accept the thought, will follow my hints to all their manifold conclusions. One of these conclusions is so important that I cannot avoid directing special attention to it,—the moral effect of proper food.

Do not doubt that all through life high things depend on low ones; and in this matter it must be evident to every observing woman that food is often the *nerve* of our highest social affections. There is an acute domestic disorder which Dr. Marshall Hall used to call "the temper disease." Need I point out to wives the wonderful sympathy between this disease and the dining-table? Do they not know that a fretful, belated, ill-cooked breakfast has the power to take all the energy out of a sensitively organized man, and make his entire day an uncomfortable failure?

On the contrary, a cheerful room, a snowy cloth, coffee "with the aroma in," bread whose amber crust and light, white crumb is a picture, in short, a well-appointed, quiet, comfortable first meal has in it some subtle influence of strength and inspiration for work. I have seen men rise from such tables *joyful*—full of such gratitude and hope as I can well believe only found expression in that silent uplifting of the heart to God which is, after all, our purest prayer.

Then when at evening he returns weary, faint and hungry, a fine sonata or an exquisite painting will not much comfort him. I even doubt whether a religious service could profitably take the place of his dinner; for we *know*, if we will acknowledge it, that the importunate demands of the flesh do cry down the still small voice of devotion. But how different we feel after eating; then we are disposed for something higher, the mind is elevated to gracious thoughts, the brain gives reasonable counsel, the heart generous responses. And I speak with all reverence when I say that many of our darkest hours in spiritual things are not to be attributed to an angry God or a hidden Saviour, but to physical repletion or inanition. But if these wonderfully fashioned bodies be the "temple of the Holy Ghost," how shall we expect the comforts of God in a disordered or ill-kept shrine?

Thus it is in the power of the housewife to turn the work of the kitchen into a sacrifice of gladness, and to make the offices of the table a means of grace. Certain it is that she will decide whether her husband is to be commercially successful or not; for if a man will be rich, he must ask his wife's permission to be so. And if he will be physically healthy, mentally clear, morally

sweet, she must take care that his home furnish the proper food and stimulus on which these conditions depend. Nor will she go far wrong if she take as a general rule, lying at the foundation, or in close connection with them all, Sydney Smith's pleasant hyperbolic maxim, "Soup and fish explain half the emotions of life."

We will suppose that the housewife is also the house-mother, and that she is not content with apathetically remarking that "her children are beyond her control," and so sending them away to nurses and boarding schools; but that she really strives to encourage every virtue, draw out every latent power, and make both boys and girls worthy of the grand future to which they are heirs. Who shall say now that woman's domestic sphere is narrow, or unworthy of her highest powers? For if she accepts honestly and solemnly all her responsibilities, she takes a position that only good women or angels could fill.

Nor need house duties shut her out from all service except to those of her own household. In these very duties she may find a way to help her poorer sisters far more efficient than many of more pretentious promise. When she has become a scientific, artistic cook, let her permit some ignorant but bright and ambitious girl to spend a few hours daily by her side, and learn by precept and example the highest rules and methods of the culinary art. Girls so instructed would be real blessings to those who hired them, and would themselves start life with a real, solid gain, able at once to command respectable service and high wages.

I am quite aware that such a practical philanthropist would meet with many ungracious returns, and not a few insinuating assertions that her charity was an insidious attempt to get work "for nothing." But a good woman would not be deterred by this; she has had but small experience of life who has not learned that it is often our very best and most unselfish actions which are suspected, simply because their very unselfishness makes them unintelligible; and if we do not reverence what we cannot understand, we suspect it.

It may seem but a small thing to do for charity's sweet sake, but who shall measure the results? Say that in the course of a year four young girls receive a practical knowledge of the art of cooking, how far will the influence of those four eventually reach? The larger part of all our good deeds is hid from us,—wisely so, else we should be overmuch lifted up. We have nothing to do with aggregate results, and I believe that the woman who provides intelligently for her household, makes it cheerful and restful, and finds heart and space to help some other woman to a higher life, has the noblest of "missions," the grandest of "spheres," and is most blessed among women.

She who adds to household duties maternal duties fills also the highest national office, since to her hands are committed—not indeed the laws of the republic but the fate of the republic; for the children of *to-day* are the *to-morrow* of society, and its men of action will be nothing but unconscious instruments of the patient love and prayerful thought of the mothers who taught them. And yet let the women who are excused from this office be grateful for their indulgence. Alas! how many shoulders without strength have asked for heavy burdens.

Professional Work for Women

"LABOR! ALL LABOR IS NOBLE AND HOLY!"

THAT man should provide and woman dispense are the radical conditions of domestic service; conditions which I believe are highly favorable to the development of the highest type of womanhood. But at the same time they are far from embracing all women capable of high development, nor are they perhaps suitable for every phase of character included in that myriad-minded creature—woman.

For just as one tree attains its most perfect beauty through sheltering care, and another strikes the deepest roots and lifts the greenest boughs by self-reliant struggles, so also some women reach their highest development through domestic duties, while others hold their life most erect through public service and enforced responsibilities.

It has taken the world, however, nearly 6,000 years to come to the understanding that these latter souls must not be denied their proper arena, that brains have no sex, and that it is well for the world to have its work done irrespective of anything but the *capability* of the workers. But it has now so far accepted the doctrine that women who must labor if they would live honestly and independently need no longer do so under suffering or suspicion. Wherever they can best make their way the road is open, and they are encouraged to make it; nor am I aware of any serious restriction laid on them, except one, whose true kindness is in its apparent severity,—namely, that the debutante must justify her work by her success in it. I call this kind, because favor and toleration are here unkind; since she who stands from any other reason than absolute fitness will sooner or later fall by an inevitable law.

The great curse of women, educated and yet unprovided for, is not that they have to labor, but that, having to work, they cannot find the work to do. Nor is it generally their fault; they have probably been miseducated in the old idea that marriage is the only social salvation provided

whereby woman can be saved; and no one having married them, what are these compulsory social sinners to do?

A great number turn *instinctively* to literature for help and comfort; and their instinct in many respects is not at fault; for literature is one of the few professions that from the first has dealt kindly and honorably with women. Here the race is fair; if the female pen is fleetest, it wins.

But writing *does not* come by nature; it is an art to be seriously and sedulously pursued. My own reflection and experience lead me to believe that within the last thirty years its methods have radically changed. That condition of inspiration and mental excitement once considered the native air of genius has lost much of its importance; and people now ordinarily write by the exercise of their reason and reflection, and by the continual and faithful cultivation of such natural powers as they are endowed with. Upon the whole, it is a mark of rational progress, and opens the field to every woman who is thoughtful and cultivated and willing to study industriously. Not undervaluing the mood of inspiration, I yet honestly believe that for practical bread-winning purposes reason and study are the most effectual aids, and the hours devoted to personal culture by acquiring information just so much "stock in trade" acquired.

The motives for writing, too, have either changed with the method, or else writers have become more honest, as they have become more reasonable. I can remember when every author imagined himself influenced by some unworldly consideration, such as the desire to do good, or to instruct, or at least because he had something to say which constrained him to write. But people now sell their knowledge as they sell any other commodity; the best and the greatest men write simply for money, and no woman need feel any conscientious scruples because her own pressing cares sometimes obliterate the full sense of her responsibility. God does not work alone with model men and women. He takes us just as we are; and I *know* that the stray arrow shot from the bow when the hand was weary and the mind halting has often struck nearer home than those set with scrupulous exactness and sped with careful aim.

Besides writing, there are other literary occupations specially suited to women, such as index-makers, amanuenses, and proof-readers. The first need a clear head and great patience, but the remuneration is very good. An amanuensis must have a rapid hand, a fair education, and such a quick, sympathetic mind as will enable her to readily adapt herself to the author's moods, and in some measure follow his train of thought. Proof-reading pre-supposes a general high cultivation, enough knowledge of French, Latin, etc., to read and correct quotations, and an intimate acquaintance with general literature, as well as grammar, orthography, and punctuation. But though a responsible position, women, both from physical and mental aptitude, fill it better than men. They have a faculty of detecting errors immediately, often without knowing why or how, and are both more patient and more expert. The editors of the *Christian Union* practically support me in this opinion, and the carefully correct type of the paper is evidence of the highest order. The conditions of these three employments being present, the mere technicalities of each are of the simplest kind, and very easily acquired.

"A fair field and no favor" has also been freely granted to women in every department of music and art. But in its highest branches public opinion is inexorable to mediocrity; and success is absolutely dependent on great natural abilities, thoroughly and highly cultivated. But there are many inferior branches in which women of average ability, properly educated, may make honorable and profitable livelihoods. Such, for instance, as engraving on wood and steel, chasing gold and silver, cutting gems and cameos, and designing for all these purposes.

Not a few women (and men too) make good livings by designing costumes for the large dry-goods houses and the fashionable modistes; but the good designer is a creator, and this faculty has always hitherto been confined to a small number both of men and women. The ability to draw by no means proves it; this is only the tool, the design is the thought. Therefore schools of design, though they may furnish natural designers with tools, cannot make designers. If designing, then, is a woman's object, she must not deceive herself; for if the "faculty divine" is not present she may devote years to study, and never rise above the mere copyist.

It is usually conceded that antiquity and general "use and wont" confer a kind of claim to any office. If so, then women have an inherited right, almost wide as the world, and coeval with history, to practise medicine. Every one recognizes them as the natural physicians of the household, and under all our ordinary ailments it is to some wise woman of our family we go for advice or assistance. As Miss Cobbe says,—

"Who ever dreams of asking his grandfather, or his uncle, his footman, or his butler what he shall do for his cold, or to be so kind as to tie up his cut finger?" Yet women regard such requests as perfectly natural, and are very seldom unable to gratify them.

Medicine as a profession for women has almost won its ground; and as it is a science largely depending on insight into individual peculiarities, it would seem to be specially their office. An illustrious physician says, "There are no diseases, there are diseased people;" and the remark explains why women—who instinctively read mental characters—ought to be admirable physicians.

Indeed female physicians have already gained a position which entitles them to demand their male opponents to "show cause why" they may not share in all the honors and emoluments of the faculty. That the profession, as a means of employment for women, is gaining favor is evident from their large attendance at the free medical colleges for women in this city, nor are there any facts to indicate that their practice is less safe than that of men; and if accidents have taken place, they were doubtless the result of ignorance, and not of sex.

Theodore Parker favored even the legal profession for women, giving it as his opinion that "he must be rather an uncommon lawyer who thinks no feminine head could compete with him." Most lawyers are rather mechanics at law, than attorneys or scholars at law; and in the mechanical part women could do as well as men, could be as good conveyancers, could follow precedents as carefully and copy forms as nicely. "I think," he adds, "their presence would mend the manners of the court on the bench, not less than of the bar."

But though, if properly prepared, there would seem no reason why women could not write out wills, deeds, mortgages, indentures, etc., yet I doubt much whether they have the natural control and peculiar aptitudes necessary for a counsellor at law. But no one will deny a woman's capability to teach, even though so many have gone into the office that have no right there; for mere ability is not enough. Teachers, like artists, are born teachers, and the power to impart knowledge is a free gift of nature.

Those, then, who accept the office without vocation for it, just for a livelihood, both degrade themselves and it. The duties undertaken with reluctance lack the spirit which gives light and interest; the children suffer intelligently, the teacher morally. But if a woman becomes a teacher, having a call which is unmistakable, she is doubly blessed, and the world may drop the compassionate tone it is fond of displaying toward her, or, if it is willing to do her justice, may pay her more and pity her less.

The question of a woman's right to preach is one that conscience rather than creeds or opinions must settle. It must be allowed that her natural influence is, and always has been greater than any delegated authority. She is born priestess over every soul she can influence, and the question of her right to preach seems to be only the question of her right to extend her influence. In this light she has always been a preacher; it is her natural office, from which nothing can absolve her. A woman must influence for good or evil every one she comes in contact with; by no direct effort perhaps, but simply because she must, it is her nature and her genius.

Whether women will ever do the world's highest work as well as men, I consider, in all fairness, yet undecided. She has not had time to recover from centuries of no-education and mis-education: She is only just beginning to understand that neither beauty nor tact can take the place of skill, and that to do a man's work she must prepare for it as a man prepares; but even if time proves that in creative works she cannot attain masculine grandeur of conception and power of execution, she may be just as excellent in her own way; and there are and always will be people who prefer Mrs. Browning to Milton, and George Eliot to Lord Bacon.

At first sight there seems some plausibility in the assertion that woman's physical inferiority will always render her unfit to do men's work. But all physical excellence is a matter of cultivation; and it would be very easy to prove that women are not naturally physically weaker than men. In all savage nations they do the hardest work, and Mr. Livingstone acknowledged that all his ideas as to their physical inferiority had been completely overturned.

In China they do the work of men, with the addition of an infant tied to their back. In Calcutta and Bombay, they act as masons, carry mortar, and there are thousands of them in the mountain passes bearing up the rocky heights baskets of stone and earth on their heads. The women in Germany and the Low Countries toil equally with the men. During the late war I saw American women in Texas keep the saddle all day, driving cattle or superintending the operations in the cotton-patch or the sugar-field. Nay, I have known them to plough, sow, reap, and get wood from the cedar brake with their own hands.

