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Title: Her Royal Highness Woman

Author: Max O'Rell

Release Date: July 28, 2010 [EBook #33285]

Language: English

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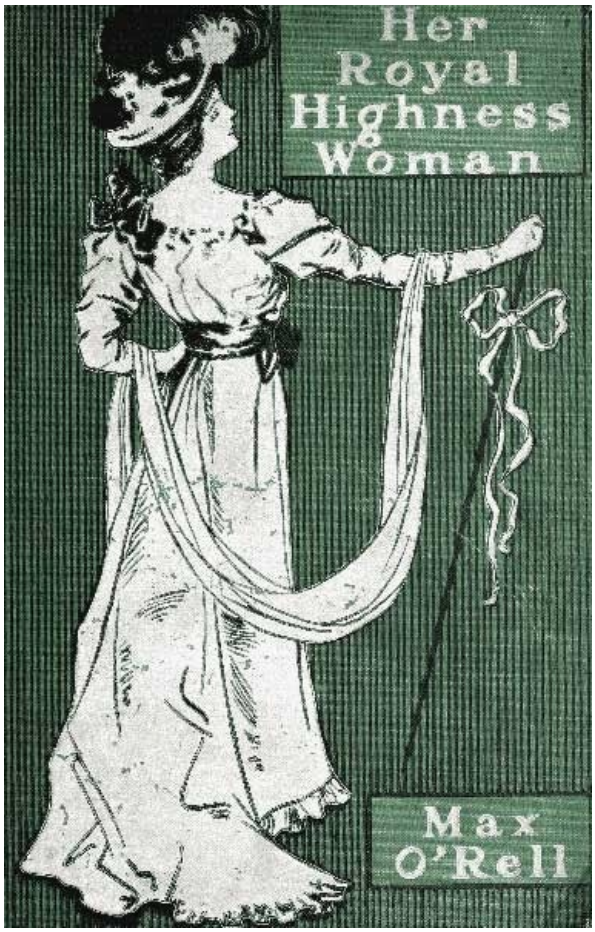

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HER ROYAL HIGHNESS WOMAN

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS

ON

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS WOMAN

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HER ROYAL HIGHNESS

WOMAN

By

MAX O'RELL

AUTHOR OF
'JOHN BULL AND HIS ISLAND,'
'JONATHAN AND HIS CONTINENT,'
'WOMAN AND ARTIST,' ETC.

FIFTEENTH THOUSAND

LONDON

CHATTO & WINDUS
1903

I DEDICATE

THIS VOLUME

TO

'THE NICEST LITTLE WOMAN IN THE WORLD'

(CHAPTER XXXI.)

PREFACE

'MONSIEUR, MADAME, ET BÉBÉ,' that most delightful, untranslatable book of the late Gustave Droz, by its genial and humorous philosophy and its pretty pictures of matrimonial life, by its healthy teachings and its piquant, poetic illustrations, has taught to thousands of French people how to make their married lives happier and more cheerful.

This unpretentious little volume of mine, which appears simultaneously in Paris, London, and New York, will not have been written in vain if it causes one married couple in each of the three great countries where it is published to study and understand each other better.

I dedicate it to married men and women, and to young men and women contemplating matrimony—a large public indeed.

MAX O'RELL.

P.S.—Did I hear you ask whether I have been married?

Oh yes, that's all right.

M. O'R

April, 1901.

CONTENTS

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS

WOMAN

CHAPTER I

THE ETERNAL FEMININE

What do we know about women? — Generalities on the subject — I am requested to speak on some subject I know something about.

'I am a man, and everything that concerns woman interests me,' might have said Terence. This is also what every Frenchman says, and why of all men on earth he is the one who knows women best. He is keenly alive to woman's influence, and woman is an ever-present, almost a fixed, idea with him. Whether he study her from the artistic, the psychological, even the physiological, point of view, his interest in her is never exhausted. And this explains why, since Aspasia inspired Socrates and advised Pericles, in no other country (not even in America) has woman's sovereignty been so supreme as it has always been, and still is, in France.

It is true that the leaders of thought in France, as in any other country, have long ago proclaimed that woman was the only problem it would never be given to man to solve. It is true that they have all tried and all failed, and that they acknowledge it, but they are trying still.

This characteristic of woman is probably, after all, what makes her ever so interesting to us. Nothing is more different from a woman than another woman. Nothing is more different from a woman than that very woman herself. The very moment we think we know her, she slips through our fingers and stands in front of us an absolute stranger. And so it should be. A man was one day complaining to a friend that he had been married twenty years without being able to understand his wife. 'You should not complain of that,' remarked the friend. 'I have been married to my wife three months only, and I understand her perfectly.'

When I come to think of it, I must confess that we men are sometimes perfectly lovely in our estimation of women. For example, you know, my dear fellow-men, that when we have a little cold in our heads—nothing more—the whole household is in a perfect state of commotion, and we wonder how it is that the earth still dares continue her course round the sun. Yet, when we see a woman patient, as she very generally is, of the most poignant physical and moral suffering, we exclaim, in admiration of her: 'She bears it like a man!' And what we seem to be unable to understand is, why women should smile when they hear us make that exclamation. Myself, I could roar, while holding my sides.

No man can say that he knows what a woman is unless he has met her in adversity. It is then that she can attain prodigious heights. Indeed, I believe that the head of a woman is much stronger in adversity than in prosperity. She can always surpass herself in misfortune, and often fails to stand success—I mean personal success, for she can associate herself to the success of a husband with all her heart and soul, but personal success is very often too much for her. How many women have I met during my twenty years of contact with the literary, artistic, dramatic, and social circles of life who completely lost their heads over a sudden personal success! I have seen women immediately lose all interest in home and family life; I have seen some abandon husband, and even children, on suddenly becoming a celebrity, a famous writer, actress, or singer, or a 'professional' beauty. A successful man will not alter in his feelings toward his family because he has become celebrated, unless he has a wife who should keep amusing herself with reminding him that, however the great 'John' of Oliver Wendell Holmes he may be to the public, he is only plain 'Jack' at home. On the contrary, the successful man will often most willingly give all the applause of the public for a few encouraging words of praise from a devoted wife, for a few expressions of admiration from a loving daughter. The easily unstrung, almost hysterical, temperament of a woman will sometimes make her give up all the quiet enjoyment of family happiness and love for the noisy applause of the crowd. It acts on her like an intoxicating beverage; and if men sometimes get cured of the craving for drink, women, it is well known, never do. The celebrated woman is seldom fit to be, or, if she is, to remain, a wife and a mother. She becomes an anomaly, a freak. It is in woman's nature. She cannot look down to drop her love on a man; to love she must admire and look up. I would rather be the husband of a simple little dairymaid than that of a George Sand or a Madame de Staël.

All these are stray thoughts on the great eternal feminine. Like my fellow-men, I know nothing about women.

I quite appreciated a little scene only a few weeks old. I was announced to give a lecture on 'Women' to the students of a large ladies' college in North Carolina. A couple of hours before the lecture, three young ladies from the college called on me at the hotel where I was staying. I met them in the parlour. Three charming, bright, most intelligent-looking girls they were. After looking at each other for some time, so as to suggest that the other should speak, one at last made up her mind to be the spokeswoman of the little deputation. 'We have called on you,' she said, 'to ask if you would be kind enough to change the subject of your lecture to-night. Our lecture course is instituted for the instruction and the general improvement of the students, and we thought we should like to hear you talk to us on a subject which you know something about.' I must say that I felt fearfully small; but I was delighted at the frankness of those young American girls, and at once acceded to their request.

CHAPTER II

WOMAN'S INFLUENCE FOR GOOD AND EVIL

A woman at the beginning — The first love-story — Different versions — 'Cherchez la femme' — The influence of woman on national characteristics.

If we look back into the dawn of the world, we see that, from her first appearance, woman has always been a great power. Indeed, she had the leading part in the first great drama of which the literature of the world gives any account. A snake and a poor weak man had the minor parts, the snake playing the villain and the poor man the fool. I have never read that story without feeling ashamed of the first representative of my sex. If I had been Adam, I would have stuck to Eve through thick and thin. To save, even only to shield, a woman (especially one I loved, or one who would have been as kind to me as Eve had been to Adam), I would tell lies by the yard and by the hour, and I admire that English judge who, being told so by a male co-respondent in a divorce case, replied, 'And so would I.'

How I prefer that story of our first parents as related in the sacred books of the Buddhists! There, as in the version that we know, man is tempted by woman, and, as in our version, and as he has done ever since, and will do for ever and ever, he succumbs. But when he is found out and sentence is to be passed on him, what a difference! He does not turn around and say, 'Please, it was not I who tempted her; it was she who tempted me.' No, he acknowledges his guilt, affirms that he alone disobeyed, and that he alone should be punished. Then Eve intervenes, and she, too, confesses her guilt. There is a regular attempt each at shielding the other. Then both fall on their knees and beg to be punished together, and their request is granted, and they go forth hand in hand into exile. This is the first record of love and devotion, not, as in our version, a first record of man's cowardice and selfishness.

From that memorable day to this, Her Royal Highness Woman has been the greatest power for good and evil that the world has known, for ever since Adam and Eve there have been men and women—especially women.

A beautiful woman was the cause of the Trojan War; the cause of David's single sin, a woman; the cause of Solomon's decadence, a woman, or rather, many women. A woman was the instigator of the greatest crime ever recorded in history, the terrible massacre of St. Bartholomew. A woman, who has dearly paid for it since, was the cause of the Franco-German war. On the other hand, France was saved in the fifteenth century by a sweet peasant girl at a time when King and people had given up all hope of ever again seeing France a free and independent nation—but that was a long time ago.

There is no country where the influence of women over men is so great as France, and the famous phrase 'Cherchez la femme'—'Seek the woman'—emanated from the lips of the greatest jurisconsult France ever produced, President Dupin, in the reign of King Louis Philippe. And it is a fact that among French prisoners who belong to the better classes, there are ninety-nine out of every hundred who have committed murder, forgery, embezzlement, theft, for the sake of a woman. The English people (and the Americans, too, I believe) say that drunkenness is responsible for the great majority of crimes committed in Great Britain and America. The expensive ways of French women are responsible for the majority of crimes and offences committed by men in modern France, as these expensive ways of women are responsible for their own downfall nine times out of ten.

On the other hand, a man owes all his best qualities to the influence of the first woman he has known, his mother. A man will be what his mother has made him. A man does not learn

how to be a gentleman at school, at college, or at the university. There he may improve his manner, but his mind is formed at home much earlier than that.

It is woman, and woman alone, that makes society polite. Men together can talk or chat, but it is only when women join them that they can *causer*, an equivalent for which the English language does not possess. And why? Simply because Englishmen do not as a rule care for the restraint that results from the presence of women.

Thanks to the tact, the brilliancy, and the high intellectual attainments of American women, one can *causer* in America, and the vocabulary of the language used in the United States ought to be richer by one word, a good equivalent for this French verb which both 'to talk' and 'to chat' most imperfectly translate; for *causer* means 'to chat with wit, humour, brilliancy, and great refinement.'

CHAPTER III

MAXIMS FOR THE MAN IN LOVE

How to deal with your girl — Avoid catching colds in your head — How women with humour can be saved.

Never go down on your knees to declare your love; you will spoil your trousers and feel very uncomfortable. Rather give the lady an opportunity of denying that you were on your knees before her, for the simple reason that she was sitting on them.

Never put your hand near your lady's waistband or round her neck. Place it about the middle of her back; there are no pins there.

If she asks you to fasten her bracelet, never forget to apply a kiss on her arm. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred, that is what she wants and why she does not secure her bracelet with a little chain.

Never call on your lady-love while you have a cold in your head. If you begin your declaration, you will never be able to resume it after a fit of sneezing. A cold in the head inspires pity neither in the heart of man nor in that of woman, and sneezing is fatal if the lady possesses the slightest particle of humour. Remember that, with a cold in your head, you will have to say to her: 'I lob you, be darling. Oh! I hab such a cold id be dose.' No romantic love, my dear fellow, could survive that.

I knew a man who once eloped with a married woman. They were deeply in love with each other. When they arrived at their destination, they went to the hotel where they had engaged rooms. It was a bitterly cold day, and they had forgotten to give orders for fires. The rooms were dull and chilly. They fell in each other's arms. 'At last, my darling!' he exclaimed. 'At last, my own beloved one!' He could say no more. He was seized with a violent fit of sneezing. The misled lady came at once to her senses. In no time the trunks were sent back to the station, and that same evening she had returned safe and sound to the conjugal roof. The 'saving grace' of humour has done still more for women than for men who owe so much to it.

The woman who has a keen sense of humour is a terrible one to make love to. The romantic one will find charms in all your shortcomings, but the other is inexorable. She is constantly on the look-out for something to laugh at; nothing will escape her. And you know that, if you laugh, love-making is out of the question.

I know a woman who was radically cured of her ardent love for a man because he had, near the tip of his nose, a tiny little wart which turned alternately white and red while he got passionately engaged telling her the sincerity and intensity of his love.

If you are bald, never make love to a woman taller than you. Looked at from below, you are all right.

Never let your lady-love see you without a collar, no, not even the very wife of your bosom. A man's head without a collar is like a bouquet without a holder.

Never let her see you asleep. Maybe you sleep with your mouth open. If you are married, let your wife sleep first. When you are quite sure she is off, let yourself go—and be careful to wake up first in the morning.

Never tell your lady-love that you are very steady in your affections, and that every time that you love a woman it is for ever. If you think she will enjoy the joke, you overrate her sense of

humour.

If your wife or sweetheart be in love with you to such a degree that she tells you she could never survive you if you happened to die, reassure her and tell her that there is a way out of the difficulty—her setting out first.

Don't let your wife see you shave. Your idiotic, cowed look, your gaping mouth and grimaces are as many infallible remedies for love.

Never indulge in any little objectionable trick before the woman you love. Great affections should never be trifled with. Madame Bovary, in Gustave Flaubert's famous novel, took a dislike to her husband and went helplessly wrong, because the latter, after eating, used to clean his teeth by promenading his tongue inside his mouth. I sympathize with the poor woman and feel rather inclined to forgive her.

CHAPTER IV

ADVICE TO THE MAN WHO WANTS TO MARRY

What should attract him in matrimony — At what age should people get married? — Be superior to your wife in everything.

When you are dead, once said a cynic, it's for a long time; but when you are married, it's for ever.

Therefore, before entering into the holy estate of matrimony, a man could not be too careful in the choice of his partner.

Now, what should influence him most in that choice? Money? Never—oh, never, unless it be out of philanthropy and on reflecting that, after all, it would be very hard on rich girls to feel that they cannot marry because they have money, and I do think that they want to marry as well as others. Beauty, then? No; beauty passes away. Ugliness? Certainly not; ugliness remains. What, then? An altogether of physical, moral, and intellectual charms which fit in exactly with all the ideals of that man, and, above all, a similarity of tastes.

After all, what is beauty, considered as an incentive to love? A man has in himself a hundred beings to every one of which a different kind of beauty can appeal. If he be an artist, the women of Raphael will inspire him with the purest sensations of love, those of Titian with the loftiest sentiments of admiration and respect. Those of Watteau will make him believe that he could live on candies and *choux à la crême*. Those of Teniers would reconcile him to the idea of a quiet life over a pipe and a tankard of beer. Some heroic beauty will inspire him with the most chivalrous sentiments; some melancholy one with dreams of a refined poetic life. Some sedate beauty, with her hair dressed *à la vierge*, will suggest to him a regular humdrum life, mid-day dinners, retiring and rising early, and will inculcate in him an immoderate desire to be the father of a large family. That same man, however, might become a criminal under the influence of some poisonous beauty. Some Bostonian girl educated beyond her intellect might induce that very man to spend the rest of his life studying Browning.

Now, my dear man, if beauty should influence you in the choice of a wife, never decide on a woman before you are absolutely sure that, whatever happens, you will be happy with her as your wife knitting by your side, while, under a veranda covered with jasmine and honeysuckle, you play with the babe on your knees. If a woman does not possess *that* kind of beauty, she is not fit for matrimony, and don't marry her.

Now, a woman should marry young, very young even, so that her husband should enjoy all the different phases of her beauty, from the beauty of girlhood to that second youth, or matronly beauty, which to my mind is perhaps the best of all. The Watteau of eighteen will become a Rubens at forty. It is, perhaps, at forty that a woman is most strikingly beautiful, and she is almost invariably so when she has taken care of herself, and has been loved and petted by husband and children alike. It is then that she knows how to make the best of herself, that she best understands how to exercise her gifts and charms in the most effective manner.

It is at forty that she enjoys the grace of perfect self-possession. She has tact, and dresses faultlessly. Her knowledge of the world, her experience of life, all help to make her a more delightful companion than ever. The love she has inspired is written on every one of her features. Her eyes sparkle with joy, her mouth expresses the ecstasy of past and present bliss, and also gratitude for the kisses that have been impressed upon it. Yes, the woman of

forty is a joy, an intoxicating and an incomparable joy, to a husband. That woman is even more beautiful physically than she ever was, and her beauty is of such a different type from what it was at twenty that I can very well understand how a husband can seriously fall in love with his wife a second time. All this is truth, my dear fellow. And don't even be afraid of white hair. With a good complexion, a cheerful expression, and two big black eyes, nothing goes better than white hair, and the whiter it is the better.

And, you will say, at what age should a man marry? Well, at all events, never before he is quite prepared to provide for a wife, whatever her position may be. When this indispensable condition is satisfied, I shall say never, or seldom, before thirty. Never try matrimony as an experiment—that is to say, never before you are absolutely certain you will prefer it to all the rest. I heard the other day a very good piece of advice, which I should like to repeat here, as I endorse it thoroughly: A man should marry a woman half his age, *plus* seven. Try it at whatever age you like, and you will find it works very well, taking for granted all the while that, after all, a man as well as a woman is the age that he looks and feels.

Never marry a woman richer than you, or one taller than you, or one older than you. Be always gently superior to your wife in fortune, in size, and in age, so that in every possible way she may appeal to you for help or protection, either through your purse, your strength, or your experience of life. Marry her at an age that will always enable you to play with her all the different characteristic parts of a husband, a chum, a lover, an adviser, a protector, and just a tiny suspicion of a father.

CHAPTER V

ON THE SELECTION OF LIFE PARTNERS

Be as careful in choosing your partners as you would in choosing your ancestors — Count your change before entering, as mistakes cannot be recognised afterwards.

In choosing their partners for life, people should be as careful as in choosing their ancestors. To give advice in the matter, however, is a very delicate task to undertake.

You see, there is no probation allowed by the laws and customs of civilized nations, and we have to put aside at once the best piece of advice that could be given on the subject, which is: 'Go and have a try, and if you don't like it, why, give it up and try something else.' What a progress it will be, what a guarantee for the improved happiness of the human race, when couples will be allowed to associate on trial, say, for a few months! Yes, but how many will remain married? And then, what will become of the human race?

This not being legal now, or, if you prefer, not accepted by the rules of proper society, let us examine the case a bit.

Should couples study each other's characters during a long period of engagement? Alas! how could they be hopeful of success when, after ten years of married life, they often discover they were not made for each other? I have known English couples who had been engaged ten years trying to find out if they were fit for each other. Poor couples! they might have been engaged fifty years without any more chance of success. Life during an engagement means the daily repetition of an old story: sentimental walks. The sky is serene, the sea is smooth. As I say elsewhere, they will never know they are good sailors until they have been together on board the same boat in a good big storm—no, not until misfortunes have come to try them, not until they have been confronted with bills for meat and coal and the price of butter. Besides, long engagements should be avoided, because if they do not end in matrimony the prospects of a woman may be ruined.

Make your inquiries about your possible future partners, about their antecedents, their family, their social and financial position. If your partner is healthy (make sure of that), make up your mind quickly. Marriage is a lottery; go in for it at once and take your chance.

A woman should avoid accepting a man who has been particularly successful with women. At the same time, she should look for one to whom woman is not an enigma, and who is a man of the world and of strong character, so that she may feel sure that when he chose her, he said to himself: 'I know my mind; happiness for me lies there.' On that man she will be able to depend and lean safely.

As peace and security are the guarantees of happiness in matrimony, a man should not choose a lovely rose who will attract the attention of all the men, but look for a modest violet in some retired, shady spot. The violet is the emblem of peaceful and lasting love.

A woman should avoid marrying a man who at home is the favourite of many sisters who constantly dance attendance on him. That man is spoiled for matrimony. He will require his wife to bestow on him all the attentions he received from his sisters, besides those which he has a right to expect from a wife.

I should advise woman to shun a dragon of virtue like fire: she should prefer a dragoon rather. A man may be good, but he must not overdo it. He that has no wickedness is too good for this world; not even a nun could endure him. Fancy, my dear lady, a man being shocked by you! The male prig is the abomination of the earth, and should be the pet aversion of women.

Let a man avoid marrying a woman who has won the applause of the public. The life of a successful woman unfits her for matrimony and its peaceful joys. Of course there are, and I have known, many exceptions. If you marry a well-known singer, you will soon discover yourself in the act of carrying her roll of music. Ah, if you are a great singer yourself, well and good! But then, take care that if you both appear at the same concert, one does not get more encores than the other, or peace will be destroyed.

Don't marry women who have big bouquets of roses and orchids sent to them, or your daily little bunch of violets or lilies-of-the-valley will soon run the risk of being despised.

CHAPTER VI

MAXIMS FOR THE MARRIED MAN

Keep your wife in order — How to deal with her (confidential).

If at the beginning of his married life a man cannot have enough control over himself to see that his wife does not get her own way in everything, and that he does not make himself her abject slave, he will never be able to recover his liberty, and he is done for, condemned to subjection for the rest of his natural life. The beginning of wisdom is to keep your wife in order.

No Government has ever been known to successfully suppress, or even reduce, any liberty or privilege previously granted to the people. If a man capitulates on the threshold of matrimony, he will never be able to recover one inch of the ground he has surrendered. In fact, a man has to be as careful to avoid spoiling a wife as he would a child, and that for her sake as well as for his own.

To be happy, for instance, a woman does not require the constant presence of her husband. On the contrary, she will enjoy his company very much more if he and she are not always thrown together.

I know men who, from the beginning of their married lives, visited their clubs, enjoyed men's company, while remaining very devoted to their wives and making them very happy.

But if a man waits ten years to decide on belonging to a club, he will soon discover the terrible mistake he has made. His visits to that club will be treated like perfect acts of unfaithfulness, reproaches will begin, followed by sulking, and the famous sentence will be uttered, 'You love me no more.'

To be happy, matrimonial life must be uniform. Every change must be discreet, gradual, and for the better. You have to keep a fire alive for the length of your natural life; see that your cellar is well stocked and the fuel used discriminately and economically.

Control your love and your ardour. If at the beginning you are too attentive, and do such things as you know you cannot do for ever, look out! The slightest inattention will take the most gigantic proportions.

Some men, good diplomatists, carry this principle the length of objecting to being their wives' lovers, simply because they know they cannot always be lovers, and that the day they cease to be lovers they will be considered perfect criminals.

Therefore, my friend, control yourself sufficiently to restrain your *épanchements* so cleverly that your wife may be led to believe that you love her more and more every day. Remember that you enter the holy estate of matrimony with a certain capital of love. The whole happiness of your married life will depend on the way you use that capital.

Live on the interest.

If you touch the capital, you are bound to become bankrupt sooner or later.

Married life is a comedy (sometimes, alas! a tragedy) in several acts. Like in a play, avoid putting into the first act of your married life all your strongest situations and all your smartest dialogue, for fear lest the interest should go on flagging steadily to the end.

The clever dramatist is invariably satisfied with writing a quiet and sober first act. No situations of any strength are required. He makes his audience thoroughly acquainted with his characters.

Then the action begins, and the climax is never reached before the end of the last act but one. A genius sometimes gives it in the last act.

The intelligent husband should bear this in mind and do the same.

The first act of matrimony should be a careful and sympathetic study of character, the laying down of a little plan of campaign full of considerate concessions and well-conceived resolutions.

It is only after at least ten years of matrimony that a climax should be reached, when the man is above forty, in the full possession of his manly powers, when the woman is above thirty, in the full possession of her glorious womanly charms, when both are sure of each other and tried friends.

Then, and then only, they can allow themselves to be lovers in the full meaning of the word. They will be able to enjoy that great bliss if they have not made the mistake of trying too soon.

The epicure, like the diplomatist, is the one who knows how to wait.

In matrimony it is not 'All is well that ends well': it is All is well that begins well, and not too well.

Don't read at mealtime in the presence of your wife, not even the newspaper at breakfast. Converse with her pleasantly; it will help to make her cheerful for the day; it will also help your digestion. The market may have gone down, and the reading of your newspaper may spoil your appetite.

If at night your room is lighted by the means of one lamp only, don't bring that lamp just behind you in order to read your paper comfortably. See that your wife is not compelled to do her needlework in the dark. You do not perhaps realize that women are not all cats and cannot all of them see in darkness.

Let your wife show and prove she loves you, but never let her tell it you. On the contrary, tell her all day long, if you choose. She will never tire of hearing you telling her; she will spend her life listening to you telling her.

If your wife loses her temper, keep cool as a cucumber and enjoy the scene. The effect will be marvellous and instantaneous.

If you are of a jealous disposition, take all the precautions in the world that your wife may not see it, for it will make her so proud that she may give you serious reasons for indulging in it. If you are suspicious, be a diplomatist and hide it from her; for if she does not deserve your suspicions, she will naturally resent it, and if she does, it will only make a hypocrite of her.

Quarrel with your wife, but never bore her. Never fidget, never fuss, and never sulk. If she is late keeping an appointment, don't scold, don't make yourself unpleasant. Tell her it's much better to have her late than not at all. Next time go without her. The cure is infallible.

If she is late coming down, take it for granted that she is trying to look her best for you. Feel flattered and show your gratitude. Remember that the modern *coming* woman is the one who says she will be ready in ten minutes. Laugh at it, make fun of it, crack a joke on it, but never let a woman suppose that, in your manly grandeur, you can lose your temper, even your equanimity, for such trifles.

Never appear to be idle in your house, in the morning especially. If you have nothing to do, go to your study, your library, or any other 'growlery'; inform your wife that you have to be very busy all the morning, and will she be kind enough to see that you are not disturbed? Then lock the door, light a cigar, and take a paper or a book, and be fearfully busy all the time. Your wife, being busy herself all the morning, giving orders and preparing the programme of the day, will be grateful to you for being out of the way, and think all the more of you for being so busy.

Whenever you do your wife a favour, make her a present, etc., never remind her of it. Gratitude, like love, is not to be had for the asking. What a woman admires most in a man is generosity, and to remind anyone of a favour is not generous. It looks like asking to be paid for a service.

When you lend money to your wife, never ask for the return of the loan. She would think it shabby of you. If she should return it (there are some extraordinary women), give it back to her in the shape of a jewel or any other thing that may be a fair representative of the value. She will say of you, 'My husband is a gentleman,' and this will cost you nothing, as you had made up your mind to the loss of that loan.

When your wife puts on a new gown, a new hat, or any new garment, never fail to notice it at once. She will appreciate an act which proves to her that your interest in her is keenly alive.

Never do unto your wife what, as a gentleman, you would never think of doing to any lady of your acquaintance, such as to enter a room before her, meet her in the street without taking off your hat, etc.

If your wife should ever appear in your presence with curlers on, or in any way she would sternly refuse to appear before a stranger, do not reprove her, but shame her by the irreproachableness of your appearance. Therefore, treat her as you want her to treat you. If she is intelligent, she will take the hint at once. Never put on slippers, a smoking-cap, spectacles, and such remedies for love. Always be freshly shaved, and let your *negligé* at home be as carefully put on as your best dress coat. Love feeds on even such trifles as these in the case of people of a refined and artistic temperament.

Never interfere with the liberty and independence of your wife, and never allow her to interfere with yours. Let her correspondence be sacred to you as yours to her. Mutual confidence and 'Liberty Hall' should be the motto of matrimony.

CHAPTER VII

MAXIMS FOR THE MARRIED WOMAN

A wife should follow and obey her husband, especially follow him — Feed the brute.

The Roman and British Empires were founded by men who did not allow themselves to be led by women. The gentle submission of woman to man is the basis of every solid social system. But the appearance of it is all that is needed.

Never tell your husband that you give him this or that for dinner, and not what he asks for, because you know what is best for him. A man will willingly yield to the woman he loves, he will make any sacrifice she may require, but he will generally draw the line at being told what is good for him. Of this he will beg to remain the best judge and tell you so frankly and firmly.

If you suggest to your husband that he should go for a walk, and tell him that he must take to the right and go up the hill, because the air is much purer that way and will make his walk much more profitable, take it for granted that, if he is a man really worthy of the name, he will take to the left and go the other way, not at all to annoy you, but simply to assert his liberty and make himself believe that, although he is married, he is still a free man, able to go where he likes.

The whole being of a man craves for liberty. If he is not in real possession of it, give him sometimes a chance of fancying he is. He will be grateful to you for this delicate act of consideration, and boast in his club that he is one of the lucky married men absolutely free to do as they choose.

Never complain of your husband because he now and then criticises your dress or your new hat. On the contrary, return grateful thanks that he takes notice of what you wear. There are husbands who allow their wives perfect freedom in this respect, for the simple reason that they care absolutely nothing whether they have a garden of flowers or an old saucepan on their heads. Be grateful that your husband is none of those.

If you want to be quite sure that he will like at least one dress of yours, take him with you

when you choose it and let him believe that you entirely submit to his taste. He will always be sure to admire that dress, especially if he has had the privilege of paying for it.

Never allow your husband to frequent your dressing-room and poke his nose into all your little jars and bottles, for fear he should discover the secret of your beauty and of your lovely complexion. Remind him that Balzac said that a man must be a philosopher or a fool who enters his wife's dressing-room.

Cheerfulness is the keynote of happiness in matrimony. Never take life, and never let your husband take life, too seriously, if you happen to have the good fortune to be in easy circumstances. Indulge in little fads and yield to hundreds of innocent temptations. Your life will one day be worth remembering on account of the thousand and one little follies you will have indulged in and enjoyed.

If your husband has a hobby, encourage him in it; never snub him for it. If he brings home a little picture, an engraving, a set of books, a few bits of china he has taken a fancy to, admire his purchase, and don't tell him he has spent his money foolishly. Probably he has earned that money himself. Besides, reflect that there are men who spend their money in drink or at the gambling-table, not only their spare cash, but often the money that would buy the necessaries of life for their wives and families.

I know men who dare not change the place of a picture in their own house, for fear of being sneered at by their wives. Let your husband 'potter' about his house to his heart's content. Let his study be a lovely picture of disorder, and every time you enter that room, don't begin to turn up your nose at the door, and look everywhere to see if there is a little dust on the furniture.

When you have decided to go in for the spring-cleaning of your house, choose your time well and see that it fits in with one when your husband can have a little holiday. Spring-cleaning indulged in indiscriminately has been the cause of more disturbance in temper and language than all the immorality of the world put together.

Let the man smoke and the children romp all over the place. Don't compel them to withdraw, like culprits, one in some underground den, the others in a nursery at the top of the house. If some stuck-up prig of your acquaintance should call on you and spread the report that your house is not kept on the strictest lines of order and propriety, plead guilty, and show that woman, to obtain 'extenuating circumstances,' the marks of the kisses of your husband and children engraven on your cheerful, happy face.

Don't lavish yourself too much on your husband. Always leave something to be desired. If you saturate him with love, he will get tired of you.

When lots of people require your attention in your house and you have to reply to all in succession, do not exhaust your stock of sweetness, patience and gentleness on your friends, your relatives, your children and your servants, so that, when your husband's turn comes, you may not have to say to him with a frown: 'Now, what is it?'

He should be served first and best. Perhaps he deserves it. If not, your consideration for him may put it into his head to try and deserve it.

CHAPTER VIII

THE GENTLE ART OF RULING A HUSBAND

The rule of women over men is the survival of the fittest.

The best thing that can happen to a man is to be ruled by his wife; but she should rule him so discreetly, so diplomatically, that he could almost boast that it is he who rules her. At all events, he should remain very undecided which of the two it is that rules the other. And when a man is not quite sure that it is he who rules his wife, you may take it for granted that it is she who rules him. Of course, I start from this indispensable, fundamental element, that there is love between husband and wife. Without love existing in matrimonial life, no rule can be laid down, no advice can be given on the subject.

How is the art of ruling a husband to be learned? The American and the French girls are at a good school; they have only to study how Mamma does it. I have travelled all over the world, and so far I have discovered two countries only in which the men are in leading-strings and the women are the leaders—my own beloved one and the United States of America. In these two privileged nations the women lead the men by the nose; but in America the women

boast of it, and I do not think they should. In France the women do not boast of it, but they do it, and with a vengeance. Yet, before the people a Frenchwoman will always say: 'Oh, I do so and so because it pleases my husband.' Dear little humbug! does she, though! Butter would not melt in her mouth when she says that.

Now, the rule of the women over the men, both in France and in America, is simply the survival of the fittest, the power of the most keen and intelligent; but for all that, and perfectly as he may realize it, a man objects to his submission being obvious to everybody. In public he will let his wife pass first; in the elevator with her he will take off his hat; in the street car he will give her a seat and remain standing. All this is not submission; it is merely politeness. He behaves, not like a henpecked husband, but only as a gentleman, and a man should always be as polite to his wife as he would to any lady he comes in contact with. A French gentleman, who meets his wife in the street and stops to speak to her, remains with his head uncovered until she begs him to put on his hat. A French son does the same to his mother.

This leads me to the first and the most important principle of the art of ruling a husband, and that is, never to allow him to do to her, or before her, what she knows he would never think of doing to or before any lady of his acquaintance—at any rate, without her permission. The day on which either a husband or a wife says, 'Oh, never mind; it's my husband,' or 'Oh, it's only my wife; I can do as I please,' on that day, that awful day, Cupid packs up his traps, and when that little fellow is gone he never comes back; he is too busy visiting.

To rule a husband it is not at all necessary that the wife should be the more clever of the two, unless by clever you mean intelligent, much less that she should possess a better education than he. The latter qualification would probably lead her to rule him in an assertive and aggressive manner, which would be fatal to their happiness. Very few marriages are happy when the wife is the superior of her husband. I know very clever men, scientific and literary men of prodigious ability, who are completely ruled by charming little geese who are fortunate enough to possess the most enviable of gifts—common-sense, delicacy, refinement, consideration, amiability, devotion, unselfishness, and a good temper. These men enjoy the rule of their wives thoroughly.

God save you, my dear fellow-man, from the conceited woman who cannot do wrong! You will find that you cannot live up to that. If the day after you are married you discover that your wife is perfect, run away for your life. Perfection in a woman ought to be a cause for divorce. In fact, never have anything to do with angels this side of the grave.

How I do love that simple, fascinating little woman who gently puts her arms round her husband's neck, kisses him, and confesses that she was wrong! What a brute that man is if he does not at once take that dear creature in his arms and make all the apologies he is capable of for behaving in such an ungentlemanly way as to force his wife to acknowledge that she was in the wrong! That man, if he is a gentleman, a man even, will spend weeks and weeks after such a confession attending to the smallest wishes of his wife. I would lay all I am worth in this world at the feet of a woman who would acknowledge that she was in the wrong. Most of them will argue and talk you deaf, dumb, blind, and lame, until, for peace' sake, you will say: 'Yes, dear, you are right, of course. How could I imagine for a single moment that you were not?' Then a ray of satisfaction flashes across her face, which seems to say to you: 'I knew you would have to acknowledge it.'

To rule your husband, my dear lady, do exactly as you please, but always pretend that you do as he pleases. That is where your ability comes in.

Men are ruled, as children are, by the prospect of a reward. The reward of your husband is your amiability, your sweetness, your devotion, and your beauty, of which you should take a constant care. Love has to be fed constantly. And always let him suppose that it is for him only that you wish to remain beautiful.

The woman who believes that she is asserting her independence every time she puts on a hat particularly displeasing to her husband is as intelligent and clever as the Irishman who buys a return ticket at a railway office, and, on entering his compartment, says to his fellow-passengers: 'I have played a good joke on the company, I have bought a return ticket—but I don't mean to return.'

CHAPTER IX

ART IN LOVE

Pleasure and happiness — Love is the poetry of the senses — The artistic temperament — The instrument and the instrumentalist — The defence of monogamy on artistic principles — Polygamy *versus* monotony.

Pleasure is a passing sensation. What the soul craves for is a permanent state. Pleasure is the satisfaction of the moment; happiness is the security of the morrow. Nothing but happiness gives satisfaction to the soul.

Thomas Carlyle spent his life in scolding the human race for trying to be happy. His diatribes should have been aimed only at those who are foolish enough to try to find happiness in pleasure.

Happiness is to be found in congenial work, in a regular and well-spent life, in obscurity and retirement, in sound and true friendship, and especially in the love of a man and a woman who thoroughly appreciate each other.

For instance, Carlyle abused money-making, that chief occupation of modern life which most people pursue in order to attain the great end, happiness. But men may find pleasure in money-grubbing, not happiness. Carlyle mistook pleasure for happiness. His dyspeptic state prevented him from enjoying any pleasure, and his sour disposition any happiness; and, just as a man who cannot eat a dinner loves to lecture another who enjoys a good digestion, he scolded and snarled. Now, mankind has never been improved by scolding, and that is why his writings have passed over the heads of the human race and done no good. Man has ever been, is, and ever will be, in search of the solution of the great problem of life, happiness; and what they want is thinkers, writers who will help them to find it. Carlyle treated the human race very much as he treated his wife: he wrote beautiful love-letters to her, but never said a kind or sweet word to her which might have helped to make her happy.

There is always something very unsatisfactory and inconclusive about a blind man discoursing on colour, or a dyspeptic one on pleasure and happiness.

No doubt the greatest source of happiness in this world is to be found in the love and devotion of a man and a woman. You may find it in every sphere of life, but more particularly in that little cottage covered with ivy, jasmine, and honeysuckle which seldom attracts the attention of the passer-by. Happy the one whose nest is hidden far from the crowd!

Now, what will especially help a man and woman to find happiness in love? Many, many things will help, but most especially the artistic temperament—that temperament which can be cultivated and developed, and which will cause the man and the woman to always look for the beautiful, for the enjoyment of the soul and the heart at the same time as that of the body.

Love is the poetry of the senses. It reveals its secrets and its ecstasies only to those who can so mingle their thoughts, their hearts, their souls, as to transform two beings into one—only to people of refinement and of artistic disposition.

The French, for example, are neither more moral nor more immoral than the English or the Americans: they are different in their morality, different in their immorality, as they are in their tastes, customs, and habits. But what I am perfectly sure of is that they are the happiest people on earth, simply because of their artistic temperament, which makes them take all their pleasures in discreet moderation, like epicures, and, by making the companionship of man and woman most pleasant and attractive, enables them to enjoy domestic relations in all their beautiful fulness.

But, some people will say, is not an artistic temperament conducive to unfaithfulness? Will not a man with an artistic temperament, for example, constantly have new 'artistic' aspirations, and constantly fall in love with beauty? Not at all necessarily. If you will allow me to repeat an expression, of which I cannot say I am particularly proud, but the truth of which I insist on, that woman is a beautiful instrument and man a good or a bad instrumentalist, I will answer: No, not at all necessarily. I am not aware that Sarasate or Joachim require more than one violin to give their marvellous performances on, and I know that when Paderewski goes on tour, he insists on always playing on the same piano, which follows him everywhere.

It is not only on moral but on artistic grounds that I object to polygamy, and that I advocate monotony—I mean monogamy. And on this subject another question might be put: Should a woman prefer to marry a man to whom woman is an enigma? I know that most people who belong to the retinue of Mrs. Grundy will at once exclaim: Most decidedly a woman should expect to find the man as he expects to find her. There goes again the old saying: 'What is good for the goose should be good for the gander.'

Well, there is something in that; but when I consider that the whole happiness of a married

life may depend on the start, I would fain reply: Remember that the first time a man whispers words of love he is a fearful stammerer.

Mrs. Grundy is a very moral person for whom I cannot help feeling some respect; but she is the cause of a great deal of happiness being missed in Anglo-Saxon lands. My greatest grudge against that lady is that she is the bitter, implacable enemy of the artistic, the beautiful, and the truthful, of which she has succeeded in denuding art, literature, and life itself. Anglo-Saxon intelligence—'the intellectuals,' as we call them in France, are dead against her, loathe her, but the masses of the people are crawling on their knees before her. All the conventionalities of English life have been invented to suit her tastes, and to please her the most innocent pleasures have had to be transformed into funereal functions. Everything suggests impropriety and indecency to her distorted mind, and she is the cause that, in England, and also to some extent in America, art, literature, and life, have to lie in order to avoid running the risk of deserving her frowns.

CHAPTER X

SORE TRIALS FOR PEOPLE IN LOVE — WILL LOVE TRIUMPH OVER THE AFFLICTIONS OF THE BODY?

A pathetic story — Could you whisper words of love through an ear-trumpet? — The case presented on the stage — Take care of the woman you love.

The following reflections were suggested to me by a pitiful story that I heard a few days ago only. A young, beautiful girl, belonging to the best society, was engaged to be married. During her lover's absence she had typhoid fever. She recovered and is now quite well, but (the 'but' is terrible) she has not a single hair left on her head. Of course, she wears a wig, but she has tried every possible thing, consulted the most eminent specialists, to no avail. Her lover is returning very soon. He knew she was ill, but does not know the terrible misfortune which has befallen his beautiful *fiancée*. Will he marry her? Will his love be powerful enough to overlook the loss of woman's best ornament on his sweetheart's head? Will he be able to behold her with the wig off, and say to her: 'I love you just the same?' In a melodrama he would, but will *he*? I dare not answer the question. We do not live in heroic times nowadays, and you must not ask too much of man.

As physical beauty is an appanage far more precious to a woman than a man, the question may perhaps be better put in the following manner: If a man loves a woman, will her disfigurement—the loss of a limb, the loss of her hair, deafness, blindness, or any other calamity of this sort which may afflict her—destroy the love of that man for that woman?

It is all very well to say that love is the yearning of the soul, but it must be admitted that the man himself is closely associated with it, and that the face is the means of expressing what the soul feels. You can softly whisper 'I love you' in a woman's ear; but if the poor thing is deaf, you cannot shout these three words at her, much less blow them through a trumpet. If you doubt me, try it in a play, and you will see the effect it will infallibly produce on the audience. Why, they will roar. Deafness is terrible, so dull, so prosaic, so suggestive of old age; I have sometimes heard men wish their wives were dumb, but deaf never.

I remember once seeing a play at a Paris Boulevard theatre, frequented by the emotional portion of the Parisian public, in which the heroine, in the fourth act, appears with a thick veil over her face. She has had small-pox and she is sadly disfigured for life; she expects her lover, who is returning from the war. A year has elapsed since the curtain went down over the third act; she has just received a letter announcing his arrival safe and sound. She is happy, radiant; then she looks at herself in a glass and weeps bitterly; she has told him of her illness, but not of her misfortune; he knows nothing about it. Will he love her still when he sees her, or will he go away from her? The suspense is awful, and the situation dramatic. At last he appears on the threshold of the door, and stretches out his arms to her; she remains speechless, motionless, and the audience breathless. He rushes up to her to take her in his arms. With a dramatic gesture of the hands she bids him stand back. Then she tells him what has happened; but he is one of those worthy, undaunted heroes of the Boulevard melodramas whose love can triumph over all obstacles. He swears that it will make no difference to his sentiments; she lifts up her veil; then he falls at her feet and exclaims from the depths of his heart: 'I love you just the same, my darling.' (Tableau, cheers, and applause.) Of course he does not say to her that he finds her more beautiful than ever, and that the marks suit her style of beauty and all that sort of thing, but he swears again that his love has not altered, and the audience applaud this lofty sentiment, and the women say: 'That's a man!'

H'm! is it, though?

A friend who was with me on that occasion, and who is a bit of a cynic, said to me: 'There was only one possible *dénouement* for that play to give satisfaction to an audience that must go home perfectly persuaded that the hero and the heroine will be happy and in love with each other for ever and ever. The author missed a fine dramatic curtain. As the small-pox marks cannot be taken away, that man should have carried his love for that girl further than he did. He should have torn his eyes out in her presence. The sacrifice would have gone straight to her heart, and would have made the continuation of his love possible.'

'Well,' I said, 'yes, I see what you mean, but how do you know that the girl would have cared to marry a blind man? Maybe her love would not triumph over the difficulty.'

I may tell you that I knew a loving married couple who ceased to love each other, he because her hair turned white, and she because his turned outwards.

This is a psychological subject that may well puzzle the best sociologist.

I have not tried to answer the question, but merely intended to offer it for discussion.

However, this I will say to my fellow-men: 'I know how truly and deeply you love your wives and sweethearts, but let me advise you: Don't try the experiment; don't put your love to so severe a test. Take the greatest care of the said wives and sweethearts, and see that no accident happens to them, that no disease disfigures them or permanently injures their health. This is wisdom.'

CHAPTER XI

MAN VERSUS WOMAN IN LOVE

How many times can a man and a woman love? — They love differently — A delicate question — 'Lucky dog!' — The inexorability of the virtuous woman.

Man is capable of love as earnestly as woman is; but love is not the whole business of his life, whereas it is a woman's. When a child, she loves her doll; when a girl, her mother; when a woman, a man. She can feed on love and die of it. When a mother, she loves her children; when she dies, surrounded by beloved grandchildren, she may say that her life has been well filled.

I believe that a woman can love more than once. I have known widows remarry, and love their second husbands with the same devotion as their first.

A man really loves once only. I knew a man under fifty who was married three times. He was a good and devoted husband to his three wives, but he never really loved but the second. If he dies suddenly without having time to take all his precautions, the portrait of his second wife will be found on his heart.

The reason of this is that men and women love in different ways. A man loves because his whole being—heart, soul, and body—craves for a woman. A woman often gives herself to a man because it pleases her to be loved by him. For a man, love is the pleasure he feels in the company of a woman; for a woman, it is the enjoyment of the pleasure she gives to a man. A woman is proud to call herself a reward, and that is why all heroes appeal to her so much. Mirabeau was the plainest of men, with his face covered with smallpox marks, yet no man ever made so many conquests among women. Successful generals, explorers, great orators, authors, artists, singers, all appeal to women. They may not love them personally, but it affords them great pleasure to be loved by them. There is in every woman a craving for a man superior to herself, and that is why women who try to dominate men are such dismal failures.

To a woman love is sacred, her food, her life.

Never have a sneer at a woman or at a child. Whenever you feel sarcastic, exercise your talents on something else.

Never profane the words, 'I love you'; they may seal the fate of a woman; but when you have uttered these three words in great earnestness, and the woman has answered with that great religious, almost sad, smile that Victor Hugo called 'the smile of angels,' when, in a

word, she is yours, place her on a pedestal, on an altar, and worship her. The world has nothing better to offer you.

A man can cure a woman of a man. Nothing can cure a man of a woman, unless it be that woman herself.

While on the subject of love and tender relations, let me ask a question of my lady readers: Which would you rather know, that the man you love had broken his allegiance to you, but kept his heart faithful, or that he had lost his heart with another woman, but kept his 'monastic' vows? A clever woman once answered me in the following manner: 'If that man was my husband, I would much rather know that his heart had gone from me for a time. If I was not married to him, I would prefer to know that his heart had remained faithful.'

Only I must warn you that if a man put this question to his wife, she would probably say to him at once: 'Jack, which of the two are you guilty of?'

'In ninety cases out of a hundred,' says Paul Bourget, 'for a woman to play her heart in the game of love is to play at cards with a sharper, and gold against counterfeit pieces.' How true! for when the game is over, society (which ought to be ashamed of itself in its treatment of men and women) says of the man, 'Lucky dog!' but mocks at the woman who has given way, puts her outside the pale when she forgets herself for the moment, and turns away from her when she gives way to despair. Poor woman! She cannot rebel, for if man is the cause of her downfall, it is woman who becomes her bitterest enemy. There is no pity in the breast of a woman for the woman who has fallen, unless she herself has had the same sad experience. The virtuous woman is inexorable, although her virtue is very often like a fortress which never had to capitulate for the reason that it never was attacked.

If I were a woman, oh, how I should hate women!

Madame de Staël said that what consoled her to know that she was a woman was that she would never have to marry a woman.

CHAPTER XII

COURTING IN FRANCE AND ENGLAND

Kneeling and sitting — The piquancy of French courting — The use of the second person singular — The sealing kiss.

The art of courtship as practised in France and England leaves the amorous Gaul sometimes at a decided disadvantage, and sometimes at a marked advantage, by comparison with the Briton. On the whole, I think honours are easy. Take the declaration of love. In France the foolish animal has to go on his knees at the feet of the adored one, who through her modestly drooping eyelashes can make an inventory of the suitor's least defects—of the bald spot on his crown, his languishing eyes, with their white turned up in the ardour of passion, maybe of the little wart which will obtrude itself for observation, especially at such a moment. The poor Frenchman is obliged to run the risk of making himself very ridiculous.

But now turn to England. There, if you would a-wooing go, you sit down comfortably, very much at your ease, with the beloved object of your dreams at your side, or sitting on a cushion at your feet. Thus situated, you can murmur your soft whispers of love into her ears without any risk of dislocating your spinal column. The ladies will possibly think that the business is more nicely arranged in France, but they will hardly get the other sex to agree with them.

In America I never was able to make any observations on the subject. Those provoking Yankees invariably waited until I had left their houses to proceed to business.

What adds, however, to the charm of the French system of making love is that French girls do not enjoy the same freedom as English ones, and that the declarations of love are made in the sweet moments stolen from the watchfulness of their parents.

What, for instance, would an English girl, or for that matter an American one, think of the young lady in M. Victorien Sardou's comedy of 'Old Bachelors,' who, finding herself alone with her lover—a lover to whom she is engaged to be married—reproaches him with having ventured into her presence when he knew that there was no one with her?

'N'est-ce pas que c'est bon d'être ensemble?' pleads the young man.

'Je n'ai pas dit que ce ne fût pas bon,' replies the young lady in good epigrammatic style; 'j'ai dit que ce n'était pas bien.'

To the Anglo-Saxon people who have not familiarized themselves with French customs and modes of thought, it seems simply inconceivable that a girl who intends to entrust to a particular man the happiness of her life should think there could be danger, indiscretion, impropriety of any, even the slightest kind, in talking to him for a few moments without the presence of witnesses.

I have always pitied the English-speaking people for using the second person singular only when addressing the Almighty.

I am not speaking of poetry, of course, but of everyday conversational prose. This second person singular seems to me indispensable for the due expression of love. Where is the Frenchwoman who does not remember with a thrill of pleasure the never-to-be-forgotten moment when her lover, after many times saying to her 'Je vous aime,' got emboldened enough, by her return of his deep affection, to change that 'Je vous aime' into 'Je t'aime'?

She knows that this change of person sealed her fate, that from the very moment that second person singular was used she became his. 'Je vous aime' will, of course, always appeal to the woman who loves the man who utters these words; but when 'Je t'aime' is whispered into her ears, she will close her eyes in ecstasy and be transported to heaven as if for eternal bliss.

This use of the second person singular in love affairs is not the only superiority that the French have over the Anglo-Saxons in the expression of the tender feelings. In England, and I believe also in America, a woman is kissed on the lips by her father, mother, brothers and lady and girl friends. Of course her lover will do the same, with more ardour, more expression, more 'impressions;' but in France this is very seldom the case. Girls are kissed on the forehead by their father, and on the cheeks by all their other relatives and friends. Even a tiny little girl, on being asked for a kiss, will offer her cheeks, never her mouth. The lips are entirely reserved for Cupid.

A French philosopher has said that when a woman has surrendered her lips she has surrendered everything; but he is right only as far as his countrywomen are concerned. Even after saying 'Je vous aime,' the Frenchman will not dare kiss his sweetheart on the lips. It is only after risking the sacred second person singular, 'Je t'aime,' that he will venture to do so, and thus stamp her his.

Well, after all is said and done, I have no doubt that Britons and Americans find that the second person plural, for want of the second person singular, answers the purpose well enough. And for ever and ever men and women will love without attempting to discover new methods or adopt foreign ones. The old story will ever be told; the old method will ever do.

CHAPTER XIII

THE WOMAN-HATER

Should a woman marry a woman-hater? — The portrait of a woman-hater — The risk a woman runs in marrying a woman-lover — Take your chance, don't cast your pearls before swine.

Should a woman marry a woman-hater? Yes, some people say, because he will pay no attention to any other woman, and will be a faithful husband in all the force of the expression. A woman-hater is *par excellence* a one-woman's man, and just the sort of man that a woman should wish to marry.

No, other people say, the woman-hater is a no-woman's man. A woman should marry a lover of her sex, and feel proud to know that it is she whom he prefers to all and loves best of all. Of course, they admit that she will have to be careful and ever-watchful in order to keep alive the interest which her husband takes in her and the affection which he feels for her. But a woman-hater is a prig, and the male prig is the last man that a woman should care to marry.