Woman's physical strength has degenerated for want of exercise and use; but it would be as unfair to condemn her to an inferior position on this account as it was for the slave master to urge the necessity of slavery because of the very vices slavery had produced. However, if women are really to succeed they must give to their preparation for a profession the freshest years of life. If it is only taken up because marriage has been a failure, or if it is pursued with a divided mind, they will always be behind-hand and inferior. But the compensation is worth the sacrifice. A profession once acquired, they have home, happiness, and independence in their hands; the future, as far as possible, is secure, the serenity and calmness of assurance strengthens the mind and sweetens the character, and from the standpoint of a self-sustaining celibacy marriage itself assumes its loftiest position; it is no longer the aim, but the crown and completion of her life; for *she need not*, so she *will not*, marry for anything but love, and thus her wifhood will lose nothing of the grace and glory that belongs to it of right.

Little Children

THE teachers of a people have need of a far greater wisdom than its priests. The latter are but the mouthpiece of an oracle so clear that a wayfaring man, though a fool, may understand it. The former are the interpreters in the mysterious communings of ignorance with knowledge.

"Only a few little children," says the self-sufficient and the inefficient teacher. Twenty-five years' experience among little children has taught me that in spiritual and moral perceptiveness, and intuitive knowledge of character, they are far nearer to the angels than we are.

Consider well what a mystery they are! Who ever saw two children mentally alike? More fresh from the hands of the Maker, they still retain the infinite variety which is one of the marks of his boundless wealth of creation. In a few years, alas! they will take on the stereotyped forms of the class to which they belong; but for a little space heaven lies about them, and they dwell among us—so much of *this* world, and so much of *that*.

Twenty years ago I thought I understood little children; *to-day* I am sure I do not: for now I know that every one has a hidden life of its own, which it knows instinctively is foolishness to the world, and which therefore it never reveals. Now, if you can humble yourself, can become as a little child, can win a welcome to this inner life, let me tell you that you have come very near to the kingdom of heaven. Better than the writings of schoolmen, better than the lives of the saints, will such an experience be for you; therefore treat it with reverence and tenderness; for it is an epistle written by the finger of God on an innocent and guileless heart.

Consider, too, what sublimity of faith these little ones possess! The angels believe; for they know and see; men believe—upon "good security" and indisputable "evidences;" a little child believes in God and loves its Saviour simply on your representation. O cold and doubting hearts!—asking science and philosophy, height and depth, to explain; terrified but not instructed by the eternal silence of the infinite spaces above you!—humble yourselves, that you may be exalted; become fools, that you may become wise! The human intellect is a blind guide, but if you seek God through the *heart*, then "a little child can lead you."

In your intercourse with young children, try and estimate rightly *their delicate fancy*; for they are the true poets.

"Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter darkness,
But trailing clouds of glory do they
come."

And I think it was of them God thought when he made the flowers and butterflies. Their little voices are the natural key of music, their graceful carriage and sprightly abandon the very poetry of motion. As Michael Angelo's imprisoned angel pleaded out of dumb marble, so the divinity within them pleads in the beauty of their forms, the clear heaven of their eyes, the white purity of their souls, for knowledge and enlargement.

"Only a little child!" O mother! saved by thy child-bearing in faith and holiness; peradventure thou nursest an angel! O teacher! made honorable by thine office, how knowest thou but what thy class is a veritable school of the prophets, and that children "set for the rise and the fall of many in Israel" are under thy hand?

We are accustomed to speak of the "simplicity" of a child, *I know* that mysteries are revealed unto babes, hid from the men full of years and high on the staff of worldly wisdom. And I remember that case in old Jerusalem. He who spake as never man spake "took a little child and set him in the midst" for an example. So, then, while given to our charge they are also set for our instruction. Like them, we are to receive the kingdom of God, believing without a cavil or a doubt in our Father's declarations. Like them, we are to depend on our Father in Heaven for our daily bread, being careful for nothing. Like them, we are to retain no resentments, and if angry, to be easily pacified. Like them, we are to be free from ambition and avarice, from pride and disdain. These things are not natural to us, else Jesus had not said, "Ye must *become* as little children," and that except we do so *we shall not enter the kingdom of Heaven*.

And that we might not err, God has set these visiting angels at our firesides, and at our tables; he has made them bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh; nay, he has placed them in the heavens like a star,—

"To beacon us to the abode
Where the eternal are."

Pass by the Learned, the Mighty, and the Wise, for they are dust; but let us reverence the "Little Children," for they are God's messengers to us.

On Naming Children

THERE is a kind of physiognomy in the names of men and women as well as in their faces; our Christian name is ourself in our thoughts and in the thoughts of those who know us, and nothing can separate it from our existence. Unquestionably, also, there is a luck in names,

and a certain success in satisfying the public ear. To select fortunate names, the *bona nomina* of Cicero, was anciently a matter of such solicitude that it became a popular axiom, "A good name is a good fortune." From a good name arises a good anticipation, a fact novelists and dramatists readily recognize; indeed, Shakespeare makes Falstaff consider that "the purchase of a commodity of good names" was all that was necessary to propitiate good fortune.

Imagine two persons starting in life as rivals in any profession, and without doubt he who had the more forcible name would become the more familiar with the public, and would therefore, in a business sense, be likely to be the more successful. We all know that there are names that circulate among us instantly, and make us friends with their owners, though we have never seen them. They are lucky people whose sponsors thus cast their names in pleasant and fortunate places.

It is a matter, then, of surprise that among civilized nations the generality, even of educated people, are so careless on this subject. Now evil is as often wrought for want of thought as for want of knowledge, and as a stimulant to thought in parents the following suggestions are offered.

It is not well to call the eldest son after the father, and the eldest daughter after the mother. The object of names is to prevent confusion, and this is not attained when the child's name is the same as the parent's. Nor does the addition of "junior" or "senior" rectify the fault; besides, the custom provokes the disrespectful addition of "old" to the father. There is another very subtle danger in calling children after parents. Such children are very apt to be regarded with an undue partiality. This is a feeling never acknowledged, perhaps, but which nevertheless makes its way into the hearts of the best of men and women. It is easier to keep out evil than to put it out.

If the surname is common, the Christian name should be peculiar. Almost any prefix is pardonable to "Smith." John Smith has no individuality left, but Godolphin Smith really reads aristocratically. James Brown is no one, but Sequard Brown and Ignatius Brown are lifted out of the crowd. Some people get out of this difficulty by iterating the name so as to compel respect. Thus, Jones Jones, of Jones's Hall, has a moral swagger about it that would be sure to carry it through.

It is often a great advantage to have a very odd name, a little difficult to remember at first, but which when once learned bites itself into the memory. For instance, there was Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy; we have to make a hurdle-race over it, but once in the mind it is never forgot.

Remember in giving names that the children when grown up may be in situations where they will have frequently to sign their initials, and do not give names that might in this situation provoke contemptuous remark. For instance, David Oliver Green,—the initials make "dog;" Clara Ann Thompson,—the initials spell "cat." Neither should a name be given whose initial taken in conjunction with the surname suggests a foolish idea, as Mr. P. Cox, or Mrs. T. Potts.

If the child is a boy, it may be equally uncomfortable for him to have a long string of names. Suppose that in adult life he becomes a merchant or banker, with plenty of business to do, then he will not be well pleased to write "George Henry Talbot Robinson" two or three hundred times a day.

It is not a bad plan to give girls only one baptismal name, so that if they marry they can retain their maiden surname: as Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Harriet Beecher Stowe. This is the practice among the Society of Friends, and is worthy of more general adoption, for we should then know at once on seeing the name of a lady whether she was married, and if so, what her family name was. In Geneva and many provinces of France the maiden family name of the wife is added to the surname of the husband; thus, if a Marie Perrot married Adolphe Lauve, they would after marriage write their names respectively, Adolphe Perrot-Lauve and Marie Perrot-Lauve. The custom serves to distinguish the bachelor from the married man, and is worthy of imitation; for if Vanity unites in the same escutcheon the arms of husband and wife, ought not Affection to blend their names?

Generally the modern "ie," which is appended to all names that will admit of it, renders them senseless and insipid. Where is the improvement in transforming the womanly loveliness of Mary into Mollie? Imagine a Queen Mollie, or Mollie Queen of Scots! There is something like sacrilege in such a transformation. Take Margaret, and mutilate the pearl-like name into Maggie, and its purity like a halo vanishes, and we have a very commonplace idea in its stead. If we must have diminutives, commend us to the old style. Polly, Kitty, Letty, Dolly, were names with some sense and work in them, and which we pronounce like articulate sounds.

There is no greater injustice than the infliction of a whimsical or unworld-like name on helpless infancy; for, as it is aptly said, "How many are there who might have done exceedingly well in the world had not their characters and spirits been totally *Nicodemused* into nothing!"

It is certainly a grave question if in the matter of Christian names our regard for the dead past should blind our eyes to the future comfort and success of our children. Why have we so many George Washingtons? The name is a great burden for any boy. He will always feel it. Inferiority to his namesake is inevitable. Besides, this promiscuous use of great names degrades them; it is not a pleasant thing to see a George Washington or a Benjamin Franklin in the police news for petty larceny.

For the most part Old Testament names are defective in euphony, and very inharmonious with English family names. The female names are still less musical. Nothing can reconcile us to Naomi Brett, Hephzibah Dickenson, or Dinah Winter. And to prove that the unpleasant effect

produced by such combinations does not result from the surnames selected, let us substitute appellations unexceptionable, and the result will be even worse,—Naomi Pelham, Hephzibah Howard, Dinah Neville! A Hebrew Christian name requires, in most cases, a Hebrew surname.

Some parents very wisely refuse for their children all names susceptible of the *nicking* process, thinking with Dr. Dove that “it is not a good thing to be Tom’d or Bob’d, Jack’d or Jim’d, Sam’d or Ben’d, Will’d or Bill’d, Joe’d or Jerry’d, as you go through the world.” Sobriquets are to be equally deprecated. We know a beautiful woman who when a girl was remarkable for a wealth of rippling, curling hair. Some one gave her the name of “Friz,” and it still sticks to the dignified matron. Wit, or would-be wit, delights to exercise itself after this fashion, but a child’s name is too precious a thing to be ridiculed.

Fanciful names are neither always pretty nor prudent. Parents have need of the gift of prophecy who call their children Grace, Faith, Hope, Fortune, Love, etc. It is possible that their after-life may turn such names into bitter irony.

For the sake of conciliating a rich friend never give a child a disagreeable or barbaric name. It will be a thorn in his side as long as he lives, and after all he may miss the legacy.

A child, too, may have such an assembly of unrhythmical names that he and his friends have to go jolting over them all their lives. Suppose a boy is called Richard Edward Robert. The ear in a moment detects a jumble of sounds of which it can make nothing. If many Christian names are decided upon, string them together on some harmonious principle; names that are mouthfuls of consonants cannot be borne without bad consequences to the owner.

The euphony of our nomenclature would be greatly improved by a judicious adaptation of the Christian name to the surname. When the surname is a monosyllable the Christian name should be long. Nothing can reconcile the ear to such curt names as Mark Fox, Luke Harte, Ann Scott; but Gilbert Fox, Alexander Hart, and Cecilia Scott are far from despicable.

Among the many excellent Christian names, it is astonishing that so few should be in ordinary use. The dictionaries contain lists of about two hundred and fifty male and one hundred and fifty female names, but out of these not more than twenty or thirty for each sex can be called at all common.

Yet our language has many beautiful names, both male and female, worthy of a popularity they have not yet attained. Among the male, for instance,—Alban, Ambrose, Bernard, Clement, Christopher, Gilbert, Godfrey, Harold, Michael, Marmaduke, Oliver, Paul, Ralph, Rupert, Roger, Reginald, Roland, Sylvester, Theobald, Urban, Valentine, Vincent, Gabriel, Tristram, Norman, Percival, Nigel, Lionel, Nicholas, Eustace, Colin, Sebastian, Basil, Martin, Antony, Claude, Justus, Cyril, etc.,—all of which have the attributes of euphony, good etymology, and interesting associations.

And among female names why have we not more girls called by the noble or graceful appellations of Agatha, Alethia, Arabella, Beatrice, Bertha, Cecilia, Evelyn, Ethel, Gertrude, Isabel, Leonora, Florence, Mildred, Millicent, Philippa, Pauline, Hilda, Clarice, Amabel, Irene, Zoe, Muriel, Estelle, Eugenia, Euphemia, Christabel, Theresa, Marcia, Antonia, Claudia, Sibylla, Rosabel, Rosamond, etc.?

There are some curious superstitions regarding the naming of children, which, as a matter of gossip, are worth a passing notice. The peasantry of Sussex believe that if a child receive the name of a dead brother or sister, it also will die at an early age. In some parts of Ireland it is thought that giving the child the name of one of its parents abridges the life of that parent. It is generally thought lucky to have the initials of Christian name and surname the same, and also to have the initials spell some word. In the northwestern parts of Scotland a newly named infant is vibrated gently two or three times over a flame, with the words, “Let the flames consume thee now or never;” and this lustration by fire is common to-day in the Hebrides and Western Isles. There is a wide-spread superstition that a child who does not cry at its baptism will not live; also one which considers it specially unlucky if anything interferes to prevent the baptism at the exact time first appointed. In many parts of Scotland if children of different sexes are at the font, the minister who attempted to baptize the girl before the boy would be interrupted. It is said to be peculiarly unfortunate to the child if a priest that is left-handed christens it. In Cumberland and Westmoreland a child going to be christened carries with it a slice of bread and cheese, and this is given to the first person met. In return the recipient must give the babe three different things, and wish it health and fortune. We have witnessed the last-mentioned custom very frequently, and once in a farm-house at the foot of Saddleback Mountain we saw a very singular method of deciding what the name of the child should be. Six candles of equal length were named, and all lit at the same moment. The babe was called after the candle which burned the longest.