I think the latter are right. The woman-hater hates all women, and will never be capable of any love for his wife any more than for any other woman. Only the sense of ownership will make him value her. He may like her, be a good friend to her, a hard-working and devoted husband, but he will never be a lover to her; and the husband who, during at least the first fifteen years of his married life, cannot now and then be the lover of his wife fails to give to that woman that bliss which is a perfect compensation for all the troubles and miseries of that which the Popes are fond of calling the Vale of Tears, and Mrs. Gamp 'the Wale of Tears.'

The woman-hater is a man who has never petted his mother, who has never been the 'chum' of his sisters, who as a boy has despised girls, and as a young man has treated them with disrespect and even contempt. This kind of man has never once in his life given a thought to woman, has never deemed it consistent with his dignity to devote a minute to the study of her character. He has never given way to her charms, he has never felt her influence, he has never learned to smile kindly at her little foibles and fads. The idea has never occurred to him to indulge her, to treat her, in turn, as a beloved child, even sometimes a spoiled one, as a friend whose advice is worth following nine times out of ten, as a sweet companion either for moments of pleasure or for those of studious retirement. For him woman is a necessary evil. He puts up with her, and is always glad when she is gone. She annoys him, provokes him—nay, even shocks him, and her frivolity is for him a constant source of torment. He breathes more freely when at last he is left alone or finds himself in the company of men at his club.

He is seldom generous, and is not infrequently a miser.

The woman-hater is always conceited, and most generally selfish, and conceit and selfishness are the two worst, the two most objectionable, pieces of furniture in the household of a married couple. The woman-hater is also dull, and often sulky, which is worse still. With him there can be no cheerfulness in the house, and dulness is the bitterest enemy of happiness in matrimony.

The woman-hater has not a redeeming fault or foible which may enable his wife to get hold of him. He has no weaknesses to make him lovable or even tolerable. He is ironclad, and a woman cannot come near him without getting a bruise of some sort or other. He will ever stand before his wife a perfect model for her to look up to, and all her pretty little womanly ways, being a closed letter to him, will be wretchedly wasted on him.

Like all conceited men, the woman-hater has no humour in him. He cannot for the life of him see a joke. A frivolous remark will make him frown. He is a moral man with a vengeance, but all his morality and all the gold in the world are not worth the smile of a genial, cheerful husband. And, worst of all, the woman-hater is generally dyspeptic, and if a woman marries a dyspeptic man she is done for.

The man-flirt is the most despicable creature on earth, but the woman-hater is undoubtedly the most objectionable.

Yes, my dear lady, avoid the woman-hater, and, above all, don't marry him. Have to your wedded husband a lover of women, full of foibles and weaknesses, a man who understands and appreciates women. It will depend upon you whether that man will make the best of husbands or not.

With a woman-lover marriage is a risk; with a woman-hater it is a certainty. With the latter you will be casting pearls before swine.

Marry the former and take your chance.

CHAPTER XIV

WHAT DO WOMEN ADMIRE MOST IN MEN?

People generally admire in others the qualities they do not themselves possess — The sexes differ in their opinions of infidelity and its causes — The eleventh commandment: Never confess.

I believe that what sexes admire most in the other are the qualities which they do not generally possess themselves. For instance, a man will always tell you that the qualities he admires most in a woman are constancy, good, equal temper, and such others as his most flattering friends would never accuse him of possessing. If, on the other hand, you read the confession-books of women, you will invariably discover that the qualities they most admire

in men are generosity, broad-mindedness, magnanimity, absence of prejudice, and a lofty sense of justice, of toleration, and of forgiveness. Now, some women may possess these qualities, but no one, I think, will say that they are eminently feminine virtues.

And it may also be added that what sexes hate most each in the other are the very defects which they themselves not infrequently possess. Out of twenty confession-books which I have this moment under my eyes, and in which is to be found the question, 'What defect do you hate most in man?' eighteen women have answered, 'Meanness.' That is just what you would expect, now, don't you think so?

Of course, there are women of whom it might be said, however preposterous the remark may sound, that they are not only perfect ladies, but also perfect gentlemen. These are glorious women. Now, don't smile; I know what I am saying. When you say of a woman that she is a perfect lady, the remark chiefly refers to her manners, the way she dresses and behaves in society, etc. When you say of a man that he is a perfect gentleman, it means that he is a man of considerate feelings, generous, magnanimous even, a man who could not do anything mean if he tried.

A woman who receives an anonymous letter about her husband, puts it in the fire, and never mentions the fact to him, behaves like a gentleman. A man who receives an anonymous letter about his wife and shows it to her is a cur.

In a pretty play, the name of which escapes me just at present, a woman has compromised herself with a man. A letter from that man is delivered to her before her husband. The latter knows whom the letter is from. His wife hands it to him.

'My dear, this letter is addressed to you. I have no right to open it,' says the husband. 'Don't you want to read it yourself?'

The wife answers that she does not.

'Very well,' he says; 'then there is only one thing to do.'

And before her he throws it into the fire.

All the women in the audience applaud. So they should; but how many of them would behave in the same manner if such a letter from a woman came to their husband?

Meanness in a man is revolting to woman; but although many women cannot be accused of the defect, it must be admitted that it is often found in them.

Many a man who was sure that his wife was in earnest love with another man would be found ready to sacrifice himself and give his wife to that man. A celebrated English writer did it. Under similar circumstances a woman would rather give her husband or lover to the tiger of Mr. Frank R. Stockton.

A man will admit the possibility of his wife loving another man and being loved by him. He may grieve over it, but he will not despise her for it, or necessarily impute any low or degrading motive to her. But a woman will never admit that her husband can have fallen in love with another woman. She will only accuse him of being too amorous, and in her eyes that other woman can only be a 'low creature.' She will not stop a moment and reflect that by lowering that 'creature' she lowers herself, since her husband, for a time at any rate, may prefer that woman to her.

It will not enter her head that, maybe, her husband goes down on his knees and prays that he may forget that woman, but is conquered in the struggle, and cannot resist the fascination. No; for her the woman is an abandoned creature and her husband a blackguard. Every day in the novels she reads, she will give her sympathies to a man who has met with the misfortune which has befallen her husband and herself.

She will forget that if there was no passion in this life, no human weaknesses, no pits and falls in the path of man and woman, there would be no drama, no great poetry—in fact, no literature, no art.

She will admit that no heart (man's or woman's) is free from the danger of being lost. She will admit that this may happen to any man, but not to her husband. You may give her to read and study all the works of Balzac, of Alexandre Dumas the younger, and of all the greatest dissectors of the human heart; she will learn nothing. The mind of a woman is a mixture of obstinacy and prejudice. When she reads the accounts of the proceedings of the Divorce Court, she exclaims of the respondent, if she be a woman: 'Poor thing! romantic, I suppose.' When the respondent is a man, she dismisses the whole thing with: 'Man's a beast.' She sometimes sympathizes with a co-respondent.

What women admire particularly in men is indulgence, the spirit of forgiveness, magnanimity. Their hero is the man of the play who, when his wife, falling at his feet, shrieks, 'I am not guilty!' takes her gently by the hand, embraces her, and whispers softly in

her ears, like Dr. Primrose to his misguided daughter: 'And if thou wert, child, am I not here to protect thee, to comfort thee?' And, true enough, the situation is pathetic, thoroughly human, and that husband's rôle is sublime; but in real life not one woman out of a thousand would play that part.

For, even when woman forgives, it is out of consideration for her children—for her own sake, as it were, in order to avoid a scandal, an open avowal of the situation. She may forgive, but she will not forget. It is true that in Mr. Arthur Pinero's beautiful play, 'The Profligate,' the wife forgives, and tells her husband she will help him bear it. But the offence was committed before the marriage. She has not been personally wronged or deceived, except in her estimation of the man she has married. Therefore she may forgive, although I do not envy that man's future in matrimonial life.

Conclusion: If a man should be unfortunate enough to deviate from the path of virtue after entering the holy estate of matrimony, let him follow the advice given by a great French jurisconsult to all prisoners about to appear before their judges: 'Never confess.' Only a very lofty woman will take him by the hand and, putting in the scales all he has done for her in life, will say: 'It leans on the right side.' A *rara avis* this woman.

CHAPTER XV

CAN GRATITUDE ENGENDER LOVE?

Expecting gratitude is asking for the price of a service — Love keeps out of it.

Has love anything to do with gratitude? In other words, does gratitude engender love? No; to kill a woman's love for him a man has only to keep on reminding her of what he has done to earn her gratitude, and by the same means a woman will obtain the same result with a man.

A woman will often hate a man who lavishes money upon her, and will love the first man who comes along to whom she will owe no gratitude, simply because the former degrades her by paying for her favours, whereas the latter enables her to regain her independence and to raise herself in her own estimation.

A man who marries below his rank in society may be loved by his wife, not because, but although, he has raised her to his rank. And a man will seldom love a wife whom he has married for money, because by so doing he has to a certain extent sold himself, and love never goes abreast with either feelings of self-degradation or absence of respect for the other party. This is why mésalliances, as a rule, turn out to be very unhappy marriages. The best guarantee of happiness in matrimonial life is the equal footing on which a husband and wife will go through the years of their association. Neither of them must have a feeling of owing anything to the other. It must be a partnership into which each party has brought the same amount of capital.

Gratitude will engender affection, devotion, great friendship, but not love. Nay, I will go further and risk the following statement: Not only gratitude does not engender love, but it will stand in its way.

A woman does not love a man because she feels it is her duty to love him. Love has nothing to do with duty. You cannot help falling in love any more than you can help becoming gray or bald, and you may fall in love against all the interests of your life. The more you argue against love, the more you love. Love has nothing to do with arguing and reasoning, any more than it has with duty and gratitude. You cannot command love to come or go, and many a woman has been on her knees praying that she might love a man to whom she owed a debt of gratitude, but the prayer has seldom been heard. A woman will remain faithful to a man out of duty or out of gratitude, but all that will not make her love him.

No, no; and I will also say that for a man to feel that he has to be grateful to a woman is injurious to his love for that woman. He so hates himself for being unable to do for her all he would like to do, that he curses himself and fails to love her more for all her patience, for all the devotion she shows to him through the hardships of life. A man loves a woman all the more for all he can do for her, and so does a woman a man. This is the natural consequence of the fact that we often love people (not necessarily of the opposite sex), not for what they actually do for us, but for what they allow us to do for them. M. Perrichon, in 'Le Voyage de M. Perrichon,' by Labiche, a play worthy of Molière, had a daughter whose hand was sought by two suitors. One saved his life; the other, more cunning, pretended to have his life saved by him. Perrichon prefers the latter, simply because the first reminds him that he cannot

ride, and made a fool of him, while the second one made a hero of him by enabling him to boast that he had saved a man's life.

Now, this does not by any means show the better side of human nature. But we are not writing a panegyric of man or woman: we are philosophizing a bit, and seeking to speak the truth and our mind. Of course it is possible, and I hope it is a fact, that a lofty, exalted nature may love through gratitude; but lofty, exalted natures are the exception.

A man may win the love of a woman by risking his own life to save hers; but in this case it is not only gratitude that engenders love; it is an act of heroism, and an act of heroism will always appeal to a woman. On the other hand, a wounded soldier may fall in love with a woman who nurses him; but in this case it is the sweet ministration of a tender woman, nursing—that most womanly rôle, that of an angel—that will appeal to man, not gratitude pure and simple.

I have known men fall in love with girls of low character, have them educated—physically, mentally, and intellectually—and marry them, with the most disastrous results.

Of course, when people already love, gratitude will increase their love for the one they owe it to; what I mean to say is, that if love does not exist, it is not gratitude that will engender it.

Love is inspired by an exaltation that makes us feel better or greater. Gratitude, like pity, makes us look smaller; that is why gratitude does not, and cannot, engender love.

A cynic once remarked that ingratitude was the independence of the heart. He might have added that gratitude, by attempting to force the heart, fails to touch it in the tender relations between man and woman.

CHAPTER XVI

DOES MARRIAGE HELP A MAN?

In social life — In commercial life — In literary and artistic life — Matrimony is a highly respectable institution.

Does marriage help a man?

Well, if he marries a rich wife, of course it does; but, you see, money helps wherever it comes from, and so we must put this consideration out of the question altogether.

Let us also say, and at once, too, that if a man finds happiness in matrimony, marriage will help him, whatever his position may be; but happiness helps wherever it comes from, and so we must put this consideration out of the question also.

And before answering the question, or rather, before presenting arguments both in the affirmative and in the negative, we must examine the different positions that a man may occupy in life.

In commercial pursuits marriage will help a man. If money-making is the chief concern of his life, an attentive, interested, saving wife will enable a man to devote all his mind to business, and, by a careful management of her house, will also enable him to amass wealth.

If a man holds a post of responsibility—a Government one, for example, in the Diplomatic Service, in the Civil Service, in the Church, in the university professions—a wife, possessed of attractive charms, amiable and tactful, will help him; for let us remember that in England, as well as in all countries where it is sought to always appoint the right man in the right place, before deciding on a candidate for any important vacant post, the first question that is asked is, 'What kind of a wife has he got?' The kind of wife that will help such a man is the one that will help him socially and diplomatically—by wire-pulling, if you like.

Now, if interviewers set any value on their comfort—nay, on their lives—I advise them to avoid this topic; for the question is not only a very big one, but a very uncomfortable one indeed, considering that the very men who are called upon to answer it must naturally be married men.

To prove this, I will, in a few words, put down a little conversation I quite recently had on the subject over a cup of tea with a charming English lady.

'But,' she said, 'you do not answer my question—Does marriage help a man?'

'Sometimes yes, sometimes no. It depends a great deal on the profession, or the calling, of

the man.'

'Well, a doctor, for instance?'

'Yes,' I said, 'marriage helps a doctor. It stamps him respectable, and many women will not consult a doctor unless they know that he is a married man; but white hair will help him quite as much.'

'That is not very promising,' said the lady.

'Well,' I replied, 'let us try again.'

'Surely women can do much to inspire, to encourage a man, whatever his work may be?'

'Yes, a sympathetic woman can do a great deal; but it is very difficult to quite determine what effect her help may have upon her husband's work during the various critical periods of his career. There may have been days when, without her encouragement, he would have lost faith in himself, but such cases are rare. Then you speak of artists, of people who live by praise, feed on it. I have known painters who looked for and found such encouragement from their wives. On the other hand, I have known others who sought solitude when at work, men who could not have expressed their message unless alone with their art. I have known authors who looked for inspiration from their wives, or thought they did, and I have known others who could not do a stroke of work unless they were absolutely left alone with their thoughts.'

'But if a wife makes a man happy, that alone surely helps him?'

'Of course it does; but the married man has far greater responsibilities than the single one, and he may be obliged to produce for the sake of filling many little hungry mouths. And another thing you must remember that the single man can command the interest of a great number of women who would not care to be interested in his wife, and very few wives will realize that they may not be as interesting as their husbands. This will cause trouble—unpleasantness, at least—and stand in the way of a man's success.'

'Then,' said the lady, 'let us change the question. Does marriage hamper a man?'

'Undoubtedly there are professions which seem to necessitate bachelorhood, where marriage is not only no help, but a handicap. A soldier, for instance, should not marry, for a married soldier, good fighting-man though he may be, never can forget the wife, and perhaps the little ones, at home.'

'I take it,' said my lady interlocutor, 'that you do not advocate marriage for the rising poet, painter, dramatist, or novelist?'

'I do not advocate marriage for any man that is too susceptible or who has the artistic temperament too strongly developed. The man who is strong enough to achieve great things is strong enough to achieve them alone—that is, unless he is fortunate enough to meet the exceptional woman. Lord Byron said that nothing can inflict greater torture upon a woman than the mere fact of loving a poet. This is not due to the heartless or deliberate cruelty of the poet. He himself is to be pitied for being a martyr, the slave of art. It is the natural depth of a poet's emotions to fall in love with every lovely woman. The higher we rise in the intellectual scale, says a modern writer, the more varied, complex, and deep are the emotional groups which delight and torment the soul. Mental work does not extinguish passions; it feeds the flames, on the contrary, and unfits the brain-owner for matrimony. Only people who have uneventful, almost humdrum, lives are good subjects for matrimony and perfectly happy in marriage.'

'Then you do not admit the existence of the man who needs the quiet sympathy of a good domestic wife before his art becomes fully articulate?'

'No, because the artist constantly wants stimulants, and a domestic life is not stimulating. Now, do not misunderstand me. Marriage can make a man very happy, including the man with the strong artistic temperament, but I don't think that it helps him. I have come across hundreds of cases where artistic and literary efforts have been checked, and sometimes killed outright, by the petty cares and worries of domestic life. The brain-worker is very easily irked and tormented by the most trivial things. He is irritable and most sensitive. I have known literary men put right off their work for days simply because devoted wives came into their studies, and, after giving them an encouraging kiss, carried off their pens to make out their washing list. I have known painters whose faculties were positively benumbed by the presence of their wives. I have known dramatists who could never set to work in earnest before they had sent their families into the country or had themselves left home far behind them; and, mind you, these men were all fond of their wives.'

'You are not encouraging.'

'Will you have a cup of tea?'

'Thank you, with pleasure; but does marriage——'

'Do you take sugar?'

'If you please; but are there not cases——'

'And cream?'

'Please. Now, tell me——'

'What I think of the Paris Exposition?'

'Before I go, can't you say something nice about matrimony?'

'Yes, madame: Matrimony is highly respectable.'

CHAPTER XVII

THE GOOSE AND THE GANDER

The case for man, the defendant — Freemasonry between women — Which is right? — Influence of plumage — The female bird — Man is not invariably wrong — 'What is good for the goose is good for the gander' — But there is a difference between the goose and the gander.

Women, who seldom miss an opportunity of picking one another to pieces, invariably stand shoulder to shoulder (as much as the shape of their sleeves will allow them to do) when the question to decide is whether it is a man or a woman who is in the wrong. The freemasonry between women goes as far as that and no further.

The Queen of Roumania, well known to literary fame as Carmen Sylva, declares that the reason for a wife's infidelity is to be laid at her husband's door, and the assertion is laid down as a rule by the royal authoress. In so saying, the Queen of Roumania makes herself the mouthpiece of her sex; for most women, if not absolutely all, are of her opinion, that the wickedness of man is responsible for all the vices, faults, and even shortcomings of woman.

On the other hand, I have always heard men say that a man will stay at home if his wife makes his house attractive and cheerful, and herself pleasant in it.

It is the same story, the eternally same story.

The man stays at his club and returns home at one o'clock a.m. because Madame is dull and sulky. The woman is dull and sulky because Monsieur stays at his club and does not return home before one o'clock.

Now, which is right? or rather, which of the two began? A prejudiced person of the male gender will say:

'It is the women's fault.'

A prejudiced person of the female persuasion will answer:

'No, the men's, of course.'

(Women in their arguments always add, 'Of course.')

A fair-minded person of either sex will probably say: 'Out of that equal number of men and women, half the women are right, and half the men are not wrong.'

All this leads us to a very serious question: Of man or woman, which is the more responsible of the two for the continuance and eventually the long duration of happiness in matrimony?

And as women are ever airing their grievances on the subject, let us try to plead a little the cause of that poor, often too much abused creature that Madame Sarah Grand delights in calling 'Mere Man,' and let us do so in a friendly spirit, in an unconventional, intimate sort of way.

If women have their grievances against Nature, men have theirs, too. Nature has, indeed, treated men in a far less generous manner than the other male members of the animal kingdom. The female bird, for instance, is plain. She has no voice and no glorious feathers. All the fascinating power of beautiful song, gorgeous plumage and graceful demeanour was given to the male. It is he who has to win, and Nature, knowing this, has endowed him with

the means of conquest. Not so with us. Man is about the ugliest creature of all that breathes on the face of the earth, and woman was intended to attract and charm him, and, in order to enable her to do so, Nature has given her a beautiful face, a divine figure and a taste for attractive plumage. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries men paid attention to their dress, which, in many respects, was as attractive and fascinating as that of women. But now! Man is a guy, a cure, a remedy for love-sickness, and I sometimes wonder how it is that women think his conquest worth making. To make himself lovable, man has to turn himself inside out; for only his moral and intellectual qualities can help him to get at a woman's heart. Soldiers are supposed to be more successful with women than any other men because their profession appeals to the minds of women; but I can't help thinking that their uniform has a great deal to do with it.

Now, if Nature has endowed woman with the powers of charming man by her amiability and winning grace, who is to blame if she does not avail herself of all these advantages, and does not use them carefully, discreetly, skilfully, to prevent love from flagging and cooling in matrimony?

Of course, intelligent women feel, after the wedding ceremony is over, that a man's love is not secured by a few sacramental words pronounced by a priest in solemn tones and in the presence of many witnesses. She soon discovers that man is not like woman; she understands, as the male bird does, that plumage has a great deal to do in order to excite happiness and keep it alive in matrimony, and that her cheerfulness and tactful ways will obtain what remonstrances and sulks will invariably fail to secure.

There is no doubt that many women, women spoiled by loving husbands, by lover-husbands especially, become dull and irritable when the husbands do not exactly detach themselves from their wives, but, through circumstances too numerous to enumerate, pass from the stage of lovers to that of friends.

Women are, as a rule, the embodiment of prejudice, and they will not understand. There is seldom any philosophy in them, and, when they do understand, they will not resign themselves cheerfully to the inevitable, and either make a careful study of the position and see the only possible way to revive what appears to be dying, or make the best of what, after all, is still worth having, the friendship and the protection of a devoted husband who has worked for them and made their life secure. No, they will sulk and make things wretched and hopeless.

Man is not invariably wrong, and he is not to be blamed for his coldness any more than he is to be blamed or scolded for his want of appetite. Perhaps if the dinner had been prepared with more care, he would have eaten it with avidity.

A great French poet says that happy nights make happy days in matrimony. I do not think that he is right. I rather believe in the reverse: Cheerful days, spent in delightful companionship, will make later meetings perfectly delicious. But it is on the woman, much more than on the man, that this happy result depends. There is no conceit on the part of a man in saying so. This line of conduct is dictated by the difference which exists between a man and a woman.

I am ready to admit that women have grievances in this respect; but they are not of man's making, they are of Nature's, and no blame can be attached to man for it. How many couples, wretched and miserable, could be happy if women could, or would, realize the truth of this statement! But, as a rule, they will not. Their motto is, 'What is good for the goose is good for the gander.'

But it isn't.

Non, madame, the gander, unfortunately for your sex, is not constituted like the goose, and it is for him an impossibility to eat the dish you offer him if his appetite is not tempted. *You* can, but he cannot. The whole problem of happiness in matrimony lies in this nutshell.

CHAPTER XVIII

DOES JEALOUSY COME FROM TRUE LOVE?

The different kinds of girls that men seek in matrimony — Jealousy is intensified, not created, by love — Why should not a married man continue to admire women? — I want to knock down a newly-married woman's husband — 'Who would "polyg" with him?'

There are men who would not think of courting a woman with a view to marrying her if they

knew she had been engaged before. On the contrary, there are others who marry women who have spent their girlhoods in flirting and have been engaged a dozen times. These women seem to have a special sort of attraction for men who feel proud of winning a 'prize' that has been so much sought after, and who are very much like those people who do not know the value of a picture until, at a sale, they hear men bid higher and higher for the purchase, and conclude that the picture must be a priceless treasure. So they bid higher still, and get it. As a rule, these men are remarkable neither for their intelligence nor for their appreciation of true womanhood.

This remark, however, would apply to Englishmen or Americans rather than to Frenchmen, because in France, when a girl has been engaged, she has only met her *fiancé* in the presence of her parents, whereas in England or America the young people have had lonely and sentimental walks together, indulged in many little familiarities—proper, no doubt, but still familiarities, all the same; and the young Anglo-Saxon girl who has been engaged is a flower whose bloom has been a little rubbed off. In the eyes of the real, true man, she has lost—indeed, she *must* have lost—some of her value, a bit of her innocence, as it were. How can a man marry such a girl and run the risk, when he gives her a kiss, of hearing her exclaim: 'Oh, Jack used to give me much better kisses than that!' He must be a very brave man, one very sure of himself, who is not afraid of competition, or a very conceited, if not a very foolish, one.

Not only are there men who court women because they are run after, but there are some who never really fall in love with their wives until they have some serious reasons to be jealous of them. Then, and then only, do they seem to realize that their wives must possess some attractions, since other men are attracted by them. But this sentiment I should not care to call love, but rather false pride, because that man might have exactly the same feeling toward a horse or a dog the possession of which other men envied him. Many a man, on hearing the beauty of his wife praised, has said to himself: 'I wonder if it is true. I must have a look at her.'

I have heard many men and women say that there is no love without jealousy—in fact, that jealousy is the natural consequence of love. St. Augustine said: 'He that is not jealous is not in love.' I believe these people are wrong, including St. Augustine, before whose authority on love and women I decline to bow. There is no room for jealousy in the heart that loves really and truly. There is no real love where there is no *abandon* and complete confidence.

Jealousy may be intensified by love, but not created by it. Jealousy is a characteristic of men and women which manifests itself in love as it does in friendship and in every phase of life. Love gives it a special opportunity, but it existed before the man or the woman was in love. Such men and women, who are jealous of their wives and their husbands, were jealous before of their brothers, sisters, or acquaintances, whenever they imagined that they were displaced by them in the affections of the family or of their friends.

That man who is jealous of his wife because he imagines, rightly or wrongly, that she receives and accepts the attentions of other men, will also probably be jealous of her if his children show preference to her or bestow more attentions on her than on him. Othello is a jealous brute who might have murdered a General in the Venetian army who had been promoted to a rank he would have considered himself entitled to.

And when people are jealous in love, what fools they are to let it be seen! What an idiot that man is who lets his wife suppose that he thinks she could prefer another man to him! Suggestions are terrible. What a poor diplomatist that woman is who does not let her husband think that she takes it for granted no woman could have in his eyes the charms she possesses! Jealousy can only suggest to men and women actions which would revolt them if they had absolute confidence in each other.

In love, however, jealousy should not be condemned too severely. A little of it, just a little, adds piquancy. It then becomes an emotion, a stimulant, that rouses desire, something like that short absence which the Italians call the *dolce piccante*, and which many artistically constituted lovers will take now and then merely to increase the pleasure of reunion. Epicures will do it, and invariably with success. A diplomatist, who loves his wife, and is sure to be loved by her, may cure her of a passing little coldness by openly paying innocent attentions to another woman. And who is the man who is such a strict monogamist that he cannot admire—in a platonic way, of course—other women besides the one he loves? And who is the woman who is not aware of that? I remember, a few years ago, greatly admiring a beautiful American girl, daughter of a great friend of mine. When, the following year, I went to America again, she introduced me to her husband. Did I admire that girl? Yes, immensely. Did I love her? Certainly not. Yet my first impulse was to knock down her husband. That is all I mean by saying that very few men are strict monogamists.