We have mentioned these superstitions as curious proofs that our ignorant ancestors considered the naming of children an important event; and we should feel sorry if they tended to weaken in any measure previous thoughts. For, careless as we may be of the fact, it still remains a fact beyond doubt, that the name of a person is the sound that suggests the idea of him or her,—it is a portrait painted in letters. Therefore we cannot be too careful not to give one that will be a shame or an embarrassment, or which will even condemn the bearer to the commonplace.

The Children's Table

IT is to be hoped that the best way of feeding children in order to produce the finest possible physical development will ere long have the amount of attention that is devoted to the improvement of horses, cattle, and sheep. For both men and women have begun to realize that mentally and spiritually we are largely dependent on the co-operation of a healthy body; hence there has arisen a certain school, not inaptly designated "Muscular Christianity."

The physical welfare of a child is the first consideration forced upon the mother. Long before the intellect dawns, long before it knows good from evil, there is important work to do. A healthy, pure dwelling-place is to be begun for the lofty guests of mind and soul. Alas, how little has this been considered! How often have great minds been cramped by sickly, dwarfed bodies! How often have aspiring souls been bound by earthly fetters of irritating pain!

Who shall deliver children from the unwise indulgences, fanciful theories, and inherited mistakes of their parents? This is not the province of religion; a mother may be intensely religious, and at the same time cruelly ignorant in the treatment of the child,—whom yet she loves with all her heart.

When men and women lived simply and naturally Nature in a large measure took care of her own; but in our artificial life we must seek the aid of Science to find our way back to Nature. And if science has been able to teach us how to improve our breed of horses, and bring to a state of physical perfection our cattle and sheep, by simply selecting nutriment, she can also give the seeking mother directions for building up a strong and healthy body for the immortal soul to tarry in and work from. For, humiliating as we may regard it, we cannot battle off this fact of God, that the vital processes in animals and men are substantially the same.

In the dietary of children the two great mistakes are over-feeding and under-feeding; but of the two evils the last is the worst. Repletion is less injurious than inanition; and according to my observation gluttony is the vice of adults rather than of children. If they do exceed, the cause may generally be traced to the fact that they have suffered a long want of the article they revel in. For instance, if at rare intervals candies and sweetmeats are within their reach, they do generally make themselves sick with an over supply of them; but this is but the Nemesis that ever follows unnatural deprivations of any kind.

Nothing is more necessary to a child than sugar. Its love of it is not so much to please its palate as to satisfy an urgent craving of its necessity. Sugar is so important a substance in the chemical changes going on in the body that many other compounds have to be reduced to sugar before they are available as heat-making constituents. In fact the liver is a factory for transforming much of the nutriment we take, in other forms, into sugar.

It may be said, "If sugar is a great heat-maker, so also is fat meat, which most children very much dislike." The one fact proves the other. Fat meat and sugar are both great heat-producers, but the child craves sugar and dislikes fat because its weak organism can deal with the sugar, but cannot manage the fat. Every mother must have noticed that delicate children turn sick at fat meat and usually crave sweets. Poor little things! they want something to make the vital fire burn more rapidly. Sugar in proper proportions is fuel judiciously added; fat is fuel they have not strength to assimilate, and therefore reject. Of course no mother understands me to say that children should therefore be fed on sugar; but only that they should have a fair and regular proportion of it in some form or other; in which case they would feel no more temptation to exceed in occasional opportunities.

Another dominant desire with growing children is fruit. They will eat fruits, ripe or unripe; a sour apple or a ripe strawberry seems equally acceptable. It is common to attribute summer complaints of all kinds to them, and to carefully limit children in their use. The fact is that all fruits contain a vegetable acid which is a powerful tonic and one peculiarly acceptable to the stomach. Fruits ought to form a part of every child's food all the year round,—fresh fruits in summer, apples and oranges in winter. But they must be given regularly with the meals, and not between them. They will then fulfil their tonic office in the system, and never under ordinary circumstances do the least harm.

How often have we seen children in mistaken kindness largely restricted to bread and milk, puddings and vegetables; nay, told in answer to their craving looks that "meat was not good for little boys and girls." Now, consider first why adults eat meat. Is it not to repair the loss we suffer from active work, the exhaustion from mental efforts, and to supply afresh the vital warmth, much of which is lost every day by simple radiation? In all these ways children usually exhaust life quicker than adults. They run where we walk, they jump, they skip, they are seldom still. Their studies are as severe a mental strain to them as our business cares to us. Their bodies are quite as much exposed to loss of heat by radiation as ours—in some cases more so. But children have a most important demand on their vitality which adults have not: they have to grow. Who, therefore, needs strong and nutritious food more than children? They ought to have meat, plenty of it, as much as they desire; and with the meat, bread and vegetables, milk, sweets, and fruits. For variety is another grand condition of healthy food,—no one kind of food (however good) being able to supply all the different elements the body needs for perfect health and fine development.

If children have any urgent desire for some particular diet it would be well for parents to

hesitate and investigate before denying them. They have no means of coming to any secret understanding with the child's stomach; but Nature generally asks pertinaciously for any special necessity, and Nature is never wrong. Neither is it well to limit the quantity any more than the kind of food given to children. Their necessities vary with causes too involved for any parent constantly to keep in view. The state of the weather, the amount of electricity, or moisture in the atmosphere, study, sleep, exercise, the condition of digestion, even the mental temper of the child might differently influence the condition and demands of nearly every meal. No dietary theory that did not consider all these and many more conditions would be reliable. What, then, are we to do? Have more confidence in natural instincts. If children ask "for more," ten to one they feel more truly than we can reason on this subject.

On general principles it may be assumed children ask as directed by Nature; they desire what she needs and as much as she needs. Of course, all advice must be of a general nature; special limitations are supposed in the power of every thoughtful mother. But the great principle is to remember that energy depends on the amount, not of food, but of nutritive food; for if a pound of one kind of food gives as much nutriment as four pounds of another, surely that is best for children (and adults too) which tries their digestion least.

What the next generation will be depends upon the physical, mental, and moral training of the children of to-day. These children are the to-morrow of society. Are they to be puny and dyspeptic, fretting and worrying through life as through a task? Or, are they to be finely developed, sweetbreathed, clear-eyed, light-spirited mediums for divine aspirations and intellectual and material works?

O mothers! do not despise the humble-looking foundation-stone of life—good health. You have the earliest building up of the body; see that you spare no elements necessary for its perfection. Be liberal; doubt your own theories rather than Nature; trust the child where you are at a loss, just as a lost man throws the reins on his horse's neck and trusts to something subtler than reason—instinct.

In whatever light the subject of children's food is regarded, the great principle is we—cannot get power out of nothing. If the child is to have health, energy, intellect, there must be present the necessary physical conditions. These are not the result of accident, but of generous consideration.

Intellectual "Cramming" of Boys

A LITTLE girl, who made a study of epitaphs, was greatly puzzled to know "where all the bad people were buried." Perhaps just as great a puzzle to a reflective mind is, What comes of all the promising boys?

We will allow, first, that a great deal of "promise" exists only in the partiality of parents; that a bright, intense childhood is frequently so different from the mechanical routine of adult life that the simple difference strikes the parent as something remarkable, whereas it is, perhaps, only a strong case of contrast between the natural and the artificial. This is proven by the fact that as the boy becomes part and parcel of the every-day world he gradually falls into its ways, adopts its tone, and in no respect attempts to rise above its level.

Fortunately, however, the change is so gradual that parents scarcely perceive when or how they lost their exalted hopes; and by the time that Jack or Will has imbibed a fair amount of knowledge, and settled contentedly down to his desk and high stool, they also are well pleased and inclined to forget that they had ever dreamt the boy might sit upon the bench, or, perhaps, fill with honor the Presidential chair.

Allowing such boys a very respectable minority, and allowing also a large margin for that unfortunate class who

"Wise so young, they say, do ne'er live
long,"

there is still good reason for us to ask, What becomes of all the promising boys?

We are inclined to arraign as the first and foremost of deceivers and defrauders in this matter the modern educational art of *Cram*. It is to education what adulteration is to commerce. It is far worse, for here it is not money that is stolen, it is a parent's best and highest hopes; it is a boy's whole future life and its success. For the system rests upon a fallacy, namely, that it is possible for boys of twenty to know everything, from the multiplication-table to metaphysics, from Greek plays to theological dogmas.

To the average boy such intellectual feats are simply impossible; but he is plucky and fertile in expedients; he is neither disposed to be beaten nor able really to overtake his task, so he uses his brains carefully, and makes the greatest possible show on the greatest possible number of subjects.

Perhaps nothing in our present system of education is so demoralizing and unjust as the custom of public examinations. In them interest and vanity play into each other's hands; genuine acquirement and principle "go to the wall." The teachers and the boys alike know that they are never true criterions of progress, that they are seldom even fair representations of the actual course of study. Weeks, months are spent in preparations for the deceitful display; even then true merit, which is generally modest by nature, does itself injustice, and vain self-assurance comes off with flying colors.

The Cram teacher scatters seed over a large amount of mental surface, instead of thoroughly cultivating the most promising portions; and he brings before the parents and the public the few ears gleaned on all the acres as samples of crops which he knows never will be gathered. Yet to his own pedantic vanity, or his self-interest, he sacrifices the prime of many a fine boy's life. Therefore we are disposed to believe that if parents would inexorably refuse to sanction these pretentious public displays, there would be probably a much less accumulation of bare facts, but a far greater cultivation of natural abilities, and a far more thorough development of decided aptitudes.

Mechanical drudgery, instead of intelligent labor, is the inevitable method where cramming a boy, instead of educating him, is the favorite system. No mental faculties, except the memory, receive any discipline, and the knowledge disappears as fast as it was gained. All taste for laborious habits of thought are lost, and if a boy originally possessed a love for learning he is soon disgusted at what his simple nature tells him is pretence and unreal, and judging the true by a false standard he conceives an honest disgust for intellectual labor, and pronounces it all a sham.

Few boys can even mentally go through a course of "cramming" and come out uninjured. The majority of the finest intellects develop tardily, and their superiority is in fact greatly dependent upon the staying powers conferred by physical strength and wisely considered conditions. There are of course exceptions, where an inherited force of genius stamps the boy from the first and defies all systems to crush it. But it is the average boy, and not the exceptional one, that must be considered in all methods of education.

In this matter boys are not to be blamed. They naturally accept the master's opinions as to the value of his plan; they rather enjoy a neck-and-neck race with each other in superficial acquirements, and the whole tendency of our social life supports the tempting theory. Every one wants to possess without the trouble of acquiring; every one would have a reputation without the labor of earning it. In an age which prides itself upon the speed with which it does everything, which makes a merit of doing whatever is to be done in the shortest and quickest way possible, it is easy to perceive how a certain class of teachers, and parents too, would be willing to believe that the old up-hill road to knowledge might be graded and lined and made available for rapid transit.

But nothing can be more illogical than to apply social rules and conditions to mental ones. The former are constantly changing, the latter obey fixed and immutable laws. There is not, there never has been, there never will be, any short cuts to universal knowledge; and the boy who is made to waste time seeking one will have either to relinquish his object altogether, or else, turning back to the main road, find his early companions who kept to it hopelessly ahead of him. Learning is a plant that grows slowly and whose fruit must be waited for. It is a long time, even after having learned anything, *that we know it well.*

The Servant-Girl's Point of View

A GREAT deal has been said lately on the servant-girl question, always from the mistresses' point of view; and as no *ex-parte* evidence is conclusive, I offer for the servant-girl side some points that may help to a better understanding of the whole subject.

It is said, on all hands, that servants every year grow more idle, showy, impudent, and independent. The last charge is emphatically true, and it accounts for and includes the others. But then this independence is the necessary result of the world's progress, in which all classes share. Steam has made it easy for families to travel, who, without cheap locomotion, would never go one hundred miles from home. It has also made it easy for servants to go from city to city. When wages are low and service is plenty in one place, a few dollars will carry them to where they are in request.

Fifty years ago very few servants read, or cared to read. They are now the best patrons of a certain class of newspapers; they see the "Want columns" as well as other people; and they are quite capable of appreciating the lessons they teach and the advantages they offer. The national increase of wealth has also affected the position of servants. People keep more servants than they used to keep; and servants have less work to do. People live better than they used to live, and servants, as well as others, feel the mental uplifting that comes from rich and plentiful food.

But one of the main causes of trouble is that a mistress even yet hires her servant with some

ancient ideas about her inferiority. She forgets that servants read novels, and do fancy work, and write lots of letters; and that service can no longer be considered the humble labor of a lower for a superior being. Mistresses must now dismiss from their minds the idea of the old family servant they have learned to meet in novels; they must cease to look upon service as in any way a family tie; they must realize and practically acknowledge the fact that the relation between mistress and servant is now on a purely commercial basis,—the modern servant being a person who takes a certain sum of money for the performance of certain duties. Indeed the condition has undergone just the same change as that which has taken place in the relation between the manufacturer and his artisans, or between the contractor and his carpenters and masons.

It is true enough that servants take the money and do not perform the duties, or else perform them very badly. The manufacturer, the contractor, the merchant, all make the same complaint; for independence and social freedom always step *before* fitness for these conditions, because the condition is necessary for the results, and the results are not the product of one generation. Surely Americans may bear their domestic grievances without much outcry, since they are altogether the consequences of education and progress, and are the circumstances which make possible much higher and better circumstances.

For just as soon as domestic service is authoritatively and publicly made a commercial bargain, and all other ideas eliminated from it, service will attract a much higher grade of women. The independent, fairly well-read American girl will not sell her labor to women who insist on her giving any part of her personality but the work of her hands. She feels interference in her private affairs to be an impertinence on any employer's part. She does not wish any mistress to take an interest in her, to advise, to teach, or reprove her. She objects to her employer being even what is called "friendly." All she asks is to know her duties and her hours, and to have a clear understanding as to her work and its payment. And when service is put upon this basis openly, it will draw to it many who now prefer the harder work, poorer pay, but larger independence, of factories.

Servants are a part of our social system, but our social system is being constantly changed and uplifted, and servants rise with it. I remember a time in England when servants who did not fulfil their year's contract were subject to legal punishment; when a certain quality of dress was worn by them, and those who over-dressed did so at the expense of their good name; when they seldom moved to any situation beyond walking distance from their birthplace; when, in fact, they were more slaves than servants. Would any good woman wish to restore service to this condition?

On the servant's part the root of all difficulty is her want of respect for her work; and this, solely because her work has not yet been openly and universally put upon a commercial basis. When domestic service is put on the same plane as mechanical service, when it is looked upon as a mere business bargain, then the servant will not feel it necessary to be insolent and to do her work badly, simply to let her employer know how much she is above it. Much has been done to degrade service by actors, newspapers, and writers of all kinds giving to the domestic servant names of contempt as "flunkies," "menials," etc., etc. If such terms were habitually used regarding mechanics, we might learn to regard masons and carpenters with disdain. Yet domestic service is as honorable as mechanical service, and the woman who can cook a good dinner is quite as important to society as the man who makes the table on which it is served.

Yet, whether mistresses will recognize the change or not, service has in a great measure emancipated itself from feudal bonds. Servants have now a social world of their own, of which their mistresses know nothing at all. In it they meet their equals, make their friends, and talk as they desire. Without unions, without speeches, and without striking,—because they can get what they want without striking,—they have raised their wages, shortened their hours, and obtained many privileges. And the natural result is an independence—which for lack of proper expression asserts itself by the impertinence and self-conceit of ignorance—that has won more in tangible rights than in intangible respect.

Mistresses who have memories or traditions are shocked because servants do not acknowledge their superiority, or in any way reverence their "betters." But reverence for any earthly thing is the most un-American of attitudes. Reverence is out of date and offensively opposed to free inquiry. Parents do not exact it, and preachers do not expect it,—the very title of "Rev." is now a verbal antiquity. Do we not even put our rulers through a course of hand-shaking in order to divest them of any respect the office might bring? Why, then, expect a virtue from servants which we do not practise in our own stations?

It is said, truly enough, that servants think of nothing but dress. Alas, mistresses are in the same transgression! This is the fault of machinery. When servants wore mob-caps and gingham, mistresses wore muslins and merinos, and were passing fine with one good silk dress. Machinery has made it possible for mistresses to get lots of dresses, and if servants are now fine and tawdry, it is because there is a general leaning that way. Servants were neat when every one else was neat.

To blame servants for faults we all share is really not reasonable. It must be remembered that women of all classes dress to make themselves attractive, and attractive mainly to the opposite sex. What the young ladies in the parlor do to make themselves beautiful to their lovers, the servants in the kitchen imitate. Both classes of young women are anxious to marry. There is no harm in this desire in either case. With the hopes of the young ladies we do not meddle; why then interfere about nurse and the policeman? service is not an elysium under the most

favorable circumstances. No girl gets fond of it, and a desire to be mistress of her own house—however small it may be—is not a very shameful kicking against Providence.

The carrying out of three points, would probably revolutionize the whole condition of service:—

First. The relation should be put upon an absolutely commercial basis; and made as honorable as mechanical, or factory, or store service.

Second. Duties and hours should be clearly defined. There should be no interference in personal matters. There should be no more personal interest expected, or shown, than is the rule between any other employer and employee.

Third. If it were possible to induce yearly engagements, they should be the rule; for when people know they have to put up with each other for twelve months, they are more inclined to be patient and forbearing; they learn to make the best of each other's ways; and bearing becomes liking, and habit strengthens liking, and so they go on and on, and are pretty well satisfied.

Extravagance

THE Anglo-Saxon race is inherently extravagant. The lord and leader of the civilized world, it clothes itself in purple and fine linen, and lives sumptuously every day, as a prerogative of its supremacy.

This trait is a very early one, and the barbaric extravagance of "The Field of the Cloth of Gold" only typified that passion of the race for splendid apparel and accessories which in our day has reached a point of general and prodigal pomp and ostentation.

No other highly civilized nations have this taste for personal parade and luxurious living to the same extent. The French, who enjoy a reputation for all that is pretty and elegant, are really parsimonious, and it is as natural for a Frenchman to hoard his money as it is for a dog to bury his bone, while a Dutchman or a German can grow rich on a salary which keeps an American always scrambling on the verge of bankruptcy.

Some time ago Lord Derby said: "Englishmen are the most extravagant race in the world, or, at least, only surpassed by the Americans." And the "surpassing" in this direction is so evident to any one familiar with the two countries that it requires no demonstration,—an American household, even in the middle classes, being a model school for throwing away the most money for the least possible returns.

American women have a reputation for lavish expenditure that is world-wide, but they are not more extravagant than American men. If one spends money on beautiful toilets and splendidly dreary entertainments, the other flings it away on the turf, on cards or billiards, or in masculine prodigalities still more objectionable. In most fashionable houses the husband and wife are equally extravagant, and the candle blazes away at both ends.

To foreigners, the most noticeable extravagance of Americans is in the matter of flowers. Winter or summer, women of very modest means must have flowers for their girdle. They will pay fifty cents for a rose or two when half-dollars are by no means plentiful, and it is such a pretty womanly taste that no man has the heart to grumble at it; only, if the women themselves would add up the amount of money spent in this transitory luxury, say during three months, they would be astonished at their own thoughtlessness.

For of all pleasures flower-buying is the most evanescent; before the day is over the fading buds are cast into the refuse cart, and the money might just as well have been cast into the street.

As for the amount spent in floral displays at weddings, funerals, theatres, balls, and dinners, it must be presumed that people who thus waste hundreds of dollars on articles that are useless in a few hours have the hundreds of dollars to throw away, and that they enjoy the pastime of making floral ducks and drakes with their money. But if they do not enjoy it, then why do they not imitate the economy of Beau Brummel, who, when compelled by his debts to make some sacrifice of luxuries, resolved to begin retrenchment by curtailing the rose water for his bath?

Large floral outlays are just as fantastic an extravagance, for though flowers in moderation are beautiful, in excess they are vulgar, and even disagreeable. The Greeks, who made no mistakes about beauty and fitness, contented themselves with a garland and a rose for their wine cup. They would never have danced and feasted and wedded themselves in a charnel-house of dying flowers.

Our dressing and dining is done on the same immense scale. Lucullus might preside at our feasts, and queens envy the jewels and costumes of our women. Perhaps the size of the country and its transcendent possibilities in every direction instinctively incite those who have the means to lavishness of outlay. People who live under bright high skies, and whose horizons are wide and far-reaching, imbibe a largeness of expression which is not satisfied with mere words; and if we look at our extravagance in this way, we may regard it as a national trait, developed

from our natural position and advantages.

Of course, it is easy to say that Americans are lavish because, as Dr. Watts puts it, "it is their nature to" be, but the real reason for the overgrown luxury of the last two or three decades is to be found in the rapid increase of the vulgar rich, the very last class worthy of our imitation. Are not the absurd blunders of the poor man who strikes oil a common subject for witticisms and stories?

Profuse display will probably be the only social grace the newly rich can dispense. So, then, if wealth increases more rapidly than culture, it is sure, in the very nature of things, to be squandered ostentatiously; for the men whose minds are in a stunted state, being fit for nothing else, will throw their money away on cards or horses or any other fashionable form of dissipation; and the women in the same mental incompleteness, knowing nothing but how to dress and dance, when they have wealth thrust upon them will be able to find no better use for it than to dress and dance all the more conspicuously.

This senseless love of display, once inaugurated in a city set or in a small town, is apt to take the lead: first, because all the snobs will cater to it; second, because sensible people know that they cannot start a reform movement without making themselves unpopular, and going to a great deal of trouble and expense.

For, however extravagant the machinery of society is, it has the enormous advantage of being there, and few people can afford to live against it. For to do as every one else does, and to go with the stream, is much easier than to set good examples that no one wants to follow. Indeed it takes a tremendous exercise of pluck, thought, trouble, time, and energy to reduce an establishment that has been an extravagant one to a more economical footing.

The justification of private extravagant expenditure is found in the necessity of a class who will have leisure to encourage the intellectual tastes and ambitions of the nation. And this end might be accomplished if only matters could be so arranged that a shower of gold should descend on the right people in the right place at the right time.

But wealth is no more to the worthy than the race is to the strong, and so it often finds outlets for dispersion for which there is no justification, and whose sole object is that sensual life pictured in "Lothair,"—fine houses, great retinues, costly clothing, clubs, yachts, conservatories, etc., etc.,—in fact, an existence without a crumpled rose-leaf, that would make a man a mixture of the sybarite and satyr. Such specimens of humanity may occasionally be found in America, but they are not yet a distinct class, nor are they likely to become one in our pushing, up-and-down, constantly changing society. Indeed, amid the earnest strivings, the intellectual aspirings and the mechanical wonders of steam and electricity which environ us, a semi-monster of the Lothair type would be as incongruous as a faun on the Avenue or a Pagan temple on mid-Broadway.

If we would only take the trouble to examine the facts before our eyes we have constantly in our university towns the proof that high culture and moderation in dress and living go together. Take Cambridge, Mass., for instance; its very best society is singularly unostentatious, and the wives and daughters of its educated dignitaries entertain without extravagance, and look for respect and admiration from some loftier standpoint than their dress trimmings.

Ought we to Wear Mourning?

THIS is a question that from the earliest days of Christianity has at times agitated the Church. It was specially dominant in the first centuries, when every divergence from Jewish or Pagan rites was almost an act of faith. Now the Jews, after the death of their relatives, wore sackcloth during their time of mourning, which lasted from seven to forty days. They sat on the ground, and ate their food off the earth; they neither dressed themselves, nor made their beds, nor went into the bath, nor saluted any one. This excess of grief rarely lasted long; then a great feast was made for the surviving friends of the dead; or the bread and meat were placed upon his grave for the benefit of the poor. (Tobit iv. 17; Eccles. xxx. 18; and Baruch vi. 27.)

It was natural for the Christian, with the hope set before him, to oppose this despairing sorrow, and we find Saint Jerome praising those who partially abandoned it; while Cyprian declares he was "ordered by Divine revelation to preach that Christians should not lament their brethren delivered from the world, nor wear any mourning habits for them, seeing that they were gone to put on white raiment, nor give occasion for unbelievers by lamenting those as lost whom we affirm to be with God."

As the Church lapsed from its simplicity into forms and ceremonies, vestments of all kinds, and for every purpose and occasion, gained importance; and the first serious protestation against mourning garments came from the Quakers. To these spiritual men and women it seemed absurd to wear black garments for those whom they believed had put on everlasting white. The majority of the early Methodists held the same opinion, though in a less positive form. It is remarkable, however, that Christians alone assume the woeful, despairing black garments

which seem to denote not only the loss of life, but the end of hope. Ancient Egypt wore yellow in memory of departed friends; the Greeks and Romans used white garments for mourning; the Chinese also consecrate white to the services of death, and the Mohammedans wear blue, because it is the color of the visible heavens.

Therefore I ask, if we must wear a distinct dress to typify our sorrow, why black? Black has now become objectionable from having lost all the sacred meaning it once possessed. It is no longer the livery of grief. The blonde belle wears it because it sets off her fine complexion; the brunette, because it admits of the vivid contrasts so suitable to her brilliant beauty. The prudent wear it because it is economical and ladylike; and all women know that it imparts grace and dignity, and drapes beautifully; so, for these and many other reasons, it has within the last fifty years become an every-day dress, one just as likely to express vanity as grief.

The reasons set forth by the Quakers for its abandonment cover the ground, and are at least worthy of our consideration. They are: First, that mourning had its origin in a state of barbarism, and prior to the revelation of "life eternal through Jesus Christ," and is therefore not to be observed in civilized and Christianized countries. Second, that the trappings of grief are childish where the grief is real, and mockery where it is not. Third, that mourning garments are absolutely useless: for if they are intended to remind us of our affliction, true grief needs no such reminder; if to point out our grief to others, they are an impertinence, for true sorrow courts seclusion; and if as a consolation, they are only powerful to remind of an irrevocable past. Fourth, their inconvenience: too often the house of death is turned by them into a busy work-shop; and the souls bowed down with grief are made to trouble themselves about mourning ornaments and becoming weeds. Fifth, their bad moral influence: the gracefulness of the costume stills the grief that ought to be stilled by religion; and as in a large family there must be many mourners in form only, the equivocation of dress is a sort of moral equivocation. Sixth, their expense. This is really a great item in the resources of the poor, and often straitens for years; besides causing them, in the hour of their desolation, to be so worried and anxious about the robing of the body as to miss all the lessons God intended for the soul.