A little anecdote, *à propos* of polygamy, to finish.

Not long ago one of the most popular novelists of England was calling on a lady, one of the most popular novelists of America. That Englishman is, perhaps, the plainest man I have ever set my eyes on. He, too, held, in conversation, that every man was born a polygamist. The lady said nothing. But when he had gone, she turned towards her guests, and said: 'Well, I should like to know who would "polyg" with him!'

CHAPTER XIX

DO WOMEN DRESS TO PLEASE MEN?

The female attire — Women dress for breakfast and undress for dinner — You don't know them from Eve — Society likes to be exposed — How French, English, German and American women dress — Simplicity in dress the coquetry of some women — What would happen if two women remained alone on the face of the earth.

Never in the history of female attire have women dressed so exquisitely as they do in this year of grace 1901. The figure is gracefully accentuated; all the sculptural lines are discreetly indicated without any exaggeration. No more bustle, no more outrageous sleeves, no more deformities of any sort. Many a woman would have been in despair if Nature had made her as fashion has often made her appear.

To-day it is the female form divine, beautifully draped in beautiful limp materials of soft, delicate hues, gracefully relieved by lovely lace and refined trimmings, the whole with a touch of simplicity that never fails to enhance the beauty of the wearer. No, never since the classical days of Athenian dress have women looked so beautiful as they do now.

The majority of us men are, I believe, conceited enough to think that women dress and try to look as beautiful as possible to please us. My firm conviction is that women dress to please themselves—or to kill other women with envy. To the question, Do women dress to please men? I answer most emphatically, No, they do not. Quite the contrary.

And now, may I be permitted to remark that when I reflect that Eve, after eating an apple, discovered that she was naked, I cannot help thinking that a little bite at that fruit might be of service to many ladies before they leave their dressing-rooms to go to a ball, a theatre, or a dinner party? Is it that the fashion of the day requires the train to be so long that there remains no material to make a corsage with? From the way in which women dress in the evening, you might almost mistake them for Eve.

The fact is that it is practically impossible for you to say what it is that the women wear around a dinner-table. Women dress for breakfast and undress for dinner. As for the sight offered to our gaze from the boxes at the opera, we might as well be in a Turkish bath. And the most amusing and edifying part of it is that this fashion is more flourishing in puritanical England than in any country I know, and that most of those beautiful daughters of Albion whom you see so much of are the very same ones who are presidents, vice-presidents and secretaries of the societies for the suppression of the nude in the public parks, the museums and art-galleries and other British institutions for the suggestion of indecency.

Who says that the world is sad?

'Society ought to be exposed,' I once remarked to a beautiful member of the English aristocracy, 'for giving that bad example.' 'You are quite right,' she said; 'but that will do no good, because I believe that there is nothing that English society enjoys more than being exposed.' 'Evidently!' I thought, as I looked at the glorious shoulders exposed to my gaze.

I was quite right when I once exclaimed: 'Provided an English woman does not show her feet, she is safe and feels comfortable.'

In the way of dressing, of all the women of Europe and America, the Germans are the worst, the French the best, and the Americans the smartest. The German women are covered, the English clothed, the Americans arrayed, and the French dressed. I am not now speaking of high life—these people are the same all the world over; and whenever a writer publishes a criticism on the life and manners of any nation he ought to place the following epigraph at the top of every page he writes, so that the reader may not lose sight of it: 'All civilized nations in the world are alike in one respect: they are composed of two kinds of people—those that are ladies and gentlemen, and those that are not.' Then there could be no misunderstanding about what he writes.

I think it is acknowledged that the French women are the best dressed women in the world, and that French dressmakers are the authority on what should be worn and how it should be worn. Next I should say decidedly the American woman. In the United States the latest French fashions are worn in all their freshness and glory, but too often with exaggeration. And, when the French fashions are already outrageous in their extravagance of style and size, then the Lord help the American women! I shall never forget the remark that that most delightful of men and writers, Oliver Wendell Holmes, made to me some years ago, as we were talking on the subject of women's dress: 'By the time a French milliner has been six months in New York she will make you a bonnet to frighten a Choctaw Indian.' But then, Dr. Holmes was a refined Bostonian.

The French woman, at an afternoon or evening party, may be as beautifully and stylishly dressed as you like, there is always about her dress a certain little touch of simplicity that will make you think that somewhere in her wardrobe she keeps some frock or gown still more beautiful, stylish and expensive. Very often at breakfast-time an American woman will make you think that she has on her very best and smartest dress. I have seen some at the leading hotels of Jacksonville and St. Augustine, Florida, with diamond brooches and bracelets at breakfast. The American woman has a supreme contempt for what is not silk, satin, velvet or crêpe de chine. She generally looks dressed for conquest. With her it is paint and feathers and hooray all the time! On board a steamer across the Atlantic she wears silk and fifty-dollar hats. But, of course, these ladies do not belong to the Olympian sets.

I have mentioned all this because woman's character is very much the same all over this little planet of ours. Now, of all these women, the Americans are those who devote most time and spend most money over their appearance, and as they would be least of all accused of thinking for one moment how they look for the sake of the men, I say I have proved my answer to be right, that women do not dress for men.

Indeed, if the end of the world were to witness the presence of two women only on the face of the earth, each would be discovered striving to outshine the other and look the better dressed of the two.

CHAPTER XX

THE FRENCH WIFE

Her keenness and common-sense — Her power of observation and her native adaptability — Her graceful ways — Her tact — Her artistic refinement — Monsieur et Madame — 'Did I hear you knock at my door, dear?'

The wealthy classes of society in every civilized nation in the world are so much alike in their manners, habits, and customs, that they offer very little food to the observer of national characteristics. The men follow the London fashions, the women the Paris ones. They all cultivate sport, art, and literature; they all enjoy the same luxuries of life, they all have good cooks, they all have discovered the same way of living. If you want to see how differently people live in France, in England, in Germany, in Italy, in America, wherever you like, live among the middle and lower classes. Once, in South Africa, I spent a whole day in a Zulu kraal, living with the natives and like the natives, and I found that day spent in a far more interesting manner than if I had spent it among the hosts of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, Mayfair, or Fifth Avenue.

France is the only country that I know where, outside of the aristocracy and the wealthy classes, you can find people who live daintily. The French labourer eats a more appetizing dinner than English and German well-to-do shopkeepers eat and than is served in the hotels of the small American towns. That French labourer would refuse to swallow, and even to look at, that wretched meal which I have seen English working-men eat at noon, when resting their backs against a wall or fence on the road—bread and pickles, or a slice of something looking very much like cat's-meat, and stale beer that had been stewing for hours in the sun in a badly-corked can.

The French wife, immensely superior to her husband in intelligence, in shrewdness, in *savoir vivre* and *savoir faire*, thanks to her common-sense, her knowledge of financial matters, her instinct for good order and management, her artistic refinement, her keen power of observation, her native adaptability, her talent for cookery, makes a husband enjoying but a

small income lead the life that a rich foreigner might envy.

She may have two dresses and one hat only to her name, but, by constant skilful changes, the little humbug will make you believe that she possesses a well-furnished wardrobe. It is not the cowl that makes the monk any more than it is the dress that makes the woman. A woman is stylish or not, according to the manner she puts her clothes on, and that is where the French woman is irresistible. To lift her dress modestly, gracefully, and daintily as she crosses a muddy street, she has not her equal in the world. She has a little bustling, fluttering way about her that will always keep your interest in her alive. She is always tidy and smart, her hair well dressed, her hands well gloved, her stockings well drawn, and her dainty little feet well shod. When she speaks to you, you can seldom guess, from the way she is dressed, from the way she behaves, from the language she uses, whether she is the wife of what society calls a gentleman or not.

She has the knack, the inborn genius, for getting twenty sou worth out of every franc she spends. She is no snob, does not play at At Homes, and saves her tea and sugar, which in France are expensive luxuries. She does not play the piano, and saves her husband's ears. She makes her own frocks, and saves dressmakers' bills; she eats light, healthy meals of her own make, and saves cooks' wages; she goes to bed early, and saves her candles. She is rich, as most of us might be, not in what she actually possesses, but in what she knows how to do without. Thanks to that woman, a Frenchman who has £100 to spend in the year lives like an Englishman who has an income of £500.

In the most modest little flat she has her dressing-room, out of which she issues in the morning neatly trimmed, a perfect transformation. She will do without a drawing-room, but never without a dressing-room, for she understands to a supreme degree that poetry of matrimony which has not two years to live if the apartment does not possess a dressing-room.

Better than that, the French wife of that class will play at being an aristocrat, if you please. She will insist on having Monsieur's apartment and Madame's apartment quite separate, so that they shall not be compelled to impose their society on each other if they don't feel in the mood.

And in that very humble class of French society I know men who are trained to knock at the door of their wives' apartments in good Faubourg Saint-Germain style, when they wish for the company of Madame.

And if Monsieur should fail to knock at Madame's door when the latter would be pleased to receive his attentions and enjoy the pleasure of his company, it is just possible that she would go to her husband's *appartements*, knock at his door gently and discreetly, and whisper: 'Did I hear you knock at my door just now, dear?'

'Silly nonsense!' some people will say.

Well, my dear friends, let me tell you that happiness is made up of thousands of little foolish trifles of that sort.

CHAPTER XXI

THE ENGLISH WIFE

Her position — Family life less attractive and piquant in England than in France, but more solid — The English wife is the goddess of a beautiful home.

The Englishman is no doubt cut out to make colonies, but less to make love, for the simple reason that he does not know how to forget himself, and spends the greater part of his life standing sentry at the door of his dignity.

The Englishman loves in his own fashion, in a true and manly way, according to his peculiar organization, which enables him to bring to the choice of a wife the very same cool reflection, care and discernment that he brings to all the other actions of his life. In a word, he seldom allows himself to be 'carried away.'

This is a great superiority he has over the Frenchman, because this cool and reflective way of loving has established the English family on a most solid basis. The Englishman does not seek beauty in a wife. After being married he wants to enjoy a perfect peace of mind, and, to do him justice, I will add that money will seldom make him take a wife who does not possess those moral and intellectual qualities that are the foundation-stone of happiness in

matrimonial life. A cheerful face will attract him much more than a beautiful one. It is a cheerful and useful companion he wants, not a legal mistress or a well-dressed doll.

His honeymoon lasts a month. When he settles at home, he prepares to keep his wife in order and discipline, and to give her occupations to fill up all her time—a house to keep and a large family to bring up. Devotion and friendship are nowhere deeper than in the English family, but poetry and piquancy shine by their absence. It is a prosy life among the masses of the people.

Among these masses, even the well-to-do masses, of the people (I don't mention the upper tens, who are alike all the world over) there is no privacy between them—why, very often, not even a dressing-room.

The 'nonsense,' as I once heard an Englishman call the poetry of matrimony, is soon knocked out of them. One says, 'Oh, that's all right. It is not a man; it's only my husband'; while the other says, 'I would not do this or that before a woman for all the world; but this is the wife: it's all right.' And it is that kind of life that so often causes Englishwomen of the middle class to appear so unattractive. The blame is to be laid at the door of their husbands. In love the Englishman is a little selfish. He forgets that the sweetest pleasures are those we give.

When the French girl marries, she gains her liberty; when the English girl marries, she often loses hers (when the American girl marries, she retains hers). In France the wife is the friend and confidante of her husband and often his mistress. In England she is the mistress of the house only. And this is not always a sinecure; for she becomes something more than a house-keeper in point of rank, but at the same time something less, if we consider that no wages are due to her and that she cannot give notice to leave.

In England the wife is the partner of her husband at home only. In France she is his partner in business. It is she who keeps his books and his cash-box, and neither was ever entrusted to better guardianship.

An Englishman gives his wife so much a month for housekeeping and so much for dressing and pocket money. One morning he tells her they are going to remove to a sumptuous home. She did not know he was making his fortune. Or maybe he will tell her at breakfast: 'I have lost everything. We must go to Australia and start a new life.' She did not know they were on the way to ruin; so she merely replies: 'Very well, John. Give me time to put on my hat.'

When things are prosperous and matrimonial life happy, the Englishwoman makes the best of wives. Her mission, which she understands so well, is to cheer her husband in the comfort of his home and make him forget the worry, annoyance and heartburnings that beset him out of doors in his public, professional or commercial life; to provide for him a retreat in the soothing atmosphere of which he can find rest and renovated strength; to do the honours of his house with that liberality, that provident and large-hearted hospitality, which is only to be found in England. Such is the mission of the English wife. 'The companions of John Bull are beautiful, healthy girls, perhaps a little too bold; virtuous wives, perhaps a trifle too respected; excellent mothers, perhaps a little too neglected; above all, women whose ingenious attention to all the minor comforts of existence can turn the humblest cottage into a little palace of order, cleanliness and well-being.' [1]

The more I examine the constitution of the English family, the more deeply convinced I become that it is the very pedestal on which stand solid the prosperity and the greatness of the British Empire.

[1] 'John Bull and his Island.'

CHAPTER XXII

THE BRITISH MATRON

The English woman the most charming of women — The British the most ridiculous one — English and British — The British matron is the produce of British soil — Her ways — Her fads and inconsistency — Her knowledge of French literature and her judgment thereof.

When an Englishman, speaking of a woman, says, 'She is a thorough Englishwoman,' that is

the greatest compliment he can pay to a countrywoman of his. It means the embodiment of all that is refined and delicate in a woman, of all the best domestic virtues, and of a style of beauty not so piquant, perhaps, as that of the belles of America and Southern Europe, but the beauty of delicate, regular features, clear skin, classical, sculptural outlines and an expression of repose, of modesty, and of healthy simplicity of life. In the eyes of English people the words 'English' and 'perfect' are synonymous. For once they are fairly right. I have said it elsewhere: 'When an Englishwoman is beautiful, she is beyond competition, she is a dream, a perfect angel of beauty.' When she is ugly—the Lord help her!—she has not a redeeming feature, not even that intelligent, bright expression which saves the plainest American woman from hopelessness.

When an Englishman, speaking of a woman, says, 'She is a regular British matron,' that means the embodiment of all that is ridiculous in a woman—of all the British fads, social, religious, artistic (or, rather, inartistic), the everlasting laughing-stock of all the comic papers in the world. The English people call themselves Britons or Britishers when they want to make fun of themselves. In their eyes, the words 'British' and 'ridiculous' are pretty nigh being synonymous, except when the word 'British' is used as a patriotic adjective. They say the 'British Empire,' a 'British soldier,' a 'British General,' but they would not say a 'British bishop.' No, they would say 'English'—it sounds more sober and respectful to their ears. 'English Society' means the upper ten, the pick of society. On the other hand, an English author who had failed to be appreciated by the public might say: 'What can you expect from the British public?' And he would mean, like in the song, 'that pig of a public, that ass of a public.'

The British matron is not necessarily old, not even elderly. She is a product of the soil, not an evolution or a result, and she may be blooming at thirty.

Cant and inconsistency are the characteristic traits of the British matron. It is she who writes to the papers to demand of the Town Councils the exclusion of statues from the public parks, and of the museum curators the exclusion of the nude from the picture and sculpture galleries; and it is she who, at balls, theatres and dinner-parties, astonishes the world with the display of her charms. It is she who holds up her hands in holy indignation at the sight of men and women bathing in Continental and American seaside resorts, forgetting to observe and mention that at those places both sexes are dressed exactly alike, in dark, thick serge costumes, which invariably have a skirt; and it is she whom you may see on English beaches bathe in light, clinging, salmon-pink calico tights. I hope that my readers of puritanical proclivities will feel obliged and grateful to me for not giving that attire the name that would describe it best, that of an article of underclothing which you may see on the ladies' washing-list.

The British matron is a keenly sensitive person. She may not take any notice of such pieces of news as cases of starvation in the midst of London, of cruelty to wives, of Turkish or Chinese atrocities, and all that sort of everyday intelligence which she may read in the daily press; but she will air her Homeric indignation if she hears that an operation has been performed on a rabbit without giving anæsthetics to poor 'bunny.' She is the champion of dogs, cats, horses, rabbits, birds, and is invariably a member of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, a society which includes neither men nor women among its protégés. In spite of that, the British matron witnesses pigeon-shooting matches, eats *pâté de foie gras* (which is obtained by slowly killing a goose inside a hot oven), wears furs which can be obtained only by skinning animals alive, sealskins among them, and trims her hats with the dead bodies of the most beautiful birds.

If you were to remark before the British matron that the trousers of Mr. So-and-so are always irreproachable, you would run the risk of creating a panic, and the lady might go into a fit. But you may see her watch men's races at Athletic Sports meetings. For all covering on their skin, the competitors have a thin flannel jersey, and drawers of the same material about the size of fig-leaves. Saturated with perspiration, these elementary articles of clothing will cleave to the human form as if the wearers had come straight up out of the water. The British matron looks on, applauds, and does not turn a hair. Her ears are most easily shocked, but not her eyes. She objects to the word, not to the thing. In her way she is a realist. The thing speaks for itself, it is the truth, whereas the word suggests to her fantastic imagination the most objectionable ideas.

The French and the American women call on you and, when they think they have stayed long enough, they shake hands and go. The British matron 'thinks' or 'is afraid she must be about going.'

What you have achieved does not amount to much to make a gentleman of you in her eyes. If your father is a gentleman, you may be *in* it; if, besides, your grandfather was a gentleman, then you will be *of* it. The British matron generally belongs to Thackeray's family of snobs.

Her knowledge of French literature is marvellous. She has read or heard of all the novels of M. Zola, and her verdict is that modern fiction in France is the abomination of desolation.

Edmond About, André Theuriet, Anatole France, George Sand, she does not know.

Two young girls of my acquaintance, both aged about sixteen, were speaking of the books they had lately read. One mentioned that she had just finished 'Strathmore,' by Ouida, and that her mother thought it was quite the sort of novel a young girl could read.

'And what have you read?' she added.

'Last week I read 'L'Ami Fritz,' by Erckmann-Chatrian,' replied the other girl.

Now, this little idyll is about as proper and moral as the top lines of school copy-books.

'Oh!' said the first young girl, 'does your mother allow you to read French novels? Mine never does.'

Truly a strange being, the British matron!

CHAPTER XXIII

THE AMERICAN WOMAN—I

A new coat-of-arms for America — The American woman — Her ways — The liberty she enjoys — 'Oh, please make me an American woman!'

If I were asked to suggest a new coat-of-arms for the United States of America, I would propose a beautiful, bright, intelligent-looking woman, under the protection of an eagle spreading its wings over her, with the motto: *Place aux Dames*—'Honour to the Ladies'; or, if you prefer a freer translation, 'Make room for the Women.'

The Government of the American people is not a republic, it is not a monarchy: it is a gynarchy, a government by the women for the women, a sort of occult power behind the scenes that rules the country.

It has often been said that a wife is what a husband makes her. I believe that the women of a nation are what the men of that nation make them. Therefore, honour to the men of the United States for having produced that modern national ideal the American woman.

I have been six times all over the United States. I have spent about three years of my life in America, travelling from New York to San Francisco, from British Columbia to Louisiana. If there is an impression that becomes a deeper and deeper conviction every time that I return to that country, it is that the most interesting woman in the world is the American woman.

Now, let us compare her with the women of Europe. The English woman, when beautiful, is an ideal symphony, an incomparable statue, but too often a statue. The French woman is the embodiment of suppleness and gracefulness, more fascinating by her manner than by either her face or figure.

The Roman woman, with her gorgeous development, suggests the descendant of the proud mother of the Gracchi. The American woman is a combination, an *ensemble*.

I have never seen in America an absolutely, helplessly plain woman. She is always in the possession of a redeeming something which saves her. She may be ever so homely (as the Americans say), she looks intelligent, a creature that has been allowed to think for herself, that has never been sat upon. And I know no sight more pleasing than an elderly American woman, with her white hair, that makes her look like a Louis XV. marquise, and an expression which reflects the respect she has inspired during a well and usefully spent life.

When women were born, a fairy attended the birth of every one of them. Each woman received a special gift. The American woman arriving late, the fairies gathered together and decided to make her a present of part of all the attributes conferred on all the other women. The result is that she has the smartness and the bright look of a French woman, and the shapely, sculptural lines of an English woman. Ah! but, added to that, she has a characteristic trait peculiarly her own, an utter absence of affectation, a naturalness of bearing which makes her unique, a national type. There is not in the world a woman to match her in a drawing-room. There she stands, among the women of all nationalities, a silhouette *bien découpée*, herself, a queen.

Allowed from the tenderest age almost every liberty, accustomed to take the others, she is free, easy, perfectly natural, with the consciousness of her influence, her power; able by her intelligence and education to enjoy all the intellectual pleasures of life, and by her keen

powers of observation and her native adaptability to fit herself for all the conditions of life; an exquisite mixture of a coquette without affectation and a blue-stocking without spectacles or priggishness; the only woman, however beautiful and learned she may be, with whom man feels perfectly at his ease—a sort of fascinating good fellow, retaining all the best attributes of womanhood.

Now, if this should sound like an outburst of enthusiasm, please excuse me. I owe to American women such pleasant, never-to-be-forgotten hours that on merely hearing the mention of the American woman I take off my hat.

Of all the women in the world, the American woman is the one who receives the best attentions at the hands of men. The Frenchman, it is true, is the slave of his womankind, but he expects her to be his thorough partner—I mean, to share with him his labours as well as his pleasures. The American man is the most devoted and hard-working husband in the world. The poor, dear fellow! He works, and he works, and he works, and the beads of perspiration from his brow crystallize in the shape of diamonds all over the ears, the fingers and the neck of his interesting womankind.

He invites her to share his pleasures, but he saves her the trouble of sharing his anxieties. The burden of life from seven in the morning till seven in the evening rests on his shoulders alone.

Yet, in spite of all this, I have seldom discovered in American women the slightest trace of gratitude to men. The American woman expects a triumphal arch to be erected over each doorway through which she has to pass—and she gets it.

Well, she deserves it.

Almost throughout the length and breadth of the United States, you hear of women seeking to extend the sphere of their influence, women dissatisfied with their lot. But there is no satisfying spoiled children. If they see the moon reflected in a pail of water, they must have it.

I am perfectly convinced that the American woman has secured for herself the best, the softest berth that it was possible to secure in this world.

Let me finish by repeating an exclamation I uttered after my first visit to the United States, twelve years ago: 'If I could choose my sex and my birthplace, I would shout to the Almighty at the top of my voice: "Oh, please make me an American woman!"'

CHAPTER XXIV

THE AMERICAN WOMAN—II

She walks first, Jonathan behind her — The educational system of America explains the idiosyncrasies of the American woman.

The first time that I was in America, some twelve years ago, I one day mentioned to a newspaper reporter that I could not find a cup of tea to please me anywhere in America. The next day a paragraph about me appeared in the paper, headed, 'Max is going to abuse everything in America.'

A few days later I had an opportunity to mention to another reporter that, however bad meals were in some hotels in the small cities, I could everywhere get a cup of coffee quite as good as in France, if not even better. The next day a paragraph appeared headed: 'Max wants our dollars.'

I have many times lectured in the United States on women, including a sketch on American women. After the lecture I have generally been introduced to some ladies of the audience, who kindly expressed the desire of shaking hands with me.

Almost every time one or two have taken me aside, and said: 'I have read in your books and your magazine articles and heard in your lectures all you have to say about American women; but now, tell me, what do you really think of them?'

My dear ladies, there are some men who do occasionally speak the truth, or what they believe to be the truth, and who do say what they mean, and mean what they say.

The English, long ago, warned me that I would not be able to do in America what I had successfully done in England, because the Americans, they said to me, were much more

susceptible and sensitive than the English. They were mistaken.

No doubt the Americans had resented, and justly, too, the criticisms of Trollope and Dickens (the latter had to write a permanent apology in the preface of 'Martin Chuzzlewit'). Criticism that never offends, and praises that never flatter, are, I believe, everywhere acceptable when they are taken in the spirit of fairness and good-humour in which they are expressed. I believe, and firmly believe, the American women to be the most interesting and the most brilliant women in the world, and I do not see why I could not proclaim it from the house-tops if I like, even in America.

They are picturesque, vivacious, natural, stylish, smart, clever, unconventional, and the best educated. They are typical, perfectly labelled.

Take me to a drawing-room in Paris or in London, and, without being introduced to anyone, I think I should be able to pick out all the American women in the room.

Once, after a lecture in England, I received the card of a young American lady who wished to speak to me. She came and brought in her mother, and also a man, who all the time stood in the rear. When we parted, she left, followed by her mother. Then I discovered the man, who said to me most meekly, 'I'm the father.' Poor dear man! he looked so small as he emerged from the background!

I cannot help thinking that there exists in some American women a little mild contempt for that poor creature that is called a man.

And how is that in a country where the women receive such delightful, and, for that matter, well-deserved attentions at the hands of the men, and that throughout the length and breadth of the country?

Well, I think the educational system of America explains the phenomenon.

In Europe the sexes are kept apart in youth—I mean at school, and, in France especially, young boys and young girls entertain for one another very strange feelings, most of them founded on ignorance.

In Europe even now the education received by girls cannot be compared to the education received by boys. That's being changed now—some say improved. H'm! we shall see.

It was not a long time ago that, in England and in France, when a girl could read, write, add, and subtract, name the capitals of Europe, and play 'The Maiden's Prayer' on the piano, her education was finished; she was prepared for the world and ready for her husband—and her neighbours.

Very often I have been invited to be present at the distribution of prizes in large English public schools and colleges. When I was in a girls' school, I never once failed to hear those poor girls told, and by men, too, that practically the only thing they should think about was to prepare to become one day good wives and good mothers.

I have been many times present at the distribution of prizes in boys' schools in England, and I know that I never heard those boys told that now and then they might think of preparing to become one day decent fathers and tolerable husbands.

In America things are different. In every grade of educational life, among the masses of the people, boys and girls are educated together, side by side; on each bench a boy, a girl, a boy, a girl.

Now, the official statistics of the Education Department declare that in every State of the Union the number of diplomas and certificates obtained by girls is larger than the number obtained by boys.

When I heard that statement, I said this to myself (kindly follow my little argument): 'Is it not just possible that the young American boys, when they saw what those girls next to them could do, said to themselves, "Heaven! who would have thought so?"'

Is it not also possible that the young American girls, when they saw what those boys next to them could do, exclaimed, 'Good gracious! is that all?'

Does not that, to a certain extent, explain to you the respect that young boys acquire at school for young girls, and perhaps, also, that little mild absence of respect that girls get for boys? I believe there is something in it.

Ah, my dear European men, who clamour at the top of your voices for the higher education of women, be careful! You will be found out, and, like your fellow-men of America, by-and-by

you will have to take the back-seat.