The advocates for mourning plead the veiling of the heavens in black at the death of Christ; and the universality and continuance of the custom, in all ages, all countries, and all faiths. I am aware that the subject is one in which strangers cannot intermeddle; the question when it arises must be settled by every heart individually. But, at least, if mourning garments are to be worn, let us not defeat every argument in their favor by fashioning them of the richest stuffs, and in the most stylish manner. This is to ticket them as the thinnest of mockeries. And after all, if we approve mourning, and wish our friends to hold us in remembrance after death, can we not find a better way than by crape and bombazine? Yes, crape and bombazine wear out, and must finally be cast off; but the "memorial of virtue is immortal. When it is present, men take example of it, and when it is gone, they desire it: it weareth a crown, and triumpheth forever."

How To Have One's Portrait Taken

HAVING one's portrait taken is no longer an isolated event in one's life. It has become a kind of domestic and social duty, to which even though personally opposed, one must gracefully submit, unless he would incur the odium of neglecting the wishes of his family circle and the complimentary requests of his acquaintances.

It would seem at first sight that nothing is easier than to go to a photographer's and get a good likeness. Nothing is really more uncertain and disappointing. In turning over the albums of our friends, how often we pass the faces of acquaintances and don't know them at all! How is this? Simply because, at the moment when the picture was taken, the original was unlike herself. She was nervous, her head was screwed in a vise, her position had been selected for her, and she had been ordered to look at an indicated spot, and keep still. Such a position was like nothing in her real life, and the expression on the face was just as foreign. The features might be perfectly correct, but that inscrutable something which individualizes the face was lacking.

Now if the amenities of social life require us to have our pictures done, "it were as well they were well done," and much toward this end lies within the sitter's choice and power.

First as to the selection of the artist. It is a great mistake to imagine that photography is a mere mechanical trade. There is as much difference between two photographers as between two engravers. Nor will a fine lens alone produce a good picture. The pose of the sitter, the disposition of lights and shadows, the arrangement of drapery, are of the greatest consequence. A good artist has almost unlimited power in this direction. He can render certain parts thinner by plunging them into half-tone or by burying their outline in the shade, and he can deepen and augment other portions by surrounding them with light. Thus, if the head is too small for beauty, he can increase its size by throwing the light on the face; and if it is too large, he can diminish it by choosing a tint that would throw one half of the face into shadow.

If the artist has a lens which perpetually changes its focus, the result is a portrait in which the outlines are delicately soft and undefined. A *view lens*, or one that is perfectly flat, occupies

nearly two minutes to complete the likeness, and the consequence is, the sitter moves slightly, and the required softness is obtained in an accidental manner. It is evident, therefore, that the most rapidly taken pictures are not necessarily the best. Then people have a hundred different aspects, and to seize the best and reproduce it is the function of genius, and not of chemicals.

Having selected a good artist, and one, also, whose position has enabled him to secure the best tools, the next duty of the sitter regards herself and her costume. In photography a good portrait may be quite nullified by the choice of bad colors in dress. Finery is the curse of the artist, but if he works in oils he can leave it out or tone it down. In photography, as the sitter comes, so she must be taken, with all her excellences or her imperfections on her head.

The colors most luminous to the eye, as red, yellow, orange, are almost without action; green acts feebly; blue and violet are reproduced very promptly. If, then, a person of very fair complexion were taken in green, orange, or red, the lights would be very prominent, and the portrait lack energy and detail. The best of all dresses is black silk,—*silk*, not bombazine, or merino, or any cottony mixture, as the admirable effect depends on the gloss of the silk, which makes it full of subdued and reflected lights that give motion and play to the drapery. A dead-black dress without this shimmer would be represented by a uniform blotch; a white dress looks like a flat film of wax or a piece of card-board; but a combination of black net or lace over white is very effective, though rarely ventured upon. An admirable softness and depth of color are given to photographs by sealskin and velvet.

Complexion must be considered with dress. Blondes can wear much lighter colors than brunettes. Brunettes always make the best pictures when taken in dark dresses, but neither blondes nor brunettes look well in positive white. Are any pictures so universally ugly as bridal ones? All violent contrasts of color spoil a picture, and should be particularly guarded against; and jewelry imparts a look of vulgarity.

Blondes suffer most in photographic pictures; their golden hair loses all its brilliancy, and their blue eyes, so lovely to the poet, are perplexity to the photographer. Before facing the lens, blondes should powder their yellow hair nearly white; it is then brought to about the same photographic tint as in nature.

Freckles, which are hardly any blemish in the natural face, become, on account of their yellow tint, very unpleasantly distinct in a photographic picture, and often give to the face a decidedly spotted look. They are easily disguised for the occasion. There ought to be in the dressing-room of every studio a mixture of a little oxide of zinc and glycerine; this is to be thinned with rose-water till of the consistence of cream, and applied to the face with a piece of sponge previous to the photographing process. It leaves the skin a delicate white color, and masks all freckles and discolorations. Let a lady with freckles try her picture first without this mixture, and again after the sponge and the cosmetic, and the value of the receipt will be at once appreciated. Its use has long been advocated by the *British Journal of Photography*.

In connection with this fact we may offer a few words of advice to ladies whose skins are apt to tan and freckle when exposed to the summer sun. Blue is, of all colors, most readily affected by light; and yellow is, of all colors, the least readily susceptible to it. If, then, a fine complexion is desired, the blue veil must be rigorously discarded, however becoming. Green could take its place, but a little yellow net would be better to save a delicate complexion than all the washes and Kalydors ever invented. Freckles and tan are nothing more than the darkening of the salts of iron in the blood by the action of light; and as blue is, of all colors, most easily affected by it, as we have said, any one can see how destructive to a fine skin a blue veil must be in sunny weather.

If the photograph is to be colored, the shade of the costume is not nearly of so much importance; but it may always be borne in mind that close-fitting light garments increase the size of the head, hands, and feet, and that a flowing ample dress renders these parts light and delicate. The advantage of coloring photographs is very great, if the artist be an able and judicious one, for that *hardness* of outline, which is more artificial than natural, may be in a great measure remedied by a clever brush; only, always object to *solid* colors; the most transparent water-colors alone should be used. However, it is a disputed question whether artificial coloring, however well done, improves photographs, since it certainly, in some measure, robs them of that accuracy and that air of purity which are the distinctive claims of the art. The next improvement in this method of limning faces will undoubtedly be the compelling of the sun—the source of all color—to paint the pictures he draws; and a number of recent facts point to this improvement as very probable within a short time.

Never permit yourself to be the lay figure of a photographer's ideal landscapes. The cutting up of a portrait with balustrades, pillars, and gay parterres is fatal to the effect of the figure, which should be the only object to strike the eye. No photographic portrait looks so well as one with a perfectly plain background, but if some accessory is desired, then see that it does not turn the central figure into ridicule. If you have always lived in some modest home, do not be made to stand in marble halls or amid splendid imaginary domains. Young ladies reading in full evening costume, with water and swans behind them, or standing in trailing silks and laces in a mountain pass, are ridiculous enough. We saw a few days ago the face of a lovely girl looking out of a Champagne basket. The picture was artistically taken, but the extravagant conceit of the surroundings, utterly at variance with the original's character, completely spoiled the picture. We have in mind also a famous belle sitting in an elaborate toilet in a room full of books and materials for writing and study, though all her little world knows that she never reads aught but the lightest of novels, and never writes anything but an invitation or a love-letter. Actresses

taken in character may require an elaborate artificial background in order to assist the illusion, but private ladies, as a rule, look infinitely better without it.

In ladies' portraits the setting-off of beauty is the thing to be borne in mind. This, in a photograph, is, in a great measure, a question of lights and shadows, and of their distribution. For every face there is a light and a shadow to be specially selected as the one that will show it to the best advantage. The most becoming light is one level with, or even somewhat beneath, the face, it being a great mistake to suppose the foot-lights on the stage unbecoming. A top light, such as we get in ordinary photographic rooms, augments the projection of the forehead, and throws a deep shadow over the eyes. The bridge of the nose, the lower lip, and chin separate themselves, as it were, in clear lights, from the rest of the face, and such an effect is very unbecoming and inappropriate for a young girl.

If the features are prominent, a clear bright light increases very decidedly that prominence, and also imparts a peculiar hardness to the expression that has probably no existence in the model. Therefore insist that, as far as possible, the light from above shall be got rid of, and a light from the side brought into use.

There is as much character in the human figure as in the face; consequently full-length portraits are best, because they add to the facial resemblance the attitude and peculiarities of the figure. If the portrait is half-size, then the attitude ought to indicate the position of the lower extremities. In bust portraits the head is everything, the bust merely sustains and indicates its size and proportion. The head, however, should never be represented without the bust, for the effect of such a portrait is a total want of unity; it offers no point of comparison by which the rest of the body can be judged,—a matter of great importance, as this is one of the most striking characteristics of the individual.

A *carte de visite* is a more agreeable likeness than a larger one, because it is taken with the middle of the lens, where it is truest; hence it is never out of drawing. Also, it hides rather than exaggerates any roughness of the face; and, again, it is so moderate in price that we can afford to distribute the pictures generously.

Photographs have a bad name for durability, and when we look over our albums and see those that were once strong and expressive now pale and faded, we are forced to admit that their beauty is evanescent. But this disadvantage is very much the fault of the artist. There is nothing in the chemical constitution of photographs—formed as they are by the combination of the precious metals—to make them evanescent. The trouble lies in the last process through which they pass. This process leaves them impregnated with a destructive chemical, and the removal of all traces of it is a difficult and tedious thing. To be finished effectually, the pictures ought to be bathed for a day in a good body of water constantly agitated and changed. Artists who are jealous of their art and of their personal reputation insist on this process being thoroughly attended to, but with inferior photographers the temptation to neglect it is very great, especially as in many cases the vicious chemical adds to the present brilliancy of the picture. They are further tempted by the impatience of sitters, who are often importunate for an immediate finish of their pictures. But if a durable portrait is wanted, ladies must allow the artist time for the proper cleansing of their photograph.

To the large majority of people the first interview with their photographic portrait is a heavy disappointment. They express themselves by an eloquent silence, turn it this way and that, hold it near and far off. After a little while they become used to it in its velvet frame, though they never in their heart acknowledge its truthfulness. Again, there are others to whom photography is very favorable, and they show to more advantage in their pictures than ever they did in reality. These last are people whose features are well balanced and proportioned, but who are not generally considered beautiful. Faces dependent for beauty on their mobility and expression suffer most, and are indeed, in their finer moods, almost untranslatable by this process.

Still, setting aside all artistic considerations, photographic portraits have a great social value, not only because they fairly indicate the *personnel* of their models, but because they so faithfully represent textures that we can form a very good idea from a *carte de visite* of the social position of the sitter, and incidentally, from the cut, style, and material of the dress, a very good notion also of their moral calibre.

Many things are permissible in photographic portraits—which may be retaken every few months—that would justly be deprecated in a finished oil portrait destined to go down with houses and lands to unborn generations. In such a picture any intrusion of the imagination is an impertinence if made at the slightest expense of truth.

The great value of an oil portrait is this: the divine, almost intangible light of expression hovering over the face is seized on by living skill and intellect, and imprisoned in colors. The sitter is not taken in one special moment, when his eyes are fixed and his muscles rigid, but in a free study of many hours the characteristics of the face are learned, and some felicitous expression caught and fixed forever. This is what gives portrait painting its special value, and drives ordinary photographic portraits out of the realms of art into those of mechanism.

Artists have various ways of treating their sitters. Some throw them into a Sir-Joshua-like attitude, and put in a Gainsborough background. Others compass the face all over, and map it out like a chart, taking elevations of every mole and dimple. But whenever an artist feels unsafe away from his compasses, and cannot trust himself, sitters should not trust him.

There is a real pleasure in sitting to a master in his art, a real weariness and disgust in sitting to a tyro. It must be remembered that not only is the best expression to be caught, but that the

features of any face vary so much under physical changes and mental moods that their differences may actually be measured with a foot-rule. An ordinary artist will measure these distances; an extraordinary artist will catch their subtle effects, and will draw the features as well as the expression at their very best.

A really fine oil portrait should look as well near by as it does at a distance.

Suffer no artist to leave out blemishes which contribute to the character of the original; ugly or pretty, unless a portrait is a likeness, it is worthless. There are very clever artists who cannot paint a true portrait, because they leave every picture redolent of themselves. Thus Bartolozzi in engraving Holbein's heads, made everything Bartolozzi. But in a portrait the individuality of the sitter should permeate and usurp the whole canvas, so that in looking at it we should think only of the person represented, and quite forget the artist who brought him before us.