CHAPTER XXV

THE AMERICAN WOMAN—III

Opinions and impressions — An answer to criticism.

Whenever I read a testimonial given to a candidate for some vacant post, I invariably take it for granted that the candidate does not possess the virtues, attainments, or qualities which are not mentioned in that testimonial.

This must have evidently been what that clever American writer, Mrs. Winifred Black, thought when she read an article of mine on American women which appeared in the Editorial section of the *New York Sunday Journal* some time ago. My admiration for American women is, I think, pretty well known to the public, but more particularly to my most intimate friends. In that article I said: 'I firmly believe the American women to be the most fascinating, the most interesting, and the most brilliant women in the world; and I do not see why I could not proclaim it from the housetops, if I like, even in America.' And after mentioning the respect which woman inspires in American men of all classes, the liberty she enjoys, the attentions that are lavished upon her, I concluded the article by exclaiming: 'If I could choose again my sex and my birthplace, I would shout to the Almighty at the top of my voice: "Oh, please make me an American woman!"'

'Now,' exclaims Mrs. Winifred Black, 'look between the words of that cleverly constructed sentence, and he who runs may read that Max O'Rell means to say in the still small voice of his innermost convictions: "Make me anything on earth except an American man!"'

'And,' she goes on, 'our friend is covering himself with well-earned glory, telling us all about the American woman. "She is beautiful, clever, adored, a queen"; but he does not mention that she is good, honest, true, unselfish, loving. Not a syllable about her heart and her soul. Do you know why? Because Max O'Rell thinks that the American woman has neither heart nor soul.'

Oh, oh! my dear lady, how quickly you set to work and jump at conclusions!

Mrs. Winifred Black evidently believes that when I propose the toast, 'The American ladies—God bless them!' I whisper under my breath all the time: 'The gentlemen—God help them!'

Now, madam, let me tell you that this is witty, smart, but not fair criticism. If I ever should have the honour of being introduced to you, I would say to you: 'When a foreigner attempts to describe the character of the people he visits, he either receives impressions, if he keeps his eyes fairly well open, or he forms opinions, if he resides in that country for a long time or happens to be a born conceited idiot. Impressions are not opinions. Impressions mean nothing more than this: how a nation strikes a foreigner who pays a short visit to it. You see a town for a day, you meet a person for ten minutes. That town, that person, has left an impression on you, but you hold no opinion on either. I know a charming little book on Denmark, honestly entitled by its author, 'A Week in Denmark.' Now, surely you would not expect to find in such a book a study of the institutions of Denmark or opinions on the idiosyncrasies of the Danish people. You would not expect the writer to tell you whether the Danish women have or have not a heart and a soul. No, you would expect to find an impression such as the following, which I find in that delightful, chatty, and unpretentious little volume: 'The Danish women wear the national colours of France—blue eyes, white complexion, and red lips.' I have been six times in the United States. I have seen the whole continent from New York to San Francisco, from British Columbia to Louisiana, but all the time I have been on the move, seldom spending two days in the same town. How could I form opinions worth repeating?

The qualities which, for instance, I may have discovered in American women are superficial ones—I mean outward ones, those that would be noticed by the casual visitor—brilliancy, conversational power, beautiful figures, attractive, intelligent faces, smartness in dress, gait, and carriage. To get at their hearts and their souls, I should have to settle in the country, and for years and years live among the people.

CHAPTER

THE HUSBAND OF THE AMERICAN WOMAN

The telephone and the ticker — The most useful of domestic animals — Money-making — Loneliness of the women — A reminiscence of Chicago.

On the whole, I believe that there is no country where men and women go through life together on such equal terms as in France. The wife follows her husband everywhere; she is the companion of his pleasures as well as of his hardships. She works with him, takes her vacation with him, and when they have amassed a little fortune that insures independence, they knock off work together and enjoy life quietly for the rest of their days. In business, the wife is the clerk of her husband, often his cashier, always his partner. She is consulted by him in the investment of their savings. It is a little firm—Monsieur, Madame and Co.

In England, the wife does not share the hardships of her husband, and not always his pleasures. She is seldom consulted in important matters.

What often astonishes us in Europe is to see a crowd of handsome and clever women, whom America sends to brighten up society, and who reappear in London and Paris every year with the regularity of the swallows. The London season, from the beginning of May to July 25, the Paris season, from the beginning of April to June 10, are absolutely run by them. You meet them everywhere, at dinner-parties, 'At Homes,' and the play. You conclude that they must be married, because they are styled Mrs. and not Miss, but whether they are wives, widows, or divorcées, you rarely think of inquiring, and you go on enjoying their society, even their friendship, year after year, without knowing whether there exists, somewhere in America, a Mr. So-and-so or not.

It was in America only, on calling on my lady friends whose acquaintance I had made in Europe, that I discovered the existence of their husbands. I found them very much alive, having for the companions of their joys and sorrows the telephone and the ticker.

Now, an impression (not an opinion, much less a conviction) to be formed from all this is that the American woman, with all her physical beauty and intellectual attainments, is not always a woman whose characteristic traits are devotion, unselfishness, and self-sacrifice. But it is not her fault if this should be the case, and I have no reason to suppose that it is. In a community, woman is what man makes her. So long as men's first consideration is business and money-making, so long as they consider clubs the proper place to seek relief in from the pursuits and hardships of everyday life, so long as wives are practically left to themselves to make the best of the long leisures of the day, the women will study how best they can arrange for themselves a life of comfort, ease and pleasure. Is there any other country where you will find women able to enjoy life without the companionship of men? They have come to an understanding among themselves. They will have lunch, dinner-parties, where no male guest will be seen, and they will have a grand time. They try to please each other, and an American woman will use as much coquetry to win a woman as a French woman will use to win a man. Is there any other country where you see so many women's clubs?

Women's clubs? The idea!

Yet that American woman has male friends. She is a delightful chum and good fellow, the only woman in the world who can have such male friends, 'pals' without the least misconstruction, the least objectionable whisperings on the subject. She calls those male friends by their Christian names in speaking of them, although she invariably mentions her husband as Mr. John B. Smith.

The American men are the most devoted of husbands, but they are not under the influence of their women. They indulge them in all their whims and luxuries, but their status in life is to be their women's husbands—I will not say upper servants, but domestic animals, not pets, of undeniable usefulness, who work at the sweat of their brows to keep in luxury the most lovely, interesting and expensive womankind in the world.

Some years ago, I was spending a Sunday afternoon in the house of a young married man in Chicago who, I was told, possessed twenty millions. The poor fellow! It was the twenty millions which possessed him. He had a most beautiful and interesting wife, and the loveliest little girl of three or four years of age that I ever set my eyes on. That lovely little girl was kind enough to take to me at once—there's no accounting for taste! We had a little flirtation in the distance at first. By-and-by, she came toward me, nearer and nearer, then she stopped in front of me, and looked at me, hesitating, with her finger in her pretty little mouth. I knew what she wanted, and I said to her: 'That's all right; come on.' She jumped on my knees, settled herself comfortably and asked me to tell her stories. I started at once. Now, you understand, I was not allowed to stop; but I took breath, and I said to her:

'Does not your papa tell you long stories on Sundays?'

That lovely little round face grew sad and quite long.

'Oh no,' she said; 'papa is too tired on Sundays.'

A few weeks after I left Chicago that man was taken ill with a disease not uncommon in America, a disease that starts at the top of your head and takes two or three years to kill you in a lunatic asylum, among drivelling idiots and imbeciles.

A couple of years later, being in Chicago again, I made inquiries and learned that the poor fellow was expected to exist a few weeks, perhaps a few months longer.

What a pity, I thought, that beautiful woman had not enough influence over that good man to stop him!

Do not offer me twenty millions at that price. No twenty millions can cure the disease which afflicted that American.

Put a little girl of three on my knees on Sundays, and I will tell her stories from sunrise and go on till sunset, even if I thus run the risk of being prosecuted by the Lord's Day Observance Society.

CHAPTER XXVII

PETTICOAT GOVERNMENT

Description of all the Anglo-Saxon fads.

I loathe the domination of woman, but I ever crave for her influence, and I believe that any man of refinement and thinking, that any lover and admirer of woman, will echo this sentiment.

I know of one country only where the government by woman was given a real trial, and that is New Zealand. The law was passed and the experiment was made. The law, I believe, had to be repealed after six months. The Government had taken such a tyrannical form that that loveliest of spots on the earth was on the eve of a revolution, of a desperate struggle for liberty.

Things were pretty badly managed in a small Ohio city when I was visiting it four years ago. The following year women put up their names as candidates for the City Council in every ward, and were all returned. They did manage the city. The following year the experiment had been made, and not one woman was returned again.

The American men are so busy, so long absent from home, that many of their womankind have to find out a way of using the leisure time left at their disposal, with results that are not always altogether satisfactory. Some devote that time to literature, to the improvement of their brilliant native intellect; some spend it in frivolities; some indulge in all the fads of Anglo-Saxon life.

The women of good society in America are what they are everywhere else—satisfied with their lot, which consists in being the adored goddesses of refined households; but there exists in that country among the middle—perhaps, what I should call in European parlance, lower middle—classes, restless, bumptious, ever-poking-their-noses-everywhere women, who are slowly, but surely and safely, transforming that great land of liberty into a land of petty, fussy tyranny, and trying—often with complete success—to impose on the community fads of every shape and form.

If there is one country in the world where the women appear, in the eyes of the foreign visitor, to enjoy all manner of privileges and to have the men in leading-strings, that country is America. You would imagine, therefore, that America should be the last country where the New Woman was to be found airing her grievances. Yet she is flourishing throughout the length and breadth of that huge continent. She is petted by her husband, the most devoted and hardworking of husbands in the world; she is literally covered with precious stones by him; she is allowed to wear hats that would 'fetch' Paris in carnival time or start a panic at a Corpus Christi procession in Paris or a Lord Mayor's Show in London; she is the superior of her husband in education and almost in every respect; she is surrounded by the most numerous and delicate attentions, yet she is not satisfied.

The Anglo-Saxon New Woman is the most ridiculous production of modern times, and

destined to be the most ghastly failure of the century. She is *par excellence* the woman with a grievance, and self-labelled the greatest nuisance of modern society. The New Woman wants to retain all the privileges of her sex, and secure besides all those of man; she wants to be a man and to remain a woman. She will fail to become a man, but she may succeed in ceasing to be a woman.

And now, where is that New Woman to be found? Put together a hundred women, intelligent and of good society; take out the beautiful ones; then take out the married ones who are loved by their husbands and their children, and kindly seek the New Woman among what is left—ugly women, old maids, and disappointed and neglected wives.

Woman has no grievance against man. Her only grievance should be, I admit, against Nature, which made her different from man, with duties different, physically and otherwise, almost always to her disadvantage. The world exists and marches on through love. I pity from the bottom of my heart the good woman who is not to know the whispers of love of a good husband or the caresses of little children, but I am not prepared to see life become a burden for her sake.

There is no possibility of denying or ignoring the fact. The purpose, the *raison d'être*, of woman is to be a mother, as the *raison d'être* of a fruit-tree is to bear fruit. And woe to the next generations, for everybody knows that *only* the children of quiet and reposed women are healthy and intelligent.

The woman question will only be solved by the partnership in life of man and wife, as it exists in France, where, thank God! the New Woman is unknown; by the equality of the sexes, but each with different, well-defined duties to perform.

The New Woman is not to be found outside of Great Britain, where woman is her husband's inferior, and of the United States, where she is his superior.

The woman who devotes a good deal of her time to the management of public affairs is a woman who is not required to devote much of it to private ones.

Show me a woman of forty.

Look on this picture: Eyes bright, beaming with joy and happiness, complexion clear, rosy, plump, not a wrinkle, mouth smiling. See her lips bearing the imprint of holy kisses, and her neck the mark of her little children's arms. She has no grievance. Ask her to join the New Woman army. 'No, thanks,' she will say, with a smile of pity; 'the old style is good enough for me.'

And on this: Thin, sallow complexion, eyes without lustre, wrinkled, mouth sulky, haughty, the disgust of life written on every feature. That woman will join the ranks of every organization which aims at taking the cup of love away from the lips of every happy being.

But all this might take the shape of a long digression. Let us see how some American women devote part of the time which they are not probably wanted to devote at home.

I think that of all the grand fads indulged in by some women in America, the palm should be given to the compulsory water-drinking work. That is a colossal illustration of what women can do when left entirely to their own resources.

Now I will lay down as a sort of principle that the 'temperance' woman and the teetotaler are not to be found in refined society, and I don't think that in saying so I shall run the risk of being contradicted. I have often been a guest at the Union Club, the Union League Club, the Manhattan, the Century, the Players, and many other good clubs. I have dined in the best houses of the great American cities, and nowhere have I met teetotalers in those circles of society. Refined, intelligent people of good society, artists, literary men, are not teetotalers—that will be granted by everybody. I don't mention politicians, even of the best class, who have at times to be teetotalers to catch votes in a democracy.

The smaller towns of America—and that is America proper—are ruled by fussy, interfering faddists, fanatics of all sorts, old women of both sexes, shrieking cockatoos, that will by-and-by make life well-nigh intolerable to any man of self-respect, and make him wonder whether he lives in a free country or not.

Take two lively illustrations. A few years ago I was in the town of E—— (Kansas). There was a mayor who was married, and the happy pair had a little boy. That little boy was a wicked little boy. One day he was caught smoking a cigarette. Now, what should be done by sensible parents to such a wicked little boy? Why, he should be turned over and given a good hearty—you know. This is not at all what was done. The mayor's wife called up a meeting of women, made a violent speech on the pernicious habit of cigarette-smoking, and it was decided to petition the mayor and ask him to forbid the sale of cigarettes within the precincts of his jurisdiction. For the sake of peace and happiness at home, the worthy mayor published an edict prohibiting the sale of cigarettes in his district. However, cigarettes can

be had in the town of E——, but you have to walk nearly a mile, just outside the limits of the mayor's jurisdiction, to find a store where a roaring trade in cigarettes is done. All the same, you must admit that it is a nuisance to be obliged to walk a mile in a free country to buy a little article of luxury that you indulge in, without ever abusing it, because there happens to be in the town a wicked little boy who once smoked a cigarette.

When I was in the town of T——(Arkansas), I gave a lecture under the auspices of 'temperance' ladies of the city. They called on me.

Being of a rather inquisitive turn of mind, I said to them: 'Now, ladies, I understand I am in a prohibition State. How do you account for your existence? Do you wish now to advocate the suppression of tea, coffee, and ice-water, which, I must say, would go a long way towards improving the complexion and the digestive apparatus of your compatriots?'

'No,' they said; 'we find that, in spite of the law, there is liquor, wine, and beer still sold in this town, and we want to put a stop to it.'

I knew that such was the case, for I had, *proh pudor!* a bottle of lager-beer in my pocket which I had bought for my dinner, but which, I am glad to say, was not discovered by the ladies under the auspices of whom I was to lecture in the evening. I can do with ice-water, but in a prohibition State I cannot. The evil spirit prompts me. I must have beer or wine with my meals. I have never been drunk in my life; but if ever I get drunk it will be in a prohibition State.

'Well,' said the lady president of the temperance society of the town of T——, 'could you believe that a few days ago a poor woman of the town and her children actually died of starvation, while every day her husband got drunk with the wages he received?'

'But,' I mildly suggested, 'you should see that that man was punished, not the innocent population of this town. Don't suppress the wine, which is a gift of God. Punish—suppress, even, if you like—the drunkard. It is not wine that makes a man drunk, it is vice. Don't suppress the wine, suppress the vice or the vicious. Imprison a drunkard, lynch him, hang, shoot him, quarter him, do what you like with him, but allow hundreds of good, wise, temperate people who would use wine in moderation to indulge in a habit that makes men moderate, cheerful, and happy. Don't suppress wine because a few idiots use it to get drunk.'

Every year there are men who use knives to stab fellow-creatures; but there are millions who use their knives to eat their meals peacefully with. The law punishes the criminals, but would not think of forbidding the use of knives in orderly houses.

Any law is bad that punishes, injures, or annoys thousands of good, innocent people in order to stop the mischief done by a few—a very few, after all—blackguards and scoundrels.

The Anglo-Saxon should, by all means, preach temperance, which means moderation, not total abstinence. What they preach overreaches the mark, and does no good. When you say that a country enjoys a *temperate* climate, that does not mean that it has no climate at all, but enjoys a moderate one, neither too hot nor too cold.

These same Anglo-Saxons should not despise, but admire and envy, those who can enjoy, like men of understanding, like gentlemen, the glorious gifts of God to man without ever making fools of themselves. For these the law should be made.

If your husband or son, dear lady, would like to have a glass of wine or beer with his dinner, let him have it in your sweet and wholesome presence. Don't make a hypocrite of him. Don't compel him to go and hide himself in his club, or, worse, in a saloon, or, worse still, don't allow him to go and lose his manhood's dignity by crawling on all fours under the counter of a drug-store.

There is no virtue in compulsion. There is virtue only in liberty.

Ah! how I remember admiring in the hot days of blue-ribbonism in England that free Briton I once met who had a yellow ribbon in his button-hole!

'What's that you have on?' I said to him.

'That's a yellow ribbon,' he replied. 'I belong to the Yellow-Ribbon Army.'

'Ah! and what is it the Yellow-Ribbon Army do?' I inquired.

'What do we do?' he said. 'Why, we eat what we likes, we drink what we likes, and we don't care a d—— for nobody!'

There are well-meaning, most highly estimable, and talented ladies who go about the world preaching temperance—that is to say, total abstinence, not moderation.

Now, as a rule, these ladies have special reasons for so doing. Very often they have led a life

of sorrow and misery with wretched husbands, and they should be pitied. But hundreds of thousands of women have good husbands who have not to be cured of habits which they never in their lives indulged in, and who would be condemned to deny themselves every little luxury that helps make life cheerful when used with moderation and discretion, if the preachings of these often unfortunate ladies were to take the shape of laws.

I have often had to listen to self-confessed reformed drunkards who preached to me, who never was once drunk in my life. The thing is ludicrous.

There exist, among the Anglo-Saxons, people to whom the strains of Wagner and Beethoven's music say absolutely nothing, to whom the Venus of Milo is indecent. They declare music wicked, unless it is out of tune, dancing absolutely shocking, and the fine arts immoral, and if they had their way, they would close the concert-halls and the museums on every day of the week. Because their minds are distorted, they would condemn people with lofty and artistic minds to never hear a masterpiece of music or behold a masterpiece of painting or statuary. I have met people who declared they would never again set foot inside the walls of the Louvre and of the British Museum. And if the Anglo-Saxon fanatics, those arch-enemies of art, make a little more progress, the future of that great institution is not safe.

As everybody knows, there exist in Great Britain and in America thousands of people who declare the stage to be a most wicked and immoral institution. For them a theatre is so contaminated a place that they would not go inside one even to hear a Bishop preach a sermon from the stage. For instance, in several colonial cities I appeared in the principal theatre; but my manager, on a return visit, always made me appear in the town-hall, or some other place of the kind, to attract the portion of the population who would not have come to hear me lecture inside a theatre.

All these movements, headed by women, are in the wrong direction. They interfere with the liberties of a great people, and punish thousands and thousands of good, orderly, well-behaved people to reach a score or two of bad ones, whom they often fail to reach, and oftener still fail to cure. I repeat it: There are many thousands of good people in this world for a very few thousands of bad ones. The laws should aim at reaching the former and protecting them. This world is considerably better than the fanatics of all denominations and superstitions would make us believe. For seventeen years I have travelled all over the world, and I have never met any but honourable people to deal with. For instance, I have given 2,300 lectures in my life, and only once did I come across a man who behaved dishonestly towards me. He ran away with the cash while I was speaking; but then it was on Sunday, and some good pious people said to me that Providence, in its wisdom, had punished me for my wickedness. I must say that I never could see very clearly why Providence, in its wisdom, should have allowed the thief to safely run away with the money; but the ways of Providence are inscrutable, and its decrees should not be discussed. I might add that the lecture was more of a harmless address—almost a little sermon—on the duty of cheerfulness; but two or three times it caused the audience to smile, and this is simply too awful to think of.

Yes, the world is good, very good, in spite of the calumnies that are constantly hurled at its face by the Pharisees of Anglo-Saxondom. Yes, full of good men, crammed with good women, and the excellent ladies of the philanthropic societies of America should take it for granted that there are many, many good and virtuous people besides themselves.

You don't cut down an apple-tree because there are two or three bad apples on it. You cut down the two or three bad apples, and all your efforts tend to see that the hundreds of good ones are made healthy, happy, and comfortable.

I have no hesitation in declaring, after six visits to that great and most hospitable country, that the American women of good society are probably the most intelligent, bright, and brilliant, and certainly the best educated and the most interesting, women in the world.

But when I see what some American women can do in public life, outside of the beautiful sphere in which they were intended to reign supreme, I feel ready to appreciate and echo the remark that Frederick the Great was wont to make when he met a woman alone in the streets of Berlin:

'What are you doing here? Go home and look after your house and your children!'

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE LIBERTY OF ANGLO-SAXON WOMEN

The mistakes made by foreigners — Misconstructions — Educational systems — Girls do not lose their charm by independence.

Continental men visiting England and the United States do not, as a rule, understand the comparative familiarity with which they are treated by women to whom they have been properly introduced. They are often in danger of misinterpreting their kindness of manner, and regarding as affectionate advances or invitations to flirt what are meant as only polite attentions.

This awkward error is one into which not only Frenchmen, but all men of Continental Europe, are very apt to fall, unless they happen to be men of fine perceptions, in other words, perfect gentlemen. Young girls in France are kept so much to themselves, and young men are so completely separated from them, that when one of the latter finds himself, through some accident or fault of supervision, alone in presence of one of the former, he feels called upon as a man to make himself particularly pleasant, if not actually to make a declaration of love.

Of course, there is not in France anyone, not even the most conservative provincial mother, who does not admire, above all in America, that sweet liberty which is enjoyed by the women, married or unmarried. There is not one of those French mothers who would not like to give that same liberty to her own daughters. But how can she? Who shall be the first to do it?

It takes many generations to accept such a revolution in a system of education. People will have it that this Anglo-Saxon system would never do in France. Others even affirm that French people are incapable of shaking off perpetual thought of the relations between the sexes; that in France men are always thinking about women and women about men—in fact, that it is in the blood. The proof that these people are wrong is that young men and girls, sons and daughters of French fathers and mothers, but educated from a tender age either in England or America, do behave absolutely like English or American youths. It is not in the blood: the different systems of education alone account for those different modes of thought.

And what a difference between the French girls of my boyhood and the French girls of the present day! Not that they are yet 'Daisy Millers,' but at any rate they are no longer 'Eugénie Grandets.' Thirty years ago, a French girl well advanced in her twenties could not have, even in the early morning, gone across the street to see a friend or buy a pair of gloves without being accompanied by an elderly lady of the family or a lady's-maid. Thirty years ago, in my little native Brittany town, where a child of tender years would have been absolutely safe, an unmarried woman between forty and fifty would always be accompanied by a servant, even in daytime.

It was the correct thing to do. Indeed, a woman not married would always act in this manner as long as she thought that she was fit to be looked at by men. And very few women make up their minds to the loss of their charms. It even takes some of them a long time to become aware of that loss.

The French girl of thirty years ago, who was only allowed to read children's books, and never to set foot inside a theatre, now reads M. Zola's novels, and goes to see the plays of Alexandre Dumas fils, and as she discusses these plays she comes to the conclusion that they are very clever and interesting, but hardly such as to take her mother to.

French women are now getting freer every day, and, with the use of liberty, will lose the little defect they sometimes possess—affectation. They will become more and more natural and unaffected, and they will acquire that most charming and eminently American quality in a woman—unconventionality. They are now moving, not in the direction of innocent frivolity, but in that of greater independence. The time is soon coming when French girls will cease to regard marriage as a sort of emancipation, and will perhaps look upon it, as an American lady novelist of my acquaintance does, as a rather hard way of making a living.

Those French girls will not lose their charms by the enjoyment of greater liberty and independence. The American women have thus improved theirs.

CHAPTER XXIX

ENGLISH AND AMERICAN WOMEN HAVE NO LOVE TO SPARE FOR ONE ANOTHER

England and America are two branches of a family who once quarrelled — For their common interests they may make it up, but there will never be any love lost — There are no such quarrels to patch up as family ones.

I have heard a great deal about 'our kith and kin,' 'our cousins across the Atlantic,' 'blood is thicker than water,' 'the Anglo-Saxon race,' 'the English-speaking people,' 'the Anglo-American alliance,' and other more or less venerable platitudes with which music-hall managers in England have for some time succeeded in bringing down the gallery, on Saturday nights especially. I have heard all that, and, in company with most Americans, I have laughed in my sleeve.

During their war with Spain, the Americans were grateful for English sympathy and moral support.

During the Transvaal War, the English, finding themselves isolated and blamed by the whole of Europe, hoped for American sympathy.

'I scratched your back, you scratch mine.'

This sympathy the English did not obtain, or, if they did, in a very small measure, and only among the inhabitants of Fifth Avenue and the 'Four Hundred' of a few large Eastern cities. I was in America for three months at the beginning of last year, and everywhere, from New York to New Orleans, I found ninety-nine Americans out of every hundred sympathizing with the Boers in their plucky and determined struggle for liberty and independence. Their skill and bravery appealed to a nation who, some hundred years ago, themselves fought successfully for their freedom.

Yet, as I had many times the opportunity of telling American audiences, 'In the Anglo-Boer struggle, it is not the Boers, but the English who are fighting for what your ancestors fought for so successfully during the War of Independence—the liberty of the citizen and good and honest government. I have sympathy for the Boers on account of their ignorant patriotism and bravery; but, for the sake of humanity and civilization, I hope the English will win.'

It is true that I got applause for this statement, it is true that the presidents of many American universities thanked me for putting the truth and the facts of the question plainly before the students; but I am afraid I made very few converts to the pro-English cause, although I believe I was more successful on the platform in America than in France, where I got enthusiastically hissed and had several narrow escapes of being mobbed for expressing my rather pro-English sentiments.

The more charitable of my compatriots said it was only fair for a Frenchman who had long enjoyed the hospitality of the English to speak well of them abroad. Some went so far as to suggest that I was probably in the pay of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain.

However all this may be, my point is this: I don't care what a few American millionaires, who prefer England to America, who crawl on all fours before the English aristocracy, who would think it beneath their dignity to give their daughters to honest Americans, and prefer to get some English noblemen's coats-of-arms out of pawn with their daughters and their dollars—I say I don't care what these people may say to the contrary, my firm conviction, more and more absolute every time that I travel throughout the United States, is that there is very little love to spare in America for the English people. And this state of things will exist as long as the Americans build their patriotism on their successes of 1776 and 1812 against the English, and so long as school-books published in America teach American children that the English are the hereditary foes of their country.

Add also to this that not one-third of the population of the United States are of English extraction. The Germans and the Scandinavians are not 'kith and kin,' and the Irish are tooth and nail. Now, if you don't believe me, let me wish you had been in America, as I was, during the Venezuelan squabble, some five years ago, and you will be convinced of the truth of my statement.

But I must leave aside all these political considerations, and also the question whether American and English men love each other or not, for I was very near forgetting that the subject of this chapter is 'What American and English *Women* think of each other.' Here again, as in the case of the men, we must not speak of the aristocracy and the plutocracy of the two countries. Those people are cosmopolitan; besides, they travel and they get rid of their international prejudices.

But what about the good, worthy masses of the people, say, at least nine-tenths of the populations of America and England?

Well, I should like to tell what I think to be the truth frankly and plainly. I am not a rich man—far from it—but I now see my way to easily paying my butcher's bills for the rest of my life, and I can afford to say what I mean. If you don't like it, and want something else, please apply elsewhere for compliments, platitudes, and falsehoods.

I am absolutely convinced that most American women despise English women, and that most English women cordially hate American women. And as it is much more flattering to be hated than to be despised, it is the American women who seem to me the better served of

the two.

In the eyes of the English women who have not travelled in America or had the good fortune of mixing in Europe with the best American women, and who, in good womanly fashion, stick fast to their prejudiced notions, the daughters of Brother Jonathan are bumptious, vulgar, overdressed, loud, assertive, indifferent mothers, selfish wives, bad housekeepers, or else unbearable prigs and blue-stockings. And you will hear them deliver judgment in a way that seems to admit of no appeal.

In the eyes of the American women who have not lived the home-life of the English or mixed with the women of good English society, and who have been fed on ideas and opinions given in some American books or published in the newspapers of the smaller American cities, the English women are silly, sat-upon, ignorant creatures, seedy and dowdy, badly shaped, badly dressed, and who can only talk of their babies and their servants.

Among that class of women in both countries, the only concessions I have heard them make are the following: English women admit that their American sisters are freer and smarter than they are, and the American women envy the complexion of the daughters of John Bull.

How amiable women can be!

CHAPTER XXX

THE WOMAN I HATE

Women's-righters — Electric fluids — The bearded lady — The first-fiddle — Lady doctors — Lady lawyers — Lady speech-makers — Prominent women — A pretty picture.

Ernest Renan, whom nobody would dream of charging with frivolity, said that the first duty of woman was to look beautiful. Victor Hugo once said that it was to look pleasant. In mythology we find that the gods fell in love with Venus, but never with Minerva.

The functions of woman are to inspire and to guide, not to lead or command, and I think that the saddest spectacle of the latter end of the nineteenth century was the supremely ridiculous efforts made by some women to usurp functions which by Nature were intended for men to perform. Poor women's-righters! They cannot be men, and they want to cease to be women. Men and women are like electric fluids. When of the same name, they repel each other; when of different kinds, they attract each other. Now, women's-righters are seldom beautiful, very seldom attractive. A manly woman is as objectionable a sight as an effeminate man. The blue-stockings are mostly of the 'unclaimed blessing' sisterhood, and very few of them set up for professional beauties. The blue-stocking fascinates me as much as the bearded lady of a Chicago dime museum.

When a woman is beautiful, she is generally satisfied with playing a woman's part. The tedious women's-righters embrace the thankless career of exponents of women's grievances because they have never found anything better to embrace. And, for that matter, these excellent ladies must not put it into their heads that they have created the part, for it existed in the days of Aristophanes. Praxagora was neither more nor less ridiculous than most of the present champions of women's rights.

I hate the woman who appears in public. I hate the woman who lectures in public or in private. I hate the woman who rises to make a speech after dinner. I hate the woman who speaks about politics, and would like to sit in Parliament so as to transform it into a Chatterment. I hate the scientific woman who lectures on evolution or writes on natural philosophy. I hate the lady physician, the lady lawyer, the lady member of the School Board, the lady preacher, the lady president, the lady secretary, the lady reciter, even the lady who conducts an orchestra. I hate the prominent woman. And, although I don't see her, I hate the woman who writes a book, and feel almost ready to exclaim with Alphonse Karr: 'One book more and one woman less!'

Compared to all these, how I love the pretty woman who dresses well, smiles pleasantly, parts her hair in the middle, and has never done anything in her life! 'Ah!' will exclaim the hateful woman, 'but see, she wears the collar of servitude.' Nonsense! The marks that you see on her neck are not those of a collar of servitude, but those made by the arms of the husband and the children that clasp her round it.

Women, priests, and poultry have never enough, but in wishing to extend her empire woman will destroy it.

Now, ladies, what do you want? I hear you constantly loudly demanding the emancipation of your sex. You say you can do without us, and as for our protection, you'll none of it. For you, in times past, have we drawn the sword; to-day you hold us scarce worthy to draw cheques at your bidding. You would be man's equal, as if you ought not to be content with being incontestably his superior. You have graces of body and mind, and men pay you a homage that falls little short of worship. Your first duties are to be tender, sweet, and beautiful. You have every intention of continuing to be the latter, we have no doubt, but you mean to be tender and sweet no longer. In a word, you mean to strike, as your sisters did in the good old days of Aristophanes.

'You want to be learned? But you are learned in the heart's lore by Nature. You want to be free? But we are your slaves confessed. You want to make the laws? But your lightest word is law already. And, besides, between ourselves, do you not practically make your husbands vote pretty much as you please in all the parliaments of the world? You want to have more influence in the higher councils? But are you not satisfied with knowing that it was a woman who was the cause of the fall of the human race? that a woman has been the cause of every great catastrophe, from the Siege of Troy down to the Franco-Prussian War? that, in a word, woman has ever inspired our noblest actions and our foulest crimes? The rights of woman! What a sonorous platitude!'

You are proud of saying that to your sex belonged Joan of Arc, Charlotte Corday, George Sand, George Eliot, Charlotte Brontë, Madame Roland, Madame de Staël. Quite true; but could you find many men who would have been happy by taking to wife any one of the ladies I have just mentioned?

If you give a boy the education of a girl, or a girl the education of a boy, the result will be an unsubmissive or degraded being. It is always this result which must be reached by all who, believing that they are protesting against laws and usages, are really in rebellion against Nature. 'I dream of a society,' said Jules Simon, 'where women would be the mistresses in their own household, and would figure in public affairs only through the intermediary of their fathers and their husbands. I would like to sacrifice myself for woman, but not to obey her. I repel her domination, but I crave for her influence.'

The name of woman will ever be glorious so long as it is synonymous with beauty, tenderness, sweetness, devotion, all the sacred troop of virtues. It will be glorious, thanks to the Lucretias, the Penelopes, the Cornelias, ancient and modern, the devoted daughters, the loving wives, the adorable mothers, to the thousands of obscure heroines, who remind us, in the words of the great poet of antiquity, that the best women have been those whom the world has heard least of.

The loveliest picture in the world is that which represents a soldier lying on the battlefield with a woman kneeling by his side tending his wounds. Let the field be that of the everyday battle of life.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE KIND OF WOMAN I LOVE

Another answer to critics — Distorted minds — The portrait of a womanly woman.

I once wrote an article on 'The Woman I Hate,' which brought me an avalanche of letters, not all very pleasing reading. Many of them conveyed to me the wrath of viragos, women's-righters, petticoated males, trousered females, misunderstood and unclaimed women, ripe, spectacled spinsters, cockatoos of all sorts and conditions, who happened by the irony of fate and freaks of nature to be born of a sex of which they failed to be an ornament.

One of these correspondents accused me of 'possessing a nasty mind' for sneering at lady doctors. 'You insult women,' she says. 'Can you imagine, for instance, a respectable woman submitting to an examination by a man?' My dear lady, I am afraid I must return you the compliment. Let me assure you that, just as an artist will see nothing in a female figure beyond beauty and perfect harmony of lines, and will admire her with as cool a mind as he would a statue, just so a doctor will examine a woman as he would a piece of anatomy, and your mind must be fearfully distorted and impure, if you imagine for a moment that a single objectionable thought will pass through the mind of this man of science.

If you really do think so, let me assure you that I pity you, or even must despise you, from the bottom of my heart. And, while on this subject, allow me to remind you that an eminent American man exclaimed only the other day: 'In our country we have a great many female

doctors, female lawyers, female journalists, female orators, female preachers, and females in all classes and professions and trades, but what we want is a good many more female women.'

The woman I love is the female woman that I would protect and cherish in return for all the sweet attention she would pay me, and which would enable me to cheerfully fight the battle of life. How to describe her I hardly know.

Should she be beautiful? Not necessarily. Pretty? Yes, rather. Good figure? Decidedly. Clever? H'm—yes. Cheerful? By all means. Punctual? Like a military man. Serious? Not too much. Frivolous? Yes, just a little. Of a scientific turn of mind? B-r-r-r! no; I should shudder at the idea of it. Of an artistic nature, then, with literary tastes? Yes, certainly. But, above all, a keen, sensible, tactful little woman who would make it the business of her life to study me, as I would make it the business of my life to study her; a woman who could be in turn, according to circumstances, a housewife, a counsellor, a 'pal,' a wife, a sweetheart, a nurse, a patient, the sunshine of my life, and always a confidante, a friend, and a partner.

In a little Normandy town I have a dear lady friend, Parisienne to the core, whom I have known and loved from childhood. She is not far from sixty, but, upon my word, I think she is still very beautiful. She was in succession a loving, devoted daughter, an excellent wife, and an adorable mother. She has now lost all she loved in the world, and she devotes her time cultivating a lovely garden of flowers and attending all the church services of the parish. A beggar never passes her without receiving a little contribution, and she helps many a poor family. In a word, the gay life of Paris is all forgotten, and you would imagine that my recluse friend was a hermit, a sort of lay nun, as it were.

Well, yes, she is all that; but isn't she a woman still, though! 'Do you see,' she was saying to me one day, 'I have renounced all my worldly ideas? My flowers, my books, my poor friends, that's the only thought of my life now. I am old; I don't care how I dress or how I look. Anything does for me now. The Parisienne that you used to know, my dear friend, is dead and buried.'

'What a charming dress you have on!' I remarked. 'I do admire the material and the colour, and the cut, too. And how beautifully made and finished! Did you have that made in this town?'

The expression of her face was a study.

'My dear friend,' she exclaimed, 'you do not imagine I would get a dress made in this stupid little hole of a town. They make bags here, not gowns.' And she almost looked indignant, the dear! at the idea that I could suppose she had not her dresses made in Paris. I smiled, and said nothing.

And, as I looked at the book-shelves in her boudoir, I saw 'L'Imitation de Jésus-Christ.' The volume next to it was 'Les Secrets du Cabinet de Toilette.' I could not help making a little sarcastic remark to my dear old friend.

'Well, *mon cher ami*,' she said, 'do you think the *bon Dieu* would give me a better reception if I presented myself with a face covered with wrinkles? By the way, what is that stuff they make in England which you told me is so good for the skin?'

Those little contradictions in a good and delightful woman make her lovable. So I think, at any rate.

The woman I love is the woman who possesses all the womanly virtues and qualities—sweetness, devotion, reliability. The little failings I forgive in her are those of her sex—frivolity and the divine right of changing her mind. If in any way woman apes man, she is intolerable and hateful.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WOMEN IN THE WORLD

The Irish, Hungarian and Spanish women — The beauty of the English and French women — The redeeming feature of every American woman.

If I were asked to name the spots of the earth where my eyes had the privilege of beholding the most beautiful specimens of womanhood, I think I would name the streets of Buda-Pesth and the drawing-rooms of Ireland. If, on the other hand, I were asked to say whether there is

not, perchance, a spot of the earth where no woman is absolutely, helplessly plain, where she always has a redeeming feature to speak in her favour, I would unhesitatingly answer: 'Yes, the United States of America; for in that country, let a woman have as unpleasant a face as possible, as bad a figure as "they make them," there is an air of independence, a deliberate gait, a pair of intelligent eyes, that will go a long way towards making you forget or overlook the shortcomings of the body.'

On the whole, I think the Hungarian women are the most beautiful in the world. They have the faces of Madonnas and the figures of Greek statues; both Raphael and Phidias would have chosen them for models. They are not languishing, diaphanous creatures; they are the embodiment of health and strength. They stand erect and straight, are hearty and vigorous to the core, perfect pictures of abounding vitality. Yet their limbs and features are full of delicacy. They have large eyes and small feet, full arms, plump hands with small, tapering fingers, and delicious ankles. The inclination of the shoulders is perfect, and the bosom absolutely classical. No curve is exaggerated, but every one is there, the right size in the right place. The sun has spread a reddish golden tint, like the colour of a beautiful ripe peach, over her complexion.

She seldom presents a riddle to the psychologist, and effeminate ethereal poets do not sing of her. She is the vigorous embodiment of sensible womanhood. As her exterior, so her whole character is enchantingly fresh and matter-of-fact. She eats well and heartily, and is an athlete. She swims, dances, rides, walks. In England, you find very pretty faces among the lowest class people; in France, you seldom do. In Hungary, grace and beauty know no difference between high and low, and often bestow upon a poor, barefooted, short-skirted peasant girl (with her beautiful oval face framed in a kerchief tied under her chin) the same ravishing form, the same graceful carriage, the same magically attractive glance as upon her more favoured sister.

But who can touch—even approach—the Irish woman with her dark hair, her blue, sometimes light purple large eyes, her glorious complexion, her soft, velvety skin, her beautiful, graceful form? Sometimes the lower portion of the face is a little too long, but her brow is beyond competition. The Irish woman is a symphony in white satin. Add to these physical attractions the brightness of her expression, the amiability of her smile, and you will come to the conclusion that her charm is unapproachable.

There is so much patriotism in the world, or, I should rather say, so much provincialism, that men all over the earth give the palm for beauty to the women of their own country. Now, dear American friends, you know this is true. Would any of you deny that the American women are the most beautiful women in the world?

I am sorry to say that the beauty of French women is praised by my compatriots only.

I am such a cosmopolitan that I have no biassed mind. I have been a traveller for thirty years. In 1870 I shed a pint of blood and lost the use of my right arm (for military purposes at any rate), so that France and myself are quits, and I feel I have a right to express myself on French topics quite as freely and independently as on any other country. I thoroughly believe that the French women are the most charming and certainly the most sensible women (where would France be now but for the women?), but they are far from being beautiful. They have not the eyes of the Spanish women, nor the complexion and shapely figures of the English, nor the brilliant faces of the American women; but what makes them charming is that they have a little bit of everything, of which they know how to make the best. The French woman is an *ensemble*.

It must be admitted that, after praising the women of their own country, most men award to Spanish women the palm for beauty. The conclusion must naturally be that the Spanish woman is very beautiful; but, to my mind, it is a kind of beauty that does not appeal to the heart or the soul as it does to the senses. Her large eyes, veiled by thick lashes, her delicate nose and well-formed, ever-moving nostrils, her undulating form, the suppleness, almost boneless, beautifully moulded limbs and figure, her vigour, her languor—every fibre of the Spanish woman's body, I say, appeals to the senses. She does not make you dream of sentimental walks by moonlight, much less still of a quiet, happy life in some retired, secluded little cottage. In her company, you would never dream of being mayor of your city and father of a numerous family. No, the Spanish woman strikes you as a bewitchingly beautiful creature, jealous, sensitive, proud, a sort of mixture of lioness and tigress that would suggest to you the idea of spending your life sailing on a stormy sea. On looking at her, you would almost like to start an acquaintance with a quarrel. If I were married to a fair woman of Andalusia, I would feel that the best moments of my life would be 'making it up'

with her.

If the law of my country made polygamy compulsory, I would make love to an English woman or a fair daughter of Virginia; I would have my house kept by a German wife; my artistic inclinations I would trust to a French woman; my intellectual ones to an American one. Then, when life got a bit dull and I wanted my blood stirred up, I would call on my Spanish wife. I would get it.

CHAPTER XXXIII

BLONDES AND BRUNETTES

Characteristics of blondes and brunettes — The *ingénue* and the villainess — Which of the two do men like better? — Sauterne and Burgundy — I like both — All women cannot afford to be blondes — Blondes with dark eyes — Brunettes with blue eyes.

The ideal beautiful woman of the painters is a blonde.

Eve, Venus, Helen of Troy, all the celebrated beauties of antiquity and mythology, are invariably represented as blondes.

Only Cleopatra escaped it.

The reason is no doubt that the very colouring of the blonde, her fair white skin, her light blue or gray eyes, suggest in her the possession, the embodiment of all that is womanly. The blonde is the woman *par excellence*.

Some people declare that blondes appeal to the imagination, to the heart and to the soul, and brunettes to the senses—that the former are sentimental, sweet, modest, good-tempered, obedient, nay, angelical, whereas brunettes are strong-minded, assertive, conceited, quick-tempered, passionate, often revengeful, and sometimes devilish.

I have known brunettes to be perfect angels, and sweet blondes to be perfect little devils, and so have we all.

However this may be, most women desire to be blondes, and the proof of it is that, whereas a blonde never dyes her hair black, many brunettes dye theirs gold, *blond cendré*, light mahogany, and other hues of the blonde family.

On the stage the ladies of the ballet and the chorus wear blonde wigs, and the only possible reason to give for this is that managers believe they will look more attractive to the audience as blondes than as brunettes.

In the modern melodrama, the *ingénue* is blonde and the adventuress or villainess is dark, especially in England and America, where every member of the caste has to be well labelled from the beginning. If the villainess were a blonde, the gallery would take her for the heroine, and things would get terribly mixed. The gallery would no more understand a blonde villainess than they could take for a villain a man who did not wear a chimney-top hat and patent leather boots, smoke a cigarette, squint all the time to the right and to the left, and hiss like a snake every time he took breath.

Poets are quite as partial as artists to blondes. Alfred de Musset sang of her who was *blonde comme les blés*. Petrarch's sonnets were addressed to the blonde and blue-eyed Laura. The ancient Greeks used to call young blondes 'children of the gods.' For that matter, blondes especially appeal to the men of the south on account of their rarity.

Large, dreamy blue eyes, fair and soft skin, dainty features, slender figure, such are the characteristics of the blonde which help to make her the ideal young girl; but there is another beauty besides that of the young girl, it is the beauty of the full-grown woman of thirty to forty, a beauty that you will find oftener in the brunette than in the blonde, a beauty more piquant, more solid, and more lasting; but I know brunettes of thirty who are *passées*, and blondes of forty who are beautiful. You cannot lay down any rule.

Did I hear you ask me which I prefer? How can you ask such a question? How can any man answer it? Good light sauterne is an exquisite wine; full-bodied Burgundy is a most excellent beverage.

I like both.

It is not every woman who can afford to be a blonde. If I were a rich woman of leisure, I think I would ask to be a blonde. The blonde requires much more care than the brunette. She has to avoid exposure, and her beauty will last only as long as her appearance remains youthful. The brunette does not suffer from exposure; on the contrary, the sun improves her beauty as it does peaches.

In northern countries you very seldom see a pretty woman among the working classes; they are faded, wrinkled or freckled, and lack expression.

In Italy and Spain you see, in the streets, flower-girls and fruit-sellers who could have given sittings to Raphael and Murillo.

But I will tell you what I like, although you do not ask me, and that is a blonde with brown eyes or, better still, a fine, tall brunette with dark-blue eyes and the fine delicate skin of a blonde; and, if you want to see the latter, go to Ireland, you will find her there in plenty.

CHAPTER XXXIV

FLIRTS AND COQUETTES

The difference between the two — Points of resemblance.

There is a great difference between the flirt and the coquette. The flirt accepts, even invites, your attentions, without expecting intentions. The coquette is a woman who gives you a promissory note with a firm intention of dishonouring her signature. Just as the prude often says No when she means Yes, the coquette whispers Yes all the time meaning No. The flirt promises nothing. She has nothing to refuse, because she does not allow you to ask for anything. She does not compromise herself in any way. She says neither Yes nor No. She encourages you to go on. You say to yourself, 'Will it be Yes or No? Who knows? Perhaps Yes, perhaps No.'

The coquette is generally a cold-hearted, cold-blooded woman, as perfectly sure of herself as those famous Mexican horsemen who can ride at full speed toward a precipice and stop suddenly dead on the edge of it. The coquette has no capacity for love; she does not seek love, but admiration and homage only. Unlike the flirt, she lacks cheerfulness and humour. To obtain admiration and boast of a new conquest she will risk even her reputation, compromise herself; yet her virtue is in safe keeping, for she has neither heart nor passion. In the comedy of love the coquette is the villain of the play.

The coquette uses man as she does her dresses: she likes to be seen with a new one every day. She kills for the sake of killing. She hunts, but does not eat the game she brings down. She plays on man's vanity to satisfy hers. The moment she has received a man's homage she will leave him to occupy herself with one who has refused it to her. She is dull and dreary. She may be as beautiful as you like, she is never lovable. She should be shunned like the card-sharper, whom she resembles all the more that against your good money she has nothing but counterfeit coin.

The flirt, on the contrary, is cheerful, jolly, often full of fun, and if you can make up your mind to accept her for what she is worth, she may help you pass a very pleasant time. She is not serious, and she does not want you to take her seriously. She is honest. She wants fun, innocent fun. The coquette tries to lead you as far as she wishes you to go; the flirt does not lead you any further than you wish to go. And it may be added that, while flirts have often been known to make very good wives, coquettes have invariably proved detestable ones.

Winthrop was helplessly wrong when he said, 'A woman without coquetry is as insipid as a rose without scent, champagne without sparkle, or corned beef without mustard,' unless he meant (which he did not) to use the French adjective, and not the noun, and say that a coquette is a woman who, by the care she bestows on her dress and general appearance and many other ways, knows how to make herself attractive and show herself in the most advantageous light.

The French language expresses the difference to a nicety. The word as an adjective is complimentary, but certainly not as a noun. *Elle est coquette* means 'she dresses very elegantly, and has very winning manners,' whereas *C'est une coquette* means 'she is a

coquette,' that is to say, 'she tries to fascinate for the mere sake of fascinating.'

The coquette plays on man's vanity and makes a fool of him. The flirt displays her accomplishments and personal charms either to make you have a pleasant time with her, or, when more serious, to lead you on to an offer of marriage, which she will honestly accept, often with the best results for yourself.

It is only when you say of a woman that she is a 'desperate flirt' that you may come to the conclusion that she is a coquette. Of course, when the flirt is a married woman, she is a coquette; but when she is a young girl, I would call her a very harmless person. On the other hand, in opposition to that epithet of harmless, the adjective that is most commonly coupled with the word 'coquette' is not 'harmless,' but 'heartless.'

The word 'flirt' comes from the French *fleureter*, which means to go from flower to flower, to touch lightly; but although the word is of French origin, the thing itself is not French. Flirtation is a pastime which is most essentially English. We do not flirt in France; we are more serious than that in love-affairs. After all, flirtation is trifling with love, and that game would be a dangerous one to play with a Frenchman. A woman who flirts would pass in France for giddy, if not worse. She knows her countryman well, and is aware what she would expose herself to if she flirted with him.

The English girl in flirting does not play with fire. Englishmen are reserved, cold. The customs of the country grant liberty to the women, and they accept flirtation for what it is worth. The worst they might say of a girl who flirted with them would be, 'She is an awful flirt,' with a mixed expression of pity and contempt. An English girl who has had a good time at a party, a picnic, a ball, can say, 'I have had such a flirtation!' Why, she could say that to her own mother, and if that mother was still fairly young and good-looking, she might answer, 'And so have I.'

I take the American woman to be too intelligent—I had almost said too intellectual—to enjoy that childish pastime.

I hate the coquette and somewhat pity, if not despise, the flirt. I love straightforwardness. I admire that woman who blooms in the shade, who is earnest in her affections, and who waits until she is in love to allow the curtain to rise; then who honestly, devotedly, straightforwardly, goes through the whole comedy.

In everything I hate imitations. If I cannot get the real article, I do without it.

CHAPTER XXXV

WHAT IS A PERFECT LADY?

'Am I the man as wants a gentleman to drive him?' — How can you tell a lady? — A lady is a woman who adds to the virtues of a woman the qualities of a gentleman.

In a clever article, Lady Violet Greville recently asked, 'What is a lady?'

A friend of mine was once asked in New York by a coachman if he was 'the man as wanted a gentleman to drive him.'

I was myself told once by a negro hotel-porter, whom I had asked a question about some baggage of mine, to apply 'to that gen'l'man over there'—another negro porter.

A lady friend of mine who visits the poor of her district once called at a tenement house to inquire after a poor woman who was ill. The woman who answered the door shouted to someone upstairs: 'Will you tell the lady on the second floor that a young person from the district has called to see her?'

A lady acquaintance, who once happened to be alone in her home with a maid who was ill, out of consideration for that girl, went herself to open the door to a friend she had seen go up the steps of her house, so as to save the maid the trouble of coming upstairs. The following day that maid told a servant next door that 'her mistress was no lady,' as she answered her door herself.

'What is a lady?' asks Lady Violet Greville.

Well, it is hard to tell in these democratic days, when every class strives to ape the others above, when all people are equal to their superiors and superior to their equals.

With the modern extravagance in dress, the boisterous hats, the outrageously *decollété* dresses in restaurants and other public places, the cigarette-smoking, the card-playing for high stakes, and what not, I shall feel inclined to answer: 'You can tell a lady by the efforts she makes to be taken for—anything but a lady.'

Every class of society has its own definition of a lady. To the inhabitants of the slums it is a woman who stops her nose when in contact with them; to servants, it is one who does not do a stroke of work in her house, pays their wages regularly, throws at them her left-off clothes, and treats them like dirt; to tradespeople, it is one who pays cash for what she buys; for dressmakers and milliners, it is a woman who never bargains, and is known never to wear her gowns and hats more than half a dozen times.

What is that new supreme desire to pass for a lady?

'It proceeds purely,' said Lady Violet Greville, 'from a wish to imitate; it is vulgarity pure and simple.

'It is the aspiration after gentility, the longing to appear what we are not, the desire of the fly for the dinner-lamp.

'It is the natural consequence of the religion of the Anglo-Saxon race—make-believe.

'A real lady's existence,' continues her ladyship, 'seems to outsiders to be all sweetness, and passed in a land of milk and honey; whereas, in reality, could her poor, crawling admirers realize it, the modern lady's life is a compound of hard work, exhausting excitement, anxious ease, and infinite disillusion. To begin with, she is often poorer than her prosperous neighbour, compelled to practise petty and galling economies, travel second class, wear cleaned gloves, and spend unpleasant moments in street-cars and omnibuses. It is the vulgar *nouveaux riches* who own the carriages, the horses, the jewels, and the money.'

Yet the vulgar rich may be as lavish as they please, may throw gold out of the windows, give a small fortune for their horses and carriages, they have not enough money to buy what that lady possesses, her delicacy and refinement. Even their servants know that, for they can take the measure of the mushroom nobility to a T.

In a few years more, no doubt, the word 'lady,' entirely divested of the original meaning, far away buried in the mists of time, will merely be the equivalent of the feminine gender, the female of the male, and then the gentler bred and wiser of the sex will exult in bravely calling themselves women. And they will be right. 'A perfect woman' sounds to my ears far more sweetly than 'a perfect lady.' There is no misunderstanding about the former. 'I am not an angel,' says an *ingénue* to her *fiancé* in some French play, the name of which now escapes me; 'don't expect too much from me. I am only a woman.' A woman—only a woman. Heavens! that is good enough for anybody!

Lady Violet Greville concludes her clever article by a beautiful definition of a lady:

'The real lady settles her debts, does not forget her liabilities, would as soon cheat as commit murder, and actually considers an engagement a binding duty. She has a soft voice and a pleasant manner; she is the daughter of evolution and the survival of the fittest. If she has nerves, she does not show them. She has courage of the finest sort, the courage of her opinions and the moral courage to deny herself.'

I feel almost inclined to draw myself up, and say of the real lady: 'In short, she possesses all the qualities that make up a gentleman.'

Tell me, ladies, if this is not just like a man.

CHAPTER XXXVI

MAMMIES AND GRANNIES

Cupboard love — Every kind of love is more or less selfish except maternal love — Maternal love over-rated — If you never had a grannie, do get one — Reminiscences of grannies — A sacrifice — Grannies are not at all prejudiced in favour of their grandchildren.

Every kind of love is more or less cupboard love. I mean to say that love, whatever form it may assume, requires, or, at any rate, expects, some equivalent for it in return in the shape of affection, happiness, or pleasure. I only make one exception in favour of maternal love. The most loving sweetheart, husband, wife, or child expects to be loved, almost demands it. The loving mother expects nothing, demands nothing.

A mother will love her child, however bad that child may be, however unloving and ungrateful, whatever unhappiness and even sorrow he or she may cause to her. A mother will love and bless a child whom the whole world has condemned. A mother's love and forgiveness will follow a child to the scaffold. There is no limit to it. It is infinite.

Maternal love, far above others, is the very sentiment that keeps us in touch with heaven. It is the only holy love.

And that love is so inborn in woman that you see it already written on the face of the little girl who plays with her doll. It is so inborn in woman that I find something incongruous in such a remark as, 'She was a good and loving mother!' All mothers are good and loving. All rules have exceptions, but this one has none.

Therefore it is no extraordinary testimonial for a woman to be fond of her children, because all mothers are fond of their children and good to them, even the fiercest and cruellest of animals. The feeling is given to them by Nature. We all profit by it, we are all happier for it. For being able to dispense maternal love, woman is to be admired and blessed, but not congratulated. A child is part and parcel of a mother. In loving her child, a woman loves part of herself. It is not selfishness, but, somehow, a little self-love. In her love for her child, whether returned or not, she finds happiness.

But for disinterestedness, never mind mammie: give me grannie's love. God ought to spare grandmammas; they never ought to die, the dear, lovely grannies!

'Haven't you a grandma?' once asked a little boy of another. 'No? Well, you should get one!' True, no child should be without one.

Victor Hugo said he submitted to one tyranny only, that of children. The author of 'The Art of being Grandfather' was right: that tyranny ought not only to be submitted to, but proclaimed. And who better than a grandmother will submit to the tyranny of a child? The sacrifices they will be capable of are superhuman, epic. I know one who charms away the last days of her life by a dainty little supper of biscuit and cream-cheese brought to her every day. She never now comes down in the evening, and that frugal repast is taken up to her when dinner is about over.

Her little granddaughter once came up to her room crying bitterly. She was in disgrace, and had been sent away from table before the appearance of the pudding.

'Grannie,' she said, 'I am not to have any pudding; you ought not to have your cream-cheese.'

'But, darling,' pleaded grandmamma, throwing a loving glance at the little dish of her predilection, 'I haven't been naughty.'

'Never mind; you ought not to have any when your little girl cannot have any pudding.' And the little tyrant cried more bitterly than ever.

Grannie rang the bell, ordered the favourite cream-cheese to be taken away, and, drying the little girl's tears, supped that night off a bit of bread-and-butter.

Antiquity has not recorded anything like it.

People say that mothers are prejudiced in favour of their children. Of course they are. We are all of us prejudiced in favour of what belongs to us, especially if it is of our own manufacture. But for the opinion held of a child, give me grannie's—that is sublime.

Once a lady of my acquaintance, on a visit to her mother, was in the drawing-room with her own little girl on her knees. Grandmamma, in ecstasy, was worshipping baby, challenging the world to produce such another. A lady called, took some notice of the child, and talked a great deal about her own baby, a great deal too much to please grandmamma, at any rate. When the visitor had gone, the dear old lady gave expression to her feelings:

'How silly women are, to be sure! Did you hear that woman talk and talk about her child? Good heavens! one would imagine, to hear her praise her baby, that there was no such a one in the world.'

And she laughed heartily at the presumption of that silly, conceited young mother.

'But, grandmamma,' quickly said my lady friend, 'you must forgive her. I have heard you many times declare that this, our baby, was by far the best and finest the world has ever seen.'

'Ah, my dear,' replied grannie, not in the least disconcerted and in absolute earnestness,

'that's *quite* different. In our case it's the truth, and no one could deny it.'

Certainly not! Who would dare?

The love of a grandmother, with its delightful weaknesses, with that complete collapse of all power of resistance to a child, is no sign of senility; it is only the love of a mother multiplied by two.

CHAPTER XXXVII

ON MOTHERS-IN-LAW

How to deal with them — Difference between a misfortune and an accident — 'That will spoil the whole thing' — Shoot her!

Adam, they say, must have been a happy man: he had no mother-in-law.

I once heard a Frenchman give the following definition of the difference that exists between an accident and a misfortune. Suppose you walk along the bank of a river in the company of your mother-in-law. If she should fall into the water and be drowned, it is an accident; if she fall into the water and be pulled out alive, it is a misfortune.

The mother-in-law is not dreaded in England. An English mother has no authority over her son: how could she dream of having any over a son-in-law? The mother-in-law is an object of terror in France, where the ascendancy of woman over man is a powerful factor in the social life of the country.

The French woman leads her husband by the nose, and her sons are submissive to her as long as they remain unmarried, and even when they are married they remain more or less under her influence until she dies. That French mother is queen at home, and when she sees that her daughter has started an establishment of her own, she generally at once goes there to settle for a little while, sometimes for a long while, to put her daughter up to a few points about the management of man.

That often causes difficulties and spoils the game; but as nine times out of ten the young wife will take her mother's part in any little unpleasantness that may arise, the husband submits. He knows that the mother-in-law is the drawback of matrimony. He has taken his wife for better and for worse, and 'worse' includes mamma. The bargain is fair. He has signed, and he honours his signature. Besides, he has a consolation, that of knowing that his mother-in-law will give his wife plenty of good and useful advice on housekeeping, teach her economy, and be ever ready to come to her help in times of need.

I know very little of private life in America, but I know, at all events, the supremacy of woman in social and family life, and, therefore, I should feel inclined to suspect the American mother-in-law to be as unpopular as the French one. The most striking point of resemblance between America and France is the way in which women treat men and are treated by them.

Was it not in America that I heard the following story? A man enjoyed the possession of a beautiful and loving wife and a very uncongenial mother-in-law. The latter fell ill, and her daughter went to nurse her. At last the husband one day received the following telegram: 'Mother dead; shall we have her embalmed, cremated, or buried?' The husband wired back: 'Do the three; take no chance.'

How like the following, which is French: A man loses his wife. As the funeral is about to leave the house he is ushered into the first mourning-carriage. His mother-in-law is there. 'I cannot, I will not go in that carriage!' he exclaims. 'My mother-in-law is in it.' 'But you must,' he is told; 'you are the husband of the corpse.' 'Must I?' he says. 'Well, if I must I will, but it will spoil the whole thing.'

I have always wondered how it is that men so much complain of their mothers-in-law and that women so seldom do. Poor, dear little women! They do have mothers-in-law, too—mothers-in-law to find fault with their housekeeping, and to remind them that before they married their sons were attended at home by most devoted sisters. The mother-in-law of a man, no doubt, is often in the way. You sometimes wish she was not there, but with a little diplomacy you can manage her, and even get rid of her.

I recommend the following plan; it proved a big success with a friend of mine. A short time after his marriage his mother-in-law arrived and installed herself in his house. My friend

welcomed her, and lavished the most assiduous attentions upon her. He was not a church-goer; he went to church, and insisted on carrying the excellent lady's books of devotion. When a walk was taken, it was to her he offered his arm. 'Your mother is old,' he said to his wife, 'and so kind, too! I am getting awfully fond of her.' In the evening, after his wife had retired, he sat up with his mother-in-law and took a hand at piquet. At the end of the week the mamma-in-law had vanished as if by magic. The young and neglected wife had managed the affair.

But for a woman to get rid of her mother-in-law I am afraid I have no advice to offer, not even that offered by the greatest French dramatist, Victorien Sardou, who says in that delightful play 'Seraphine': 'If ever you have to choose between living with your mother-in-law or shooting yourself, do not hesitate a single moment—shoot her.'

CHAPTER XXXVIII

ON WIDOWS

Women do have grievances — Various specimens of widows — The jolly widow — The inconsolate widow — The plump widow — Marriageable widows — Mourning and black — Last wills and testaments — How long should a widow mourn her husband? — 'You should have seen me yesterday!'

Mothers-in-law are for ever a target for men's sarcasms. Stepmothers are supposed to be the embodiment of everything that is mean. On the other hand, I have never heard fathers-in-law turned into ridicule, and stepfathers are invariably painted by novelists as unselfish, devoted men who come to the rescue of widows, and help them to bring up their children in comfort and happiness.

Poor women do have grievances, and no mistake!

And the widows—oh, the widows! Now, what have they done that they should be the butts for the jokes that are made at their expense? Why should they provoke the sarcasms and excite the scorn of men instead of their pity or, at all events, their kind sympathy?

If a widow's grief is great and she wears the deepest mourning, she is called an 'inconsolable, desolate widow,' and people smile, saying with a sneer: 'She will soon be cured.' If she bears up bravely and well, she is called a 'jolly widow,' and people say: 'She is already better.' If she remains amiable and attractive, she is immediately baptized a 'wily widow,' and if her good constitution is such that even her sorrows and worries do not make her get thin, but the contrary, she is called a 'plump widow,' and people wink. And all the time the widower escapes scot-free. Men respect his sadness, are prepared to write odes about him if he remain faithful to the memory of his wife, and send him hearty congratulations if he remarry. Never a smile; no sarcasm, no scorn!

What awful cowards men are! And what surpasses me is that, as a rule, women are to be found who join them in all the jovial remarks that are passed on widows.

However, widows are not altogether without their revenge. They get many advantages. They have the best of young girls in the matrimonial market. The most-courted woman in the world is the rich young widow. She has a fascination that very few unmarried women possess, and many men prefer her. Why? Don't ask me. Widows know the world, have experience in dealing with men. There are teachers, destitute of patience, who prefer advanced pupils to beginners. Mere laziness, my dear friends, nothing else!

Men are so conceited, too! If they were not, how would they dare marry a widow and constantly run the risk of being found far less loving, pleasant, and attractive than number one was? It is true that if, after a quarrel, a man's wife should exclaim, 'How I do regret my first husband!' he would have a chance to cure her of that expression, by remarking quietly: 'My dear, you will never regret him as much as I do!' But all this does not suggest to the mind a happy condition of matrimonial affairs.

Widows are less marriageable in England than in other countries, for this reason: that their

husbands, in their wills, almost invariably stipulate that they leave so much to their wives on the condition that they will not remarry. If they do, they forfeit everything. Of course, to a certain extent, I understand that a man does not feel anxious to know that if, by his industry and carefulness, he has succeeded in amassing a plump little fortune, Smith, Brown, or Robinson will one day enjoy it in the company of his wife. Still, why not? What does it matter? If his wife has been good to him and she is still young when he dies, why should he condemn her to solitude for the rest of her days? What good does it do to him, when he is under the grass, to have his wife lonely and miserable? If I were a woman ever so fond of my husband, I would so much resent that stipulation that I would tear his will in pieces and marry the first respectable and attractive man who sought my hand.

Compared to the Englishman who makes such a will, how I admire that Frenchman who penned the following one: 'I leave to my dear wife, for her sole and absolute use, everything I possess and everything I may become possessed of. She may remain a widow or remarry, just as she pleases. I am not afraid of competition!' I cannot help thinking that this is the proper way to treat a woman who has been a true friend to you, the partaker of your pleasures, of your joys and sorrows, and that, on leaving her, you may as well pay her the compliment of taking it for granted that she will know what is best for her and act accordingly.

In France, a widow wears deep mourning for her husband during a year, and half mourning during another year. Many a French widow wears mourning during her lifetime. For that matter, there is no country in the world where mourning is worn so long as in France, in the provinces especially, where half the population is in black for somebody or other. This outside show of grief may be exaggerated, for real mourning is worn in the heart, not in the clothes; yet if a French widow in a small provincial town should shorten her widow's veil by an inch, people would say: 'If she never cared for her husband, she might have the decency not to advertise the fact and fish already for another!' And you have to conform to the usages of a country, especially when you live in one which, like provincial France, is built of glass houses.

How long should a widow mourn the loss of her husband?

Two days after the funeral of her husband, a young widow received the visit of a friend, who remarked, on seeing the sadness engraven on her face:

'Poor dear! how sad, how haggard you look!'

'Ah, dear, that's nothing,' sighed the young widow; 'you should have seen me yesterday!'

As a rule husbands are mourned as long as they deserve.

And so are we all.

CHAPTER XXXIX

ON OLD MAIDS

Different types of old maids — Many of them are undisguised blessings — Few men are good enough for women — Old bachelors and old maids.

Next to the mother-in-law, the stepmother, and the widow, it is the old maid who comes in for the largest share of scorn and sarcasm, and this is all the more mean that, nine times out of ten, she is not responsible for her position. The more generous-minded call her 'unclaimed blessing,' but many are found, women amongst them, who whisper 'Cat!' And all this is perhaps nothing compared to 'ancient spinster.'

I cannot help thinking, however, that feelings of quite a different nature ought to be entertained towards the old maid. If it is owing to her bad looks or her poverty that her hand has not been sought, or if she was once engaged to be married and then jilted and disgusted out of all idea of ever marrying, she should be pitied. If she has had offers of marriage and has declined them, she should be respected for not having married a man she could not love. If she was once engaged, and her lover died, she should be admired for wishing to remain faithful to his memory. If she simply wished to remain free and independent and use her fortune, as many old maids do, in philanthropic work, she should be blessed. If she refused to accept matrimony as a means of livelihood (the hardest and most thankless of all), her

example should be followed. And, finally, if there do exist old maids crabby, sulky, peevish, selfish, and with all the other defects that are generally and most ungenerously attributed to old maids, they should be thanked by a grateful community for having spared men the risk of leading with them a life of wretchedness and misery.

I am of opinion that old maids and widows should inspire nothing but generous feelings of sympathy in the heart of man. Old maids are the wallflowers of that great dancing-party which is called Life. Let men who have overlooked them and women who have found partners be charitable, and let men whom they declined to associate with in the bonds of matrimony be gentlemanly, manly enough to take no mean revenge by scorning them.

No doubt there are despicable old maids—women who shirk all their duties in life, and on whom not even a dog or a parrot depends for its happiness, but they are the great exception, and for selfishness and self-indulgence I should decidedly feel inclined to give the palm to old bachelors. Some old maids are the comfort of parents in their old age, others are the devoted mothers of brothers' and sisters' children, while others are the friends of the poor and the nurses of the sick.

A great prejudice on the subject of old maids is that they are poor forlorn creatures, who spend their lives wailing and mourning over the absence of that man who never proposed. There is nothing to mourn over in that. It is no loss, nothing to regret; not more than one man out of ten is worth having. Most old maids ought to spend their lives in glee and gratitude for a narrow escape. I know very little about women, but I am afraid I do a great deal about men, and it is my firm conviction, and I will express it with all the frankness, all the brutality I am capable of, that there are very few men indeed who are good enough for women.

I know of nothing more pleasant than the company of a jolly, broad-minded, intelligent old maid, who knows that she can let herself 'go' and be a good 'pal' to you, without running the risk of hearing remarks passed of a more or less objectionable character. I know of nothing more enjoyable than the pleasure of such an old maid's company. I count old maids among my most cheerful and companionable friends.

The old bachelor is a social failure, a sort of rebellious outcast, who ought to pay an income-tax of ten shillings in the pound. But the old maid who is bright, clever, cheerful, generous, charitable, hospitable, is an ornament to society and one of its most useful members.

CHAPTER XL

SHOULD PEOPLE REMARRY?

The excuse most people give for remarrying — St. Peter's opinion of men who have been married more than once — Stepmothers.

In some countries of the Far East the question has been settled, so far as women are concerned: they burn their widows. In many places much nearer home it is not unfrequent to hear the opinion expressed that widows should be disposed of as in Malabar. Our genial friend Mr. Sam Weller, senior, entertained, on the subject, views which did not much differ from those of the sages of Malabar.

In the case of widowers I should feel inclined to answer the question in the negative. If you have been happy in your first marriage, do not risk comparisons which might be odious. If you have been unhappy, do not ask for a second dose. In both cases, therefore, I come to the conclusion that the answer should be, Don't!

People who remarry, men or women, have invariably the same excuse. They apologize by saying that they take the important step for their children's sake. If they were to follow their own inclination, they would spend the rest of their natural lives weeping over the graves of the beloved defunct, but they must not be selfish and think of themselves alone, they must remember that they have children who depend on them for their welfare, and they are ready to do their duty and sacrifice their own inclinations and feelings. The devotion of which the human heart is capable, man's especially, will save the race from oblivion when it is gone from the earth.

A widower who remarries invariably reminds his friends that children should be brought up under the sweet and beneficial care of a woman, and he tells them that he remarries to give a mother to his dear little ones—nine times out of ten an indifferent one, and not unfrequently a bad one. If he has no children, he says he is so lonely that he must have a

companion, also a housekeeper, and he gives you to understand that all this is 'en tout bien, tout honneur.' And he says it to his friends, and he repeats it to himself so often that he finishes by believing it is so.

The widow with children will tell you that she cannot support her children and that she wants a protector for them and for herself. And she often speaks the truth. At any rate, if you listen to them all, not one will ever tell you frankly that he remarries because he has fallen in love with a woman, and she because she has met a man who appeals to her fancy. When people apologize for what they do, I always suspect them of having done something of which they are not particularly proud, if not absolutely ashamed.

No man has ever been in the next world and returned to earth to tell his fellow-creatures what he saw there except Lazarus; but his contemporaries neglected to interview him, and we are as much in the dark on the subject as if he had never left his grave. However, there is a rumour, in Catholic countries at all events, that St. Peter admits all married men, without any other qualification than the fact that they were married and, therefore, had their purgatory on earth, but that he invariably and rigorously turns out any man who has been married more than once. It is said that, when they protest, suggesting that if he lets in men who have been married once and have thus had their purifying martyrdom on earth, surely he ought to let them in who have been married more than once, he slams the door in their faces, saying: 'Do you take this place for a lunatic asylum?'

I know a Scotchman who, the other day, married his fourth wife. He is only sixty-seven years old, and no widow or old maid should give up hope in the little village of five hundred inhabitants where he lives. He is proud to say that he has never taken a wife out of that village. All his wives have made him happy, and he has made them all happy, as you can ascertain from the epitaphs he has written himself on the tombstone that stands over the grave where they are all at rest in chronological order. He specially praises them for the love and care they bestowed on the children of those that went before.

I believe, in spite of what is said, that such a thing as a good stepmother can be found. Stepmothers, like mothers-in-law, get more abuse than they deserve.

I know stepmothers who have been devoted mothers to their husband's children. I even know some who had children of their own, and who continued to be excellent mothers to the children by a former wife; but it is expecting too much of a woman to ask her to love other people's children as dearly as she does her own. Two broods will seldom live happily huddled together in the same nest. If it sometimes happens to be so, it is the exception.

The world is crowded with young girls who have preferred a rough life of toil and misery to living with cold, indifferent stepmothers, who made them keenly feel the loss they had sustained when their own mothers died.

When the children are grown up, there is no excuse for a man to remarry. Yet he sometimes marries a young girl, but then it is, on his part, a sacrifice again. He wants to give a companion and a playfellow to his daughters, and, to attain that end, he does not hesitate to commit an infamy. Sometimes he marries an old one, and commits an act of profanity, of *lèse amour*. A man, fond of his wife, does not see her grow old; but no woman above fifty can inspire in a man of any age any other sentiments than those of friendship and respect. He may be the friend of such a woman, but he should not be her husband.

We might philosophize at great length on such topics.

I loathe giving advice, yet I cannot refrain from saying as much as this: If either a widower or a widow fall in love again, let them remarry by all means; but if the real inducement is the love of their children, let them, for the sake of Heaven, for the very sake of their children, engage the services of a good, motherly housekeeper. This has invariably proved to answer very well.

CHAPTER XLI

THE LAWS AND CEREMONY OF MARRIAGE

Laws that will be altered during the twentieth century — People will have to pass examinations before they are allowed to marry — The Church should give young couples a happy start, and change the ceremony of marriage.

It is my sincere belief, as it is my fond hope, for the sake of humanity, that the laws of marriage will be altered before this century is fifty years old. Just as the Legislatures of all

the civilized nations will change the laws relating to inheritance and the tenure of the land and the treasure therein, so that the earth may be enabled to feed her children and keep her workers in comfort, and that none may enjoy the privileges of wealth who does not return some equivalent for it to the community, just so will these Legislatures alter the present laws of marriage, which now bind people unfit to live together and allow the production of species which ought to get extinct. I believe that by-and-by people will not be allowed to get married just as they please, and simply because they please. Insane, sickly persons will not be permitted to marry and bring insane and sickly children into the world. There will be some careful pruning done for the good of the human race, which, as it is, threatens to overcrowd the earth.

Before the law allows couples to marry, I believe—upon my word, I do!—that it will require them to pass an examination and to prove that they are fit persons for the undertaking, that their bodies and their minds are sound and healthy, that they have means of living and the prospect of keeping the families that may be born to them. Their antecedents will be thoroughly investigated. It will be ascertained that there is no insanity, no hereditary disease in the family of either of them.

Old men of seventy will not be allowed to marry young girls of eighteen or twenty. Old ladies of temporarily unsound minds will not be permitted to be taken to the altar by calculating young men eager to live without working, whatever indemnity the said young men may receive for their adoption by the said old ladies. Marriage will be held sacred, and no one will be allowed to trifle with the institution.

Then it will no longer be the custom to commit adultery or acts of cruelty in order to obtain a divorce. No couples will be compelled to remain fastened together, living a life of misery. If they find it impossible to live happily and comfortably together, their mutual consent to a divorce will be sufficient to secure their freedom.

By the adoption of such laws, with the daily improvement of all sanitary arrangements and the progress of science, disease and misery will disappear, the human race will become more healthy, happy, and beautiful, and more than ever men and women will fall in love with each other.

Then I hope that the Church will institute a new ceremony of marriage that will give young couples a cheerful start, and do away with the present one, which is dismal and brutal enough to disgust people out of matrimony.

Fancy bringing a sweet, innocent girl, maybe still in her teens, to hear a dull, awful, solemn clergyman say to her, in front of her, close to her: 'Dearly beloved brethren, we are gathered together here, in the face of this congregation, to join together this man and this woman in holy matrimony, which is an honourable estate ... not by any to be enterprised, nor taken in hand unadvisedly, lightly, or wantonly, to satisfy men's carnal lusts and appetites, like brute beasts that have no understanding.' And then he goes on to tell you things sufficient to make your hair stand on end. He tells you that matrimony was ordained for a remedy against sin. Yes, you bring your darling young bride to hear herself called a remedy against sin, almost a penance for your sins. There, behind you, stand half a dozen young bridesmaids, blushing, wondering what those brute beasts, that have no understanding, have to do with you, and you feel ready to fall on your knees and implore the forgiveness of the beloved young bride at your side for having brought her there to hear such things. When, finally, that minister says to her, 'Wilt thou have this man to be thy wedded husband? Wilt thou obey him and serve him, love, honour him?' I wonder she does not exclaim indignantly: 'Not I, indeed, thanks—not for the world!'

I do hope the Church will invent a ceremony that will make a wedding, instead of a fearful ordeal, a thing of beauty never to be forgotten by those who go through it; the Church made a bower of flowers, sweet music, a short address consisting of the most beautiful and pathetic verses from the Proverbs and the Song of Solomon, and a shower of flowers thrown on the path of the bride, when the ceremony is over.

If I had my own way, I would read to them two or three chapters from the second part of that inimitable book which has filled so many French married lives with poetry, 'Monsieur, Madame et Bébé'—only in French; that book cannot possibly be translated into English.

CHAPTER XLII

ON NURSES

Nurses look the happiest women in the world — Their lives and their privileges — True story of a nurse.

If I were a woman of robust health, rich or poor, and I had no fascination for men, and matrimony had no fascination for me, I would become a nurse. The great, the only problem to solve in life, after all, is happiness, and the only possible way to be happy is to feel that you are wanted and you cause happiness in others; in a word, that somebody is glad and grateful that you are alive. I know I should find a great deal of happiness in nursing. I have had to deal with nurses in France during nine months in a military hospital after the Commune, when a compatriot of mine, an insurgent, of whom I never had the pleasure of making the personal acquaintance, shot me in the arm, and also in Great Britain, during a severe illness which I contracted in the North of Scotland, far away from home.

Nurses look all cheerful and happy, and the beauty of their faces, in England, is enhanced, I must say, by a pleasing, very becoming semi-nunlike attire, that gives them a peculiar charm which you find in no other women. There is engraven on their faces that joy of living which Heaven seems to stamp upon the faces of women who devote themselves to the well-being and happiness of their fellow-creatures and to the assuaging of their pains and sufferings. Yes, nurses all look beautiful, and if I were a woman, theirs is the kind of beauty which I should like to possess.

I remember seeing one by the death-bed of a little girl whom she had tenderly nursed, standing at the bedside, motionless, beautiful in her impassive grace, and looking like one of those angels that painters delight in representing at the bedside of children whose souls they have come to bear to the abode of the seraphim.