It is an axiom that every full-length portrait requires a curtain and a column, every half-length a table, every kit-kat a full face. But surely such rules betray barrenness of invention. Every good position cannot be said to have been exhausted. Why should not every portrait be treated as a part of an historical picture in which the sitter's position and background and accessories produced the tone and feeling most suitable to his ordinary life? Raphael in his portrait of Leo the Tenth exhibits a faithful study of such subordinates. There is a prayer-book with miniatures, a bell on the table, and a mirror at the back of the chair reflecting the whole scene. One of Rembrandt's most charming portraits is that of his mother cutting her nails with a pair of scissors.

Never suffer any artist to slur over or hide the hand. The hand is a feature full of beauty and individuality. Any one who has noticed how Vandyck studied and worked out its peculiarities, what beauty and expression he gave to it, will never undervalue its power as an exponent of personality again.

The portraits of men or women occupying prominent positions should always have their name and that of the artist on the back. If this had been done in times past, how many nameless portraits, now of little value, would be held in high estimation! From the time of Henry the Eighth to the time of Charles the First it was usual to insert in a corner the armorial bearings of the person represented. This did not, indeed, accurately identify the individual, but it made it easier to determine. There is a masterpiece of Vandyck's in the National Gallery of England that goes by the name of "Gevartius." But no one knows who Gevartius was. Here is an old man's head made memorable for all time,—a head which would be thought cheap at \$10,000, and which, if it were for sale, would attract connoisseurs from all parts of the civilized world, and it is without a name. How much more valuable and interesting it would be if its history were known! Therefore no feeling of modesty should prevent eminent characters from insuring the identity of their pictures. Let us imagine a picture of Abraham Lincoln and one of Professor Morse two hundred years hence, with the name attached in one case, and a mere tradition of identity in the other, and it will be easy to estimate the difference in value.

Americans have been accused of an undue taste for portraiture; the taste has its foundation in the character of the nation. It corresponds with that estimation of the personal worth of a man, and that full appreciation of individual independence, which form such important elements in our national character.

The Crown of Beauty

THE glory and the crown of physical perfection is beautiful hair. Venus would not charm us if she were bald, and neither poet, painter, nor sculptor would dare to give us a "subject" which should lack this, the charm of all other charms. Neither is it a modern fancy. Homer, when he would praise Helen, calls her "the beautiful-haired Helen," and Petronius, in his famous picture of Circe, makes much of "trailing locks."

The loveliness of long hair in woman seems never to have been disputed, and it had also a very wide acceptance as a mark of masculine strength and beauty. St. Paul, it is true, says that it is a shame to a man to have long hair, but his opinion is not to be taken without reservation, for both the traditions of poetry and painting give to the Saviour, and also to the Beloved Disciple, long locks of curling brown hair. The Greek warriors and most of the Asiatic nations prided themselves on their long hair, and the Romans gave a great significance to it by making it the badge of a freeman. Cæsar, too, distinctly says that he always compelled the men of a province which he had conquered to shave off their hair in token of submission.

The Saxon and Danish rulers of England were equally famous for their long yellow locks, and the fashion continued with little or no intermission until the dynasty of the Tudor kings. They affected, for some reason or other, short hair; and "King Hal" is undoubtedly indebted for his "bluff look" to the short, thick crop which he wore. The fashion even extended to the women of that age, and their pictured faces, with their hair all hidden away under a *coif*, have a most hard, stiff, and unlovely appearance. Under the Stuarts, long, flowing hair again became

fashionable with the Royalist party, who made their "love locks" the sign and emblem of their loyalty. On the contrary, the Puritans made short hair almost a tenet of faith and a part of their creed. Within the last ten years hair has been again the sign of political feeling, for, during the Civil War, the Southern women in favor of the Confederacy wore one long curl behind the left ear, while those in favor of the Union wore one behind each ear.

During the last century men have gradually cut their hair shorter and shorter. They pretend, of course, fashion dictates the order; but a woman may be allowed to doubt whether necessity did not first dictate to fashion. Certainly ladies prefer in men hair that is moderately long, thick, and curling, to the penitentiary style of last year. And suppose they could have long hair, but cut it for their own comfort, the act says very little for their gallantry. I have no need to point to the chignons, braids, and artifices which women use to lengthen their hair in order to please men, who decline to return the compliment, even to a degree that would be vastly becoming to them.

After the length of hair, color is the point of most interest. In reality there are but two colors, black and red. Brown, golden, yellow, etc., are intermediate, the difference in shade being determined by the sulphur and oxygen or carbon which prevails. In black hair, carbon exceeds; in golden hair, sulphur and oxygen. It has been insisted that climate determines the color of hair; that fair-haired people are found north of parallel 48°; brown hair between 48° and 45°; which would include Northern France, Switzerland, Bohemia, Austria, and touch Georgia and Circassia, Canada, and the northern part of Maine; and that below that line come the black-haired races of Spain, Naples, Turkey, etc., etc. But this is easily disproved. Take, for instance, the parallel 50° and follow it round the world. Upon it may be found the curly, golden-haired European; the black, straight hair of the Mongolian and American Indian, and again, in Canada, it will give us the fair-haired Saxon girl. So, then, it is race, and not climate, which determines the color. I am inclined to think, too, that temperament has something to do with it, since we find black-haired Celts, golden-haired Venetians, and fair and black-haired Jews.

The ancient civilized nations passionately admired red hair. Greeks, Romans, Chinese, Turks, and Spaniards have given it to their warriors and beauties. Somehow among the Anglo-Saxon race it has a bad reputation. Both in novels and plays it is common to give the rascal of the plot "villanous red hair;" and in the English school of painters, the traitor Judas is generally distinguished by it. In the East, black is the favorite color, and the Persians abhor a red-haired woman. Light brown or golden hair is the universal favorite. The Greeks gave it to Apollo, Venus, and Minerva. The Romans had such a passion for it that, in the days of the Empire, light hair brought from Germany (to make wigs for Roman ladies) sold for its weight in gold. The Germans themselves, not content with the beautiful hair Nature had given them, made a soap of goat's tallow and beechwood ashes to brighten the color. Homer loved "blondes," and Milton and Shakespeare are full of golden-haired beauties, while the pages of the novelist and the galleries of painters, ancient and modern, show the same preference.

Lavater insists greatly on the color of hair as an index to the disposition. "Chestnut hair," he says, "indicates love of change and great vivacity; black hair, passion, strength, ambition, and energy; fair hair, mildness, tenderness, and judgment."

Fashion has dressed the hair in many absurd and also in many beautiful forms; but through all changes, curls, floating free and natural, have had a majority of admirers. Some one says that "of all the revolvers aimed at men's hearts, curls are the most deadly," and from the persistent instinct of women in retaining them, I am inclined to indorse this statement. The Armenians and some other Asiatics twist the hair into the form of a mitre; the Parthians and Persians leave it long and floating; the Scythians and Goths wear it short, thick, and bristling; the Arabians and kindred people often cut it on the crown. In the South of Europe, "to be in the hair" is a common expression for unmarried girls, because they wear their hair long and flowing, while matrons put it up in a coil at the back of the head.

Until the ninth century in England, Nature pretty much led the fashions in hair-dressing; then plaits turned up on each side of the cheek were introduced; and in the eleventh century the hair all disappeared under the head-dress of that time. Early in the sixteenth century ladies began to "turn up" the hair. Queen Margaret of Navarre frizzed and turned back her abundant locks just as the women of our own day do. The custom, too, that is now prevalent of braiding the hair in two long locks and tying them at the ends with ribbons was a favorite style in the early part of the seventeenth century. In the eighteenth century women used powder to such an extent as almost to destroy the color of the hair, and during the past hundred years every possible arrangement and non-arrangement has had a temporary favor.

I have nothing to say about the customs of the present day. If there is any property in which a woman has undisputed right, it is surely in her own hair; and if she chooses to wear it in an unbecoming or inartistic style, it is certainly no one's business that I can perceive. Assuredly not the men's, since I have already shown that they, either through inability or selfishness, decline to wear the thick, flowing locks with which Nature crowns manly strength and beauty, and which are all women's admiration.

The majority of women have a natural taste in this matter, and very few are so silly as to sacrifice their beauty to fashion. Two or three rules are fundamental in all arrangements of the hair: one is that a superabundance at the back of the head always imparts an animal expression; another, that it is peculiarly ugly to sweep the whole forehead bare. The Greeks, supreme authorities on all subjects of beauty and taste, were never guilty of such an atrocity. In all their exquisite statues the hair is set low. A third is that "bands" are the most trying of all *coiffures*, and never ought to be adopted except by faces of classic beauty. To add them to a round, merry

face with a nose retroussé is as absurd as to put a Doric frieze on an irregular building. A general and positive one is that all hair is spoiled, both in quality and color, by oiling, for it takes from it that elasticity and lightness which is its chief charm and characteristic; the last (which I have no hope ladies will heed just at present) is, never to hide the natural form of the head.

Waste of Vitality

IF we come to reflect upon it, in middle age we find that the one great cause of departure from the ideal in real life is our liability to take cold. Almost all our pleasures are bound up with this probability, for when we have taken cold we are far too stupid either to give or enjoy pleasure. And there is no philosophy connected with colds. Serious illnesses are full of instruction and resignation, but who thinks of being resigned to a cold, or of making a profitable use of it?

“Chilly” is a word that of late years has come to be a frequent and pitifully significant one on the lips of the middle-aged. They have a terror of the frost and snow which they once enjoyed so keenly, and they really suffer much more than they will allow themselves to confess.

The most invigorating and inspiriting of all climates is 64°, but if the glass fall to 50°, chilly people are miserable; they feel draughts everywhere, especially on the face, and very likely the first symptoms of a neuralgic attack. At 40°—which must have been the in-door winter temperature of our forefathers—they become irritable and shivery, and lose all energy. If the temperature fall below 30°, they “take cold,” and exhibit all the mental inertia and many of the physical symptoms of influenza, which nevertheless has not attacked them.

Let us at once admit a truth: the young and robust despise the chilly for their chilliness, for there is such a thing as physical pride, and a very unpleasant thing it is in families. These physical Pharisees are always recommending the “roughing” and “hardening” process, and they would gladly revive for the poor invalid the cold-water torture of the past.

Without being conscious of it, they are cruel. Chilly people are not made better by the unsympathetic remarks of those of quicker blood. There is no good in assuring them that the cold is healthy and seasonable. They feel keenly the half-joking imputation of “cosseting,” though perhaps they are too inert and miserable to defend themselves.

Strong walking exercise is the remedy always proposed. Many cannot take it. Others make a laudable effort to follow the prescription, and perhaps during it feel a glow of warmth to which in the house—though the house is thoroughly warmed—they are strangers. But half an hour after their return home the tide of life has receded again, and they are as chilly and nervous as before.

Nevertheless, they have passed through an experience which, if they would consider it, indicates their relief, if not their cure. While out-of-doors they thought it necessary to cover their feet with warm hosiery and thick boots, the head with a bonnet and veil, their hands with gloves and a fur muff, their body with some fur or wadded garment half an inch thick. In short, when they went out they imitated Nature, and protected themselves as she does animals.

But just as soon as they return home they uncover their head and hands, replace the warm, heavy clothing of the feet with some of a more elegant but far colder quality, and take off altogether the thick warm garments worn out-of-doors. A bear that should follow the same course when it went home to its snug subterranean den would naturally enough die of some pulmonary disease. Nations which are subjected to long and severe winters have learned the more natural and excellent way. The Laplander keeps on his fur, the Russian his wadded garment, the Tartar his sheep-skin, the Shetlander goes about in his house in his wadmal. It is only in our high state of civilization that men and women divest themselves of half their clothing with the thermometer below zero, and then run to the fire to warm their freezing hands and feet.

If warm clothing protects us out of the house, it will do the same in the house; and it is no more “coddling,” and much more sensible and satisfactory than cowering over a grate. Under the head-dress a silk skullcap is a most effective protection against draughts, and would prevent many an attack of neuralgia. A silk or wash-leather vest will keep the body at a more equable temperature than the best fire. A shawl to most middle-aged ladies is a graceful toilet adjunct even in the house, and it is capable of retaining as well as of imparting much warmth. When very chilly after removal of outside wraps, or from any other cause, try a wadded dressing-gown over the usual clothing. In five minutes the added comfort will be recognized.

The secret is, then, to keep the body at its proper temperature in the house by the adoption of sufficient warm clothing, instead of trusting to artificially heated atmosphere. No one will be more liable to take cold out of the house because she has been warm in the house. There is no more sense in shivering in-doors in order to prepare the body to endure the out-door climate than there would be in sleeping with too few blankets for fear of increasing the sense of cold when out of bed.

A stuffy room, with air constantly heated to 75°, is the most efficacious invention ever devised for ruining health. But it is equally true that *habitual warmth* is the very best preserver of constitutional strength in middle and old age; and undoubtedly this is best maintained by a temperature of 68° and plenty of clothing.

A very important aid to warmth is a proper diet. Many women who suffer continually from a sense of chill, below the tide of healthy life, have yet constantly at hand an abundance of nourishing food. But they eat one day at one hour, the next at another; they don't care what they eat, and take anything a flippant-minded cook chooses to send them; they wait for some one when themselves hungry, out of mere domestic courtesy; and when their husbands are from home they take tea and biscuits because it is not worth while giving servants the trouble of cooking for them alone. In all these and many similar ways vitality is continually lost, and with every loss of vitality there is a corresponding access of slow, chilly, shivering inertia.

It is a great mistake that women are taught from childhood that it is meritorious in their sex to conceal their own wants, and to postpone their own convenience to that of fathers, brothers, husbands, and even servants. For in the end they break down, and are left in a state of ill health in which all the wheels of life run slow. The trouble, in a sentence, is that women *have no wives*—no one to remind them when they are in a draught, or come in with wet feet, no one to get them a warm drink when chilly, and ward off the little ills (which soon become great ones) by loving, thoughtful, constant care and attention.

All women know how hard it is to live the usual life of work and amusement in a physical condition of far below the requisite strength. Nothing induces this condition like chronic chill. In it no vitality can be gained, and very much may be continually lost. Therefore every plan should be tried which promises to raise the temperature to a healthy standard. Try the effect of a room heated to 68°, and plenty of warm, constantly warm clothing.

A Little Matter of Money

“IT is unpleasant not to have money,” says Mr. Hazlitt; indeed, it has become a sort of social offence to be short of virtue in this respect; for both nationally and personally, we are loath to confess so tragic a calamity. We may assert that, having food and clothes, we are therewith content, and that we would not encounter the perils and snares of vast wealth; but are we quite sure that this humility and contentment is not a fine name for being too lazy to earn money, or too extravagant to keep it? Again, if all were content with the simple satisfaction of their necessities—if nobody wanted to be rich—nobody would be industrious or frugal, or strive to acquire knowledge. Who then would build our churches, and endow our colleges? Who would send out missionaries, and encourage science and inventions? The golden grapes may be out of our reach, but they are a noble fruit when pressed by kindly hands, and have given graciously unto the world their wine of consolation.

The fact is that we have come to a time in which the want of money is about as bad a moral distemper as the love of it. The latter position is an admitted truth; the former is only beginning to put forth its claims to the notice of professed moralists. Whatever special virtue there was in poverty seems to be in direct antagonism to the spirit of the present day; for there is no doubt that worldly prosperity has come to be regarded as one of the legitimate fruits of the gospel. The modern Church puts forth her hands and grasps the promise of the life that now is, as well as that which is to come. Why not? Money gives a power of doing good that nothing material can equal. Even “The Truth” has now to depend on the currency, and the most evangelical societies pay treasurers as well as missionaries.

The amount of money in a man's pocket is a great moral factor. He who has plenty of ready cash and is not good-natured needs a thorough change, and nothing but being born again will cure him. But the man who is in a chronic state of poverty is a man placed in selfish relations to every one around him. How hard it is for such a one to be generous, just, and sympathetic! He is almost compelled to look on his fellow-creatures with the eye of a slave-merchant, to consider: How can they profit me? What can I gain by them? He must marry for money, or not marry for the want of it. His friendship is a kind of traffic. His religion is subject to considerations, for he will either go to church for a certain connection, or he will not go at all because of the collections.

Now, there is abundance of living strength in Christianity to meet this and all other special wants of the age. There is no doubt that money is the principle of our social gravitation, and we need preachers who will not be afraid to tell us the truth, even though nobody has ever told it just in that particular way before. We accept without demur all that has been said about the evils of loving money; will some of our spiritual teachers tell us how to avoid the evils and cure the moral and physical distress caused by the want of money? That this is a gigantic evil, we have constant proof in the daily papers; in murder, theft, suicide, domestic misery and cruelty. These criminals are far seldomer influenced by the love of money than by the want of it. If instead of being without a dollar, they had had sufficient for their necessities, would they have

run such risks, incurred such guilt, staked life on one desperate chance, flung it away in despairing misery?

Of course the word "sufficient" is very elastic. It can be so moderate and temperate; and again it can grasp at impossibilities. "My wants," said the Count Mirabel, "are few: a fine house, fine carriages, fine horses, a complete wardrobe, the best opera box, the first cook, and plenty of pocket-money—that is all I require." He thought his desires very temperate; so also did the Scotchman, who, praying for a modest competency, added, "and that there be no mistake, let it be seven hundred pounds a year, paid quarterly in advance." There are indeed all sorts of difficulties connected with this question, and anybody can find their way into them. But there must also be a way out; and if our guides would survey the ground a little, they would earn and have our thanks. For undoubtedly this want of money is as great a provocation to sin as the love of it. An empty purse is as full of wicked thoughts as an evil heart; and the Father who allotted seven guardian angels to man, and made five of them hover round his pockets—empty or full—knew well his most vulnerable points.

Mission of Household Furniture

HAVE wood and paper and upholstery really any moral and emotional agencies?

Certainly they have. Not very obvious ones perhaps, but all-pervading and ever-persistent in their character; since there is no day—scarcely an hour—of our lives in which we are not, either passively or consciously, subject to their influences. Our cravings after elegance of form, glimmer and shimmer of light and color, insensibly elevate and civilize us; and the men and women condemned to the monotony of bare walls and unpicturesque surroundings—whether they be devotees in cells, or felons in dungeons—are the less human for the want of these things. The want, then, is a direct moral evil, and a cause of imperfection.

The desire for beautiful surroundings is a natural instinct in a pure mind. How tenaciously people who live in dull streets, and who never see a sunrise, nor a mountain peak, nor an unbroken horizon, cling to it is proved on all sides of us by the picturesqueness which many a mechanic's wife imparts to her little twelve-feet-square rooms. And it is wonderful with what slender materials she will satisfy this hunger of the eye for beauty and color. A few brightly polished tins, the many-shaded patchwork coverlets and cushions, the gay stripes in the rag carpet, the pot of trailing ivy or scarlet geranium, the shining black stove, with its glimmer and glow of fire and heat, are made by some subtle charm of arrangement both satisfactory and suggestive.

In spite of all arguments about the economy of "boarding," who does not respect the men or women who, at all just sacrifices, eschew a boarding-house and make themselves a home?

A man without a home has cast away an anchor; an atmosphere of uncertainty clings about him; he advertises his tendency to break loose from wholesome restraints. So strongly is the force of this home influence now perceived that the wisest of our merchants refuse to employ boys and women without homes, while the universal preference is in favor of men who have assumed the head of the house, and thus given hostage to society for their good behavior.

But a house is not a *home* till it is swept and garnished, and contains not only the wherewithal to refresh the body, but also something for the comfort of the heart, the elevation of the mind, and the delight of the eye.

If we would fairly estimate the moral power of furniture, let us consider how attached it is possible for us to become to it. There are chairs that are sacred objects to us: the large, easy one, in which some saint sat patiently waiting for the angels; the little high chair which was some darling baby's throne till he "went away one morning;" the low rocker, in which mother nursed the whole family of stalwart sons and lovely daughters.

Ask any practised student or writer how much he loves his old desk, with its tidy pigeon-holes and familiar conveniences. Have they not many a secret between them that they only understand? Are they not familiar? Could they be parted without great sorrow and regrets? Nothing is more certain than that we do stamp ourselves upon dead matter, and impart to it a kind of life. Is there a more pathetic picture than that of Dickens's study after his death? Yet no human figure is present; there is nothing but furniture, the desk on which he wrote those wonderful stories, and the empty chair before it.

Nothing but the empty chair and the confidential desk to speak for the dead master; but how eloquently they do it!

Our furniture ought, therefore, to be easy and familiar. We cannot give our hearts to what is uncomfortable, no matter how quaint or rich it may be. And though it is always pleasant to have colors and forms assorted with perfect taste, it is not desirable to have the effect so perfect that we are afraid to make use of it, lest we destroy it. No furniture ought to be so fine that we dare not light a fire for fear of smoking it, or let the sunshine in for fear of fading it. In such rooms

we do not lounge and laugh and eat and rest and live,—we only exist.

The proper character of drawing-rooms is that of gayety and cheerfulness. This is attained by light tints, and brilliant colors and gilding; but the brightest colors and the strongest contrasts must be on the furniture, not on the walls and ceilings. These must be subordinate in coloring, or the effect will be theatrical and vulgar.

The dining-room ought to be one of the pleasantest in the house; but it is generally in the basement. It ought to be a room in which there is nothing to remind us of labor or exertion, for we have gone there to eat and to be refreshed. A few flowers, a dish of fruits, snowy linen and china, glittering glass and silver, a pleasant blending of warm and neutral tints are essentials. For ornaments, rare china, Indian vases, Eastern jars suggestive of fine pickles or rare sweetmeats, and a few pictures on the walls, representing only pleasant subjects, and large enough to be examined without exertion, are the best.

Advantages of locality, a refined diner will always perceive and appropriate. Thus I used to dine frequently with a lady and gentleman who in the spring always altered the position of the table, so that while eating they could look through the large open windows, and see the waving apple-blossoms and breathe the perfumed air, and listen to the evening songs of the birds. Bedrooms should be light, cleanly, and cheerful; greater contrasts are admissible between the room and the furniture, as the bed and window-curtains form a sufficient mass to balance a tint of equal intensity upon the walls. For the same reason gay and bright carpets are often pleasant and ornamental.

Staircases, lobbies, and vestibules should be cool in tone, simple in color, and free from contrasts. Here the effects are to be produced by light and shadow, rather than by color. Every one must have noticed that some houses as soon as the doors are opened look bright and cheerful, while others are melancholy and dull. The difference is caused by the good or bad taste with which they are papered. Yet who shall say what events may arise from such a simple thing as the first impressions of an important visitor? And these impressions may involuntarily receive their primal tone from a light, cheerful, or dull, dark hall paper.

All rooms open to the public must have a certain air of conventional arrangement; but the parlor in every home ought to be a room of character and individuality. Here is the very shrine and sanctuary of the Lares and Penates. Here is the grandmamma's chair and knitting, and mamma's work-basket, and the sofa on which papa lounges and reads his evening paper. Here are Annie's flowers and Mary's easel and Jack's much-abused class-books. Here the girls practise and the boys rig their ship and mamma looks serious over the house books. In this room the picture papers lie around, every one's favorite volume is on the table, and the walls are sacred to the family portraits. In this room the family councils are held and the dear invalids nursed back to life. Here the boys come to say "good-bye" when they go away to school or to business. Here the girls, in their gay party-dresses, come for papa's final bantering kiss and mamma's last admiration and admonition. Ah, this room!—this dear, untidy, unfashionable parlor! It is the citadel of the household, the very *heart of the home*.

None can deny the influence which childhood's home has over them, even unto their hoary-hairs; the memory of a happy, comfortable one is better than an inheritance. The girls and boys who leave it have a positive ideal to realize. There is no speculation in their efforts; they *know* that home is "Sweet Home." But in all their imaginings chairs and tables and curtains and carpets have a conspicuous place. This life is all we have to front eternity with, therefore nothing that touches it is of small consequence. It is something to the body to have comfortable and appropriate household surroundings, it is much more to the mind. Is there any one whose feelings and energies are not depressed by a cold, comfortless, untidy room? And who does not feel a positive exaltation of spirit in the glow of a bright fire and the cosy surroundings of a prettily furnished apartment?

God has not made us to differ in this respect. A pleasant home is the dream and hope of every good man and woman. As Traddles and his dear little wife used to please themselves by selecting in the shop windows their contemplated service of silver, so also many honest, hopeful toilers fix upon the chairs and curtains that are to adorn their homes long before they possess them. The dream and the object is a great gain morally to them. Perhaps they might have other ones, but it is equally possible that the possession of this very furniture is the very condition that makes higher ones possible.

Depend upon it "A Society for the Improved Furnishing of Poor Men's Homes" would be a step taken in the seven-leagued boots for *the elevation of poor men's and women's lives*.

People Who Have Good Impulses

THERE is a raw material in humanity—often very raw—called impulse, or enthusiasm; and some people are very proud of possessing this spasmodic excellence. They talk glibly of their "good impulses," their "noble impulses," their "generous impulses," but the fact is that

the majority of impulses are neither good nor noble; while they are, of all guides in human affairs, the most questionable. For impulses do not come from settled principles, but rather from a loose habit of mind—a mind just drifting along, and ready to accept any new suggestion as an “impulse,” an “inspiration,” a “command.” We believe far too readily the cant about emotion, and erratic genius, and suffer ourselves to be imposed upon by fussy, impulsive people; for if we are at all allied with such, it is impossible to escape imposition; since we have to be patient enough for two, and so bear an undue burden of civility and good manners.

It may be said that such a discipline is not to be despised, and could be made a lesson of spiritual grace. But if we are not sick, why should we take medicine? Lessons God sets us, He helps us to learn, but there are no promises for those who impose penance upon themselves. And it is a penance to associate with impulsive, fussy persons; for no matter how good their impulses are, they are simply nowhere—as far as noble, enduring work is concerned—beside well-considered plans, carried out by cool, consistent people, who know what can be done and do it,—just as much next year as this year; just as well in one place as in another.

Ministers of the gospel know this fact perhaps better than any other mortals. They are constantly finding out how uncertain a quantity good impulses are to depend upon. For they have not the habit of materializing into good actions; they are evanescent pretenders to righteousness; they tell more flattering tales than ever Hope told. All too soon the practical, calm minister discovers that impulse and enthusiasm are but rudimentary virtues, and seldom available for any real, good work. The men of service, either in spiritual or temporal work, are men whom nothing hurries or flurries; who are never in haste, and never too late. They are not men of impulse, but of consideration. Whether they are going to deliver a sermon or keep a momentous appointment, to get a high office or a sum of money, or merely to catch an express train, they are perfectly cool, and always in time. Of course, impulsive people keep appointments and catch trains, but oh, what a fuss they make about it!