Another thing that would induce me to embrace that profession—or vocation I ought rather to call it—is the absolute freedom that nurses enjoy. Their very dress inspires respect in all alike, high and low. They can go wherever they like with their uniform on—into a first tier box at the opera or into the lowest slums of the city. Everybody will stand back to let them pass; all will throw at them a glance of sympathy and admiration. The upper tens treat the nurse like the lady that she is, the submerged ones like the angel that brings them a ray of sunshine. The nurse may be ever so beautiful, the worst roué in the street will not only never think of following her, much less annoying her by his loathsome assiduities, but he will allow her to pass unnoticed in perfect freedom and security, and will not unlikely leave the pavement to make room for her. I believe that the pickpocket in an omnibus would hesitate to help himself to her purse, even if that light companion of hers made itself conspicuous to him by its proximity and easiness of access. If he should yield to the temptation and be caught, he would run the risk of being lynched.

I have heard it said that many women become nurses, hospital nurses especially, with a keen eye on matrimony. It is a fact that a good many nurses marry doctors they have come in contact with, hospital students they have worked with, and even sometimes patients they have nursed during a protracted and painful illness. The wounded officer and his nurse have been the hero and the heroine of many plays and novels; but very few women undertake to lead a life of seclusion and slavery, of abnegation and devotion, a life which entails work day and night, and even danger of contracting infectious disease, with a view to matrimony.

On the other hand, I dare say that a fair number of women have become nurses after the sad ending of some love-affair, in order to divert their thoughts from the death of a beloved sweetheart or the unfaithfulness of a light-hearted lover.

At all events, if the mother-in-law, the stepmother, the widow, the old maid, the strong-minded woman, the ruling wife, the woman's-righter, the woman *this* and the woman *that*, have supplied themes for the entertainment and the gaiety of nations, the humourist has invariably left the nurse alone.

I was just now mentioning the fact that many women became nurses in order to bestow on their suffering fellow-creatures the love which the death of a dear lover prevented them from bestowing on a man.

As an illustration, I will give a little story that I extract from my early reminiscences.

We were fast getting the better of the Communards in 1871, and my men were warming to the work in grand style, when a piece of burst shell hit me, and some of the fellows carried me off to the hospital. I remember being puzzled that there should be relatively no pain in a wound of that sort; but the pain came soon enough when the fever set in. The doctor of the Versailles Hospital was a rough specimen, as army doctors often are—in France, at any rate

—and you may fancy that the groans and moans of the other wounded were not soothing either. One day the doctor told me I should soon be able to be removed to a country hospital. That was after I had been under his treatment for six weeks.

The sights, sounds, and smell of the place had grown so sickening to me, that I think I could have kissed him when he talked of sending me to St. Malo. He came in one morning, and, in his brusque way, said, as he probed the wound for bits of shattered bone:

'We shall be able to pack you off in a few days. You would like to get transferred to St. Malo, would you not? You come from that part of the country, don't you? The air will suit you.'

He was a brute, but he had awfully good cigars, and used to make me smoke one when he was going to have an extra 'go' at my wound. I suppose he hoped the goodness might prove infectious. I used to call him strings of bad names while he was digging away at his work on my arm. Somehow it relieved me, and, truth to tell, he took it all in good part.

In a few days, then, I saw the last of him and he of me, and glad enough was I to find myself in the clean, quiet, nun-tended hospital in the dear old Breton town. There I had a room to myself, as each officer had, and to lie there in that sweet sunny room and hear no groans but my own was almost like being in heaven. The daily cleanings of the wound, still pretty painful, were recommenced under the hands of another surgeon, who proved to be a very good fellow. He and I struck up quite a friendship after a while.

Well, life was, if not exactly rosy, at any rate once more worth living. The brightness and calm were very sweet after the horrors of the Versailles hospital, and a serenity filled the air, like an echo of organ tones brought in by the nuns from chapel.

The nun who attended to me was an angel. I was there in St. Malo three months. Before one month had passed I had grown to love her as I should have loved my sister if she had lived. I loved the sound of her voice and the touch of her deft, gentle hands. I would have gone through the surgeon's probings without a groan if she might have re-bandaged the arm afterwards. But Dr. Nadaud always did that himself. Sister Gabrielle—that was what they called her—would come directly he had done with me, and would try the bandages to make sure they were not hurting, arrange the pillows afresh, and smooth out the wrinkles in the counterpane and my brow at the same time, sympathizing with me all the while in the sweetest fashion possible. Her voice was a great part of her charm, very low, and yet the clearest voice in the world. She had a way of looking at one all the time, too, with a gaze that was almost like a mother's caress, and that wrapped one around with a delicious feeling of security and well-being. Sometimes she would sit and talk with me about the battles, and lead me into chats about my mother, who was ill herself at this time and not able to come to see me.

How old was Sister Gabrielle? Oh, I suppose she must have been about twenty-four or five then, perhaps a little more. She had the Norman blue eyes and a fair complexion, which the white wrappings about her face seemed to heighten and irradiate. Is it the white lawn, or is it a beauty that the self-denying life lends to them which makes the faces of so many of those women look so lovely? I called Sister Gabrielle an angel just now, but you must not fancy there was any cold saintliness about her; in fact, it was her very ready sympathy with all my accounts of my young life in the outer world that drew out my heart towards her. It was her very womanliness that soon set me wondering who she could have been, and what had led her to shut herself away from the world. There was little to do, lying there in bed week after week, and hundreds of times, as I looked at that sweet woman moving about the room, I pictured her without the coif, and said to myself that if she were not then a beloved wife, with a husband's protecting arm around her, and children climbing about her knees, it was not because the love that should have led to this had been wanting, but certainly because some marring chance had prevented the realization of such happiness. It amused me to make a pretty history to myself, with Sister Gabrielle for the heroine. A woman with a voice like hers and such a smile was bound to have loved deeply and to have inspired deep love. Sometimes, when she was not speaking, her eyes had a sad, far-away look. I can only compare it to the look that an emigrant who was toiling along a hot, dusty highroad to embark for a new country might turn and give to the dear spot that he had said a long good-bye to. But that look never lasted more than a minute in Sister Gabrielle's face. It was as if the traveller settled his burden afresh on his shoulders, and, with fresh, vigorous resolution, stepped on into the long expanse of road that went stretching away to the horizon.

One day—I could not help it—I broke into one of those little reveries of hers.

'My sister,' I said, 'sweet and beautiful as you are, how is it that you never married?'

With lifted finger, as one speaks to a too daring child, she said only 'Ssshh!' Then, with the movement of the emigrant readjusting his knapsack, she added, 'Allons! half-past ten! Dr. Nadaud will be here before we are ready for him!'

From that day Sister Gabrielle avoided sitting by my bedside. She watched over me just as

tenderly as before, but our talks were shorter, and I never ventured to repeat my question, as you may imagine. Nevertheless, lying there through the long days, it was impossible not to go on wondering what had sent this beautiful woman into the rough groove where I found her.

One day I discovered that Dr. Nadaud came from the same town as herself, and I fell at once to questioning him about her. All that I could elicit from him was that her name in the world had been Jeanne D'Alcourt, and that she came of a good old Norman titled family. I did not learn much by that. It was not necessary to hear that she was noble, for she had the stamp of nobility in every line and in every pose of her body. For a talkative fellow, I thought Nadaud had remarkably little to say about his former townswoman, and, after gently sounding him once or twice on the subject, I came to the conclusion that it was useless to look to him for enlightenment, but I also came to the conclusion that Sister Gabrielle had a history.

August came. I had been three months in St. Malo Hospital, and now the time for leaving it had arrived.

It was early morning. A fiacre stood at the gate with my luggage upon it, and Sister Gabrielle had come to the doorway which led into the courtyard to see me off.

Early as it was, the sun was already well on his day's journey, and perhaps it was the strong glare from the white wall that made her shade her eyes so persistently with her left hand while we were saying 'Good-bye.' As for my own eyes, there was something the matter with them, too, for the landscape, or so much of it as I could see from the St. Malo Hospital doorway, had taken on a strange, blurred look since I saw it from the window ten minutes before.

'Adieu, mon lieutenant, adieu!' cried Sister Gabrielle, in a voice meant to be very cheery.

'Adieu, ma sœur! May I come to see you and the old place if ever I find myself in these latitudes again?'

'Yes, yes, that is it; come back and see who is in your little bed under the window. Take care of the arm!' touching the sling that held it. 'Dr. Nadaud will expect a letter from you in copper-plate style before another month is over. Allons! We will say au revoir, then, not adieu. Bon voyage, mon lieutenant, bon voyage!'

Another hand-grasp, and I made my way to the cab, feeling a strange, intoxicated sensation at being once more on my legs in the open air after such a long stretch between the blankets. Away we rattled down the steep stone-paved street, past the queer old high houses that, as the window-shutters were swung back, seemed to open their eyes and wake up with a spirited relish for another day's bustle and work. Very different to the lazy drawing up of a roller-blind in England is the swinging open of a pair of French *persiennes*. Whiffs of new bread and freshly-ground coffee floated out from the open doorways of the bakers and the earliest risers of St. Malo, and presently the pungent, invigorating odour of the sea made itself smelt in spite of the mixed odours of the street. It was new life to be out in the open again, and I was going to see my mother; but I could not forget Sister Gabrielle.

Several years passed before I saw again the old steep streets of St. Malo. These years brought great changes to me. My right arm being no longer capable of using the sword, I retired from the army, took to journalism, and eventually accepted an engagement in London. In the English capital I made my home, marrying and settling down to a quasi-English life, which possessed great interest for me from the first.

One summer (six years after the war) I began to make a yearly journey to a town on the borders of Brittany, and always landed at St. Malo to take train for my destination. Trains ran there only twice a day, and so there was generally time enough to climb the dirty, picturesque street to the hospital and see sweet Sister Gabrielle, whose face would light up at sight of her old patient, and whose voice had still the same sympathetic charm. When the now English-looking traveller presented himself, it was always the Mother-Superior who came to him in the bare, cool room reserved for visitors. And then Sister Gabrielle would arrive, with a sweet, grave smile playing about her beautiful mouth, and there would be long talks about all that I had been doing, of the pleasant, free life in England, etc., etc.

One hot August morning, just seven years after I had left the hospital with my arm in a sling, I pulled at the big clanging bell and asked to see Sister Gabrielle. I was ushered into the shady waiting-room, and stood drinking in the perfume of the roses that clambered about

the open window. Presently the Mother's steps approached, but when she saw me she had no longer in her voice the cheery notes with which she used to greet me, nor did she offer to send Sister Gabrielle to me.

In a few sad words she told me my sweet nurse was dead, that she had died as she had lived, beloved by all who were privileged to be near her. There was no positive disease, the doctor had said, but some shock or grief of years before must have undermined her health, and the life of self-sacrifice she led had not been calculated to lengthen the frail strand of her life. Gently and without struggle it had snapped, and she had drooped and died with the early violets.

Touched and saddened, I turned down the steep street to the lower town. More than ever I wondered what had been the history of the brave, beautiful woman who had nursed me seven years before.

Turning the corner of the Place Châteaubriand, I ran against a man.

'Pardon, monsieur!'

'Pardon, monsieur!'

The exclamations were simultaneous. Looking up, we two men recognised each other.

'Ah, my dear doctor!' I exclaimed.

'*Sapristi*, my dear lieutenant! What are you doing in St. Malo?'

Having properly accounted for my presence in the old Breton town, and made known to Dr. Nadaud how glad I was to see him again, we two went off together to lunch at the Hôtel de Bretagne, where I had left my luggage.

Having refreshed ourselves with a light French déjeuner, the doctor and his former patient strolled out of the long dining-room into the central courtyard of the hotel, which the sun had not yet made too warm, and there, installing ourselves at a little round table, we smoked and sipped our coffee.

'I will tell you all I know,' said the doctor, in reply to a question from me. 'It seemed almost a breach of confidence to tell you Sister Gabrielle's story while she lived, for I knew that she had come away out of the world on purpose to work unknown and to bury all that remained of Jeanne D'Alcourt. When she first came, she seemed not at all pleased to see me, no doubt because my presence reminded her of Caen and of the scenes that she had turned her back upon for ever.

'Well,' continued Dr. Nadaud, 'the D'Alcourts had lived for generations in a fine old house on the Boulevard de l'Est, and it was there that Jeanne was born. Next door lived my sister and her husband, M. Leconte, the chief notary of the town, and a man well considered by all classes of his townsmen. It is the old story of affections knotted together in the skipping-rope, and proving to be as unending as the circle of the hoop. My sister had a girl and a boy. The three children played together, walked out with their nurses together, and were hardly ever separated until the time came for Raoul to go to Paris to school. The boy was fourteen when they parted, Jeanne was only eleven, but the two children's love had so grown with their growth, that, before the day of parting came, they had made a solemn little compact never to forget each other.

'Eight years passed, during which Jeanne and Raoul saw little of each other.

'The first time the boy came home, he seemed to Jeanne no longer a boy, and the shyness which sprang up between them then deepened with each succeeding year.

'The boy was allowed to choose his profession, and he chose that of surgery. News reached Jeanne from time to time through his sister of the promising young student, who, it was said, bid fair to win for himself a great name some day.

'At the age of twenty-five Raoul left Paris. His parents, who were growing old, wished their son near them, and steps were taken to establish him in a practice in Caen.

'Time passed on, and Raoul had been six months in partnership with old Dr. Grévin, whom he was eventually to succeed, when Mme. D'Alcourt fell ill of inflammation of the lungs, and so it happened that the two young people often met beside the sick-bed, for the elder partner was not always able to attend the patient, and his young *aide* was called upon to take his place.

'By the time that Mme. D'Alcourt was well again, both the young people knew that the old love of their childhood had smouldered in their hearts through all the years of separation, and was ready to burst into flame at a touch. But no word was spoken.

'It was Raoul's fond hope to be one day in a position to ask for Jeanne as his wife, but he

knew that by speaking before he was in that position, he would only destroy all chance of being listened to by her parents.

'The touch that should stir the flame soon came.

'One day in the summer following, a hasty summons from Mme. D'Alcourt took Dr. Grévin to Jeanne's bedside, and a few moments' examination showed him that the poor girl had taken diphtheria. After giving directions as to the treatment to be followed, he said he would return late in the evening or would send M. Leconte.

'It was Raoul who came.

'With horror he saw that the case was already grave, and a great pang went through him as he spoke to Mme. D'Alcourt of the possibility of its being necessary to perform tracheotomy in the morning. When morning came—in fact, all next day—Jeanne was a little better, and the young man hoped with a deep, longing, passionate hope.

'The day after, however, it was evident that nothing could save the girl but the operation, and it was quickly decided to try this last chance.

'The rest is soon told. In that supreme moment, as Raoul made ready for the work, the two young people told all their hearts' secret to each other in one long greeting of the eyes, that was at once a "Hail" and a "Farewell."

'The operation was successful.

'All went well with Jeanne, and in two days she was declared practically out of danger.

'But Raoul, unmindful of everything except Jeanne's danger, had not been careful for himself, and had received some of the subtle poison from her throat.'

In the cemetery of Caen, high up where the sun first strikes, can be seen a gravestone with the inscription:

Ci-gît
RAOUL LECONTE,
Décédé le 18 Juillet., 1869

And this is why Sister Gabrielle never married.

CHAPTER XLIII

PORTRAIT OF A FRENCH MOTHER

Madame Proquet lived in a little town in Brittany, which she had never quitted in her life. She had been born there, she had married there, and there it was that she had brought up her only son, Henri. When friends said to her, 'Why not travel a little? You should at least go and see Paris!' she would reply: 'Thank you, I am happy enough at home.' She cared little for the outer world. Early left a widow, she had resolved to live for her son. She had made herself his dearest friend without effeminating him, his constant guide without monopolizing him, and his preceptor without ceasing to be his comrade.

Before sending the boy to any school, she set to work herself and learned enough Latin and Greek to enable her to hear his lessons; and by the time he reached the upper forms, Madame Proquet would have been able to cut a very fair figure beside him.

Thanks to the care and order with which she managed her small fortune, she was well off—rich even—with her 5,000 or 6,000 francs a year, for at the end of each year the budget showed an excess of receipts over expenditure. Her house, her books and her garden occupied all the time which was not devoted to Henri. She was fond of receiving visits, but rarely paid calls herself; and in the winter evenings she loved to sit with a book by the fireside in the room, half kitchen, half dining-room, which, with its great open fireplace, is very often the most attractive-looking apartment in a small Breton house. Sometimes it was her needlework that she would bring out and busy her fingers upon, while the faithful Fanchette, who had held Henri on her knee, and who still 'thee'd' and 'thou'd' him, took her knitting, and to the steady click of the needles would go over again the merry tricks that he was wont to play when he was a little boy.

By-and-by Henri finished his studies and took his B.A. with honours. Then it became necessary to choose a profession. For some time past he had been longing to say to his mother: 'Mother, let me go to Paris and study painting. Something tells me that I should be successful.' But he knew that Madame Proquet had long been putting by 1,000 francs a year to send him to Paris to study law or medicine, whichever he should choose. She had made up her mind to make a lawyer or a doctor of him. Is it not the ambition of every French provincial mother? Henri allowed himself to be persuaded, although he felt not the least inclination for the one profession or the other. However, when it came to the point he chose the law.

What he did in Paris during six years we may see from the fact that, in the month of May, 1877, he pleaded at the assizes in a case which resulted in two years' imprisonment for his client; and that he exhibited at the Salon a portrait which earned for the artist the praise of all critical Paris. A very talented painter had arisen. Madame Proquet learned the news without making a very wry face, swallowed the pill without grimacing, and, Fanchette having declared that she had always predicted that Henri's genius would soon manifest itself, she wisely decided under the circumstances to be proud of her boy.

'But who is going to keep the dear fellow while he is painting in Paris? I cannot, that is certain,' said the good mother to herself.

'But, madam,' said Fanchette, 'do you not know that there are rich folks who pay one hundred and even as much as two hundred francs to have their portrait painted, and that Paris is full of people like that?'

Madame Proquet remained incredulous and full of anxiety. She certainly was not going to discourage her son, but she could not find it in her to encourage him. She would let events follow their course, while she remained calm at her post of observation. She had every confidence in her son after all. Was he not an advocate, and could he not always return to his profession if painting should fail him?

The following year Henri exhibited another portrait, which excited not merely the admiration but the enthusiasm of the critics. People talked of a future Bonnat, and the name of Henri Proquet was on everyone's tongue. The young painter was striding into fame.

Orders began to flow in. This news reassured Madame Proquet, and made her mother's heart swell with pride.

'Did I not tell you so?' repeated Fanchette.

But something that dropped like a bomb into the quiet household in the little Breton town was the news that a rich financier of the Faubourg Saint-Honoré had just paid 10,000 francs for his portrait, which Henri had taken hardly a month to paint.

'But the dear fellow will be making a fortune and losing his head,' exclaimed Madame Proquet.

Fanchette herself was dumfounded. It seemed to them that their boy was going to slip from them—that fame and fortune must needs raise an inseparable barrier between the luxurious studio which Henri talked of, and was embellishing day by day, and the humble maternal home which never changed at all. They were both believers in the quiet and unobtruding happiness that hides itself and goes unenvied, and they could neither of them understand how happiness was possible in that feverish Paris, where artists and men of letters are drawn body and soul into the whirl of a great vortex; and the good souls bewailed themselves, foreseeing terrible things and getting into their heads a thousand ideas, which all had but one conclusion—'Our Henri is lost to us!'

How mistaken they were!

The years followed one another, and Henri came regularly twice a year to the dear little house where the ivy and jasmine, the clematis and the honeysuckle protected our successful man against intruders: the jealous, the gossips, the bores and all the jostling crowd that hovers around celebrities, and often makes them its prey.

Better than that, he soon did something that should still strengthen his position in the good books of Madame Proquet and Fanchette. He married a girl as good as she was beautiful, an artist's ideal, whom he had the greatest difficulty to get Fanchette to *tutoyer*.

'But, my dear, I cannot say "thee" and "thou" to that beautiful lady,' pleaded poor Fanchette.

'Nonsense, Fanchette! and why not? She is your daughter as much as I am your boy.'

And the good Fanchette, with her eyes full of tears of joy, kissed everybody and exclaimed:

'He has not changed a bit, you see. I told you so; I knew it.'

Then the young couple came twice a year to Brittany to live and love with more freedom.

Soon, instead of two, it was a trio that came, and Fanchette declared that the loveliest baby in the world was the one that she called hers.

'And,' she added, 'no one can accuse me of partiality, for everyone knows how I laugh at the people who think their babies the finest in the world.'

And the others would reply in chorus:

'Certainly not, Fanchette.'

Madame Proquet was overwhelmed with joy, the proudest and happiest of mothers.

She went so far as to say to her neighbours, as well as to herself: 'Did I not do well after all to encourage Henri to be an artist!' I say advisedly 'as well as to herself,' for by dint of innocently and honestly deceiving others, one ends by innocently and honestly deceiving one's self.

Madame Proquet had no more fear for her son's future. His fame was well established, and he remained to her the same devoted son, perfectly unaffected, his head turned neither by celebrity nor riches.

The good lady unhappily reckoned without that very absorbing mistress called Art, who was to supplant her a little, if not in Henri's affection, yet in his rule of conduct. The name of Henri Proquet was not celebrated in Paris alone, but in all the capitals of the civilized world. He one day wrote to his mother that he had just received from England a most flattering invitation to go and paint the portrait of the Queen and the principal members of the Royal Family, and that he had resolved to settle in London with his family for several years; for no doubt, after the Royal Family, his brush would be in demand by lords and ladies, and he would return from the land of fogs laden with guineas and glory.

'And,' he added, 'I embrace the opportunity with all the more alacrity, having just lost 100,000 francs in a gold mine in the United States, a loss which makes an ugly hole in my savings. Thank Heaven I am young, full of life and energy, and in less than two years I shall have forgotten the thing altogether and replaced the money.'

Madame Proquet was aghast at the news.

'So, then,' she ejaculated, 'Henri speculates! He has lost everything, and that in a gold mine, a hole in the earth, which, instead of yielding money, swallows up what fools fling into it. After that, how is it possible to feel any security about him? With all his talent, his genius, he will end in the poor-house. He talks of expatriating himself now. He is out of his mind.'

She believed in none but sure investments, and saw no difference between speculation and gambling. Land, house-property and Government securities, no other stock had any value in her eyes. She would not for the world have had anything to do with shares in even the great railways of her own country. However, in the end she calmed herself.

'He will be prudent in the future,' she said to herself, 'and the lesson will be a wholesome one. After all, England is not far from Brittany. I shall see the dear children almost as often as before.'

And seeing Fanchette looking at her, she smiled, but the smile did not deceive the good woman, who saw clearly that something was being hidden from her, and that that something concerned Henri. Her eyes filled.

'It is nothing, my dear Fanchette!' said Madame Proquet, making her faithful servant sit down by her side while she read to her Henri's letter, and discussed with her its contents.

The painter remained three years in England, and returned to Paris after having made the conquest of the English public and the Royal Academy, just as he had made the conquest of the French public and the Salon.

Mayfair and Belgravia had been painted by Henri Proquet; Fifth Avenue, New York, now claimed him, and offered him fabulous prices. He set out for America, and passed two years there. Madame Proquet and Fanchette both begged him earnestly, in all their letters, to give up these voyages, and to return to Paris and settle there definitely. 'Have a little patience, mother dear,' he wrote; 'I shall soon have 1,000,000 francs put by, and then I shall think of nothing but your wishes.' A few months later he wrote: 'I shall soon have finished my work in America, and we shall set out from New York to make our longest and last voyage. We shall cross America to the Californian side: from there we shall visit Japan, the Pacific Islands, New Zealand, and Australia. On the way home we shall stop at the Cape of Good Hope to sketch a few Zulus, who are said to be such fine people. We count on being back in Paris by the end of the year, and we will be with you on New Year's Day. What souvenirs of our travels you will have to listen to! What endless chats we will have, won't we?'

'Decidedly he is mad,' said Madame Proquet to herself. 'As if our French women were not far

prettier than all those horrid black African creatures, or those hideous little dods of Japan!' Even Fanchette began to ask herself seriously whether, after all, her boy was the same, and not a changed person. Henri had no longer any one to take his part under his mother's roof.

Madame Proquet fell ill meanwhile. The heart had been attacked for some time past; a herpetic affection threatened to complicate the state of affairs.

No sooner arrived in Paris than Henri and his wife sped into Brittany. They found their mother very changed. The doctor did not attempt to conceal from them the danger of the disease, which, at Madame Proquet's age, must needs be incurable.

This illness, which was likely to be a long and painful one, necessitated the most constant and delicate attentions, continual doctor's visits, and expensive medicines. Fanchette and the *femme de chambre*, two brave devoted women such as provincial France alone still possesses, but such as the future scarcely holds in store for us, lavished their care upon their dear mistress. They were taxed to the utmost of their strength, Fanchette especially, who had just passed her sixtieth year. To ease them, Madame Proquet engaged two nursing sisters from the convent, who came alternately to watch by her at night.

Henri, fearing that his mother's income might not be equal to the strain put upon it by these extra expenses, begged her to accept from him a little annuity of 2,000 francs. 'Every New Year's Day, dear mother,' he said to her, 'I shall send you that for my New Year's gift; you must be good and accept it. For too long a time you were my banker; now I am going to be yours.' Madame Proquet had such strong ideas of independence that he expected a refusal. Great was his joy to find his mother accept with alacrity. The disease followed its course for more than four years. Each New Year's Day Henri sent the sum he had promised. A few days before her death, in the month of December, 1890, Madame Proquet even wrote to Henri to remind him that New Year's Day was approaching, and that she would be looking out for her 2,000 francs by the next post. This made her son smile. 'Poor mother! She is perhaps hard up. What a good thing I induced her to accept help! Without it she would not have had enough for her nursing expenses. Thanks to me, we shall be able to keep her alive for years. And there are fools who say that money will not buy happiness!' Then, on the spot, he wrote out a cheque for the sum he sent every year. At the very moment that he was about to ring for a servant a telegram was handed to him.

The telegram announced the sudden death of Madame Proquet.

Henri's good mother had passed away peacefully and without pain; she had fallen asleep thinking of her children and had never wakened again.

Henri and his family took the first train to Brittany. Fanchette was at the door watching for the arrival of the carriage that should convey them from the station. In dumb grief the good creature led Henri and his wife and children to their dear dead one. They knelt and silently all kissed one another with tender effusion beside the mortal remains of that beloved and devoted mother, to whom they thus said a supreme adieu while showing