Unfortunately, calm, grand natures are not of indigenous growth, and we do not do all we might to cultivate them. If we took more time to think, we should be less impulsive, more reasonable, less shallow. If we made less haste, we should make more speed. “Slow and sure win the race” is a proverb embodying a great truth. Fussy, impulsive people never get at the bottom of things, never give an impartial judgment, never are masters of any difficult situation; for the power of deliberation, of staving off personal likes and dislikes, of waiting, of knowing when to wait and when to move,—are powers invariably linked with a cool head and a clear, calm will. But none of these grand qualities come at the call of impulse. Even good impulses are of no practical value until they crystallize into good deeds. Without this result the impulse or the intention to do great things may be a serious spiritual danger; the soul may satisfy itself with its impulses and designs, and rest upon them; forgetting what place of ineffectual regret is paved with good intentions.

In a certain sense it is true that the power of taking things in a cool, practical way is often an affair of the pulse, and so many beats, more or less, per minute, make a person fussy or serene. But it is only true in measure. Forethought and preparation—realizing what is likely to happen, and what is best to be done—are great helps to keeping cool and calm. The will also can work miracles. I believe in the will because I believe that the human will is God’s grace. Those who say, “I cannot” are those who think, “I will not.” Besides which there are heavenly powers that wait to help our infirmities. Paul did not hesitate to pray for the removal of his physical infirmity, and the “sufficient grace” that was promised him will be just as freely given to us. Indeed, I may rest the question here, for this is our great consolation: one cannot say too much of the Divine help. It will keep all in perfect peace that trust in it.

Worried to Death

TO say “we are worried to death” is a common expression; but do we really comprehend the terrible truth of the remark? Do we realize that the hounds of care and anxiety and fretful inability may actually tear and torment us into paresis, or paralysis, or dementia, and as virtually worry us to death, as a collie dog worries a sheep, or a cat worries a mouse? And yet, if we are Christian men and women, worrying is just the one thing not needful; for there are more than sixty admonitions in the Bible against it; and the ground is so well covered by them that between the first “Fear not” and the last, every unnecessary anxiety is met, and there is not a legitimate subject for worrying left.

Are we troubled about meat and money matters? We are told to “consider the fowls of the air; they sow not, neither do they reap nor gather into barns; yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?”

Have we some malignant enemy to fight? Fear not! “If God be for us, who can be against us?”

Are we in sorrow? “I, even I, am He that comforteth you.”

Are we in doubt and perplexity? “I will bring the blind by a way that they know not. I will lead

them in paths they have not known. I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight."

Do we fear that our work is beyond our strength? "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might, He increaseth strength."

Are we sick? He has promised to make all our bed in our sickness.

Do we fear death? He has assured us that in the valley and shadow of death He will be with us.

Is the worry not for ourselves, but for wife and children that will be left without support and protection? Even this last anxiety is provided for. "Leave thy fatherless children to me, and let thy widows trust in me, and I will preserve them alive."

Now, if we really believe that God made these promises, how shameful is our distrust! Do we think that God will not keep His word? Do we doubt His good-will toward us? When He says that He will make all things work together for our good, is the Holy One lying to our sorrowful hearts? Thirty years ago I was thrown helpless, penniless, and friendless upon these assurances of God; and in thirty years He has never broken a promise. He is a God that keepeth both mercy and truth. I believe in His goodness. I trust in His care. I would not, by worrying, tell Him to His face that He either has not the power or the good-will to help and comfort me.

Worriers live under a very low sky. They allow nothing for probabilities and "Godsends." They suffer nothing to go by faith. All times and all places supply them with material. In summer, it is the heat and the dogs and the hydrophobia. In winter, it is the cold, and the price of coal. They take all the light and comfort out of home pleasures; and abroad their complaints are endless. Yet to argue with worriers is of little use; convince them at every point, and the next moment they return to their old aggravating, vapping *credo*.

What remains for them then? They must pray to God, and help themselves. Egotism and selfishness are at the bottom of all worrying. If they will just remember that there is no reason why they should be exempted from the common trials of humanity, they may step at once on to higher ground; for even worrying is humanized, when it is no longer purely selfish and personal.

It is usually idle people who worry. Men and women whose every hour is full of earnest business do not try to put two hours' care and thought into one. Even a positive injury or injustice drops easily from an honestly busy man. He has not time to keep a catalogue of his wrongs, and worry about them. He simply casts his care upon Him who has promised to care for him—for his health, and wealth, and happiness, and good name; for all the events of his life, and for all the hopes of his future.

Worriers would not like to see written down all the doubtful things they have said of God, and all the ill-natured things they have said of men; besides, they might consider that they are often righteously worried, and only suffering the due reward of some folly of their own. Would it not be better to ask God to put right what they have put wrong; to lay hold of all that is good in the present; to refuse to look forward to any possible change for the worse? I know a good man who, when he feels inclined to worry over events, takes a piece of paper and writes his fears down, and so faces "the squadron of his doubts,"—finding generally that they vanish as they are mustered.

Come, let us take Cheerfulness as a companion. Let us say farewell to Worrying. Cheerfulness will bid us ignore perplexities and annoyances; and help us to rise above them. God loves a cheerful liver; and when we consider the sin and sorrow, the poverty and ignorance, on every side of us, we may well hold our peace from all words but those of gratitude and thanksgiving. Worrying is self-torment. It is always preparing "for the worst," and yet never fit to meet it. Cheerfulness is a kind of magnanimity; it listens to no repinings; it outlooks shadows; it turns necessity to glorious gain; and so breathing on every gift of God, Hope's perpetual joy, it enables us, mid pleasant yesterdays, and confident to-morrows,—

To travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness.

The Grapes We Can't Reach

THE grapes we can't reach are not, as a general thing, sour grapes; and it is a despicable kind of philosophy that asserts them to be so. Why should we despise good things because we do not possess them? Cicero, indeed, says that "if we do not have wealth, there is nothing better and nobler than to despise it." But this assertion was artificial in the case of Cicero, and it is no nearer the truth now than it was two thousand years ago.

In fact, on the question of money this dictum appeals to us with great force; for though it may be true that some of the best things of life cannot be bought with money, it is equally true that there are other good things that nothing but money can buy. Therefore, to follow Cicero's advice and despise wealth if we have not got it, is to despise a great many excellent things; and

not only that, it is to despise also the power of imparting these excellent things to other people. The golden grapes may be out of our reach, but we need not say the fruit is sour; rather let us give thanks that others have been able to gather and press the rich vintage and to give graciously to the world of its wine of consolation.

In the same way it has long been, fashionable to assert a contempt for "the bubble reputation," whether sought on the battlefield or in the senate, or forum, or study. But why despise one of the grandest moral forces in the universe? For when a man can get out of self to follow the fortunes of an idea, when he can fall in love with a cause, when he can fight for some public good, when he can forfeit life, if need be, for his conviction, the "reputation" that is sure to follow such abnegation and courage is not a "bubble;" it is a glorious fact,—one through which the general level of humanity is raised and the whole world impelled forward.

I do not say that all persons who conscientiously use to their utmost ability the one or two talents they possess are not as happy as they can be. Thank God! life can be full in small measures. But if any man or woman has been given five or ten talents, I do say they have no right to keep them for their own delectation, falling back upon such cheap sentiments as the hollowness of fame and the "bubble reputation." Fame is not a bubble; it is a power whose beneficent achievements have done a great deal toward making this world a comfortable dwelling-place.

A great many high-sounding maxims in use at the present day have lost their application. There was a time, centuries ago, when the humiliations attending any upward climb were sufficient to deter a sensitive, honorable soul. But such days are forever past. Any one now bearing precious gifts for humanity finds the gates lifted up and a wide entrance ready for him. Men and women can make what mark they are able to make, and the world stands watching with sympathetic heart. They will not find its "reputation" a "bubble."

Another fine, windy theme of warning from "sour-grape" philosophers is the hollowness of friendship and the general insincerity of the world. They have "seen through" the world, they know all its falseness and worthlessness; and, as the world is far too busy to dispute their assertions or to defend itself, the superior discernment of this class of people is not brought to accurate accounting. As a matter of fact, however, people generally get just as much consideration from the world, and just as much fidelity from their friends, as they deserve. A friend may ask us to dinner, but not therefore should we expect that he share his purse with us. Community of taste and sentiment does not imply community of goods. But, for all this, friendship is not hollow, nor are the grapes of its hospitality sour.

I may notice here the prevalent opinion that there is no such friendship now in the world as there used to be. "There are no Davids and Jonathans now," say the unbelievers in humanity. Very true, for David and Jonathan did not belong to the nineteenth century. To keep up such a friendship, we require, not a spare hour now and then, but an amount of certain and continuous leisure. There are still great friendships among boys at school and young men in college, for they have a large amount of steady leisure; and this is necessary to signal friendship. When we have more time, we shall have more and stronger friendships.

The vanity of life, the deceitfulness of women, the falseness of love, the impossibility of happiness, the passing away of all that is lovely and of good report, are old, old, old texts of complaint. Men and women talk about them until they feel ever so much better than the rest of the world; and such talk enables them to look down with proper contempt upon the hypocrisies of society,—that is, of their next-door neighbors and near acquaintances,—and fosters a comfortable, but dangerous self-esteem. The world, upon the whole, is a good world to those who try to be good and to do good, and every year it is growing better. During the last fifty years how much it has grown! How sympathetic, how charitable, how evangelizing it has become! Yes, indeed, if we choose to do so, we shall meet with far more good hearts than bad ones, and the topmost grapes are not sour.

Burdens

THERE are two kinds of burdens—those that God lays on us, and those which we lay on ourselves. When God lays the burden on the back, he gives us strength to carry it. There never was a Christian who, in his weariest and dreariest hours, could not say, "His grace is sufficient." If God smiles on him, he can smile under any burden that he may have to carry. He can go up the "hill of difficulty" singing, and walk confidently into the very land of the shadow of death. For God's burdens are easy to bear; because he walks with us, and when the journey is too great, and the burden too heavy, and our hearts begin to fail and faint, he is sure to whisper, "Cast thy burden upon me, and I will sustain thee."

The burdens that are hard to bear are those we lay upon ourselves. What a burden to themselves, and to every one around them, are the lazy and the unemployed! If it is a man, prayers should be offered up for his family and his dependents,—for who is so morbid and melancholy, so pettish and fretful, so devoured by spleen and ennui, as the man with nothing to

do? There is a lion in every way to him. He is out of God's order of creation; the busy world has no sympathy with him; society has no use for him; no one is the better for his life, and no one is sorry for his death. He is simply the fungus of living, active, breathing humanity. The lazy lay a burden on their backs which would appall men who have fought winds and waves, and searched the bowels of the earth, and bound to their will the subtle forces of electricity and steam.

The burdens we bind for ourselves we shall have to bear alone. God is not going to help us, and angels stand afar off; good men and women are not here bound by the injunction, "Bear ye one another's burdens." The envious, the proud, the drunkard, the seducer, the complainer, the lazy, etc., must bear their self-inflicted burdens, till they perish with them.

If the kingdom of heaven could be taken by some wonderful *coup d'état*, many would be first that are now last. But of great deeds little account is to be made. They are indigenous in every condition of society. It is a great life that is never a failure. A great life composed of a multitude of little burdens, cheerfully borne, and little charges faithfully kept. And this is a kind of Christian warfare, that is specially to be carried on in the sphere of the home. Many a professor, faithful in all the weightier matters of the law and the sanctuary, and blameless in the eyes of the world, is a rock of offence in his own household. His wife doubts his religion, his children fear him, and his servants call him a hard master. He pays all his tithes of mint, anise, and cummin to the church and society, but as regards the little burdens of his own household, he is worse than a publican.

Small burdens make up the moral and religious probation of a majority of women, for they have but rare occasion for the exercise of such faith and fortitude as commands the eye of the world. But these burdens, though apparently small and contracted in their sphere, are not only very important in their results, but often singularly irritating. Sickly, fretful children—impertinent, lazy servants—a thoughtless, irregular husband—a hundred other burdens so small she does not like to say how heavy she feels them to be and how sorely they weary her,—these are "her warfare;" and because the Master has laid them upon her, shall she not bear them? The world may call them "little burdens," but there is nothing small in the eyes of Infinity.

In no way can a woman cultivate beauty and strength of character so well as in the patient bearing and carrying of the small burdens that every day await her—the headaches and toothaches—the weariness and weakness incident to her position and condition. For it is the glory of a woman that her weakness or weariness never shrouds a household in gloom, or makes the atmosphere electrical with impatience and irritability. To carry her burden, whatever it may be, cheerfully, is not a little victory, and such daily victories make the last great one easy to be won. It is hard to die before we have learned to live; but death is easy to those who have conquered life. To such the grave is but a laying down of all burdens, a rest from labor and obligation, while yet their works of love and unselfishness do follow them with fruit and blessing.

We must not forget that in our journey through life, there are burdens which we may lawfully make our own. We may help the weak and the struggling on to their feet, when they have fallen in the battle of life. We may comfort those "touched by the finger of God." We may copy the Good Samaritan, not forgetting the oil and two pence. We may wipe the tears from the eyes of the widow and the fatherless. In bearing such burdens as these, we shall find ourselves in good company; for in the tabernacles of sanctified suffering we may come near to the Divine Burden Bearer; and going on messages of mercy, we may meet angels going the same way.

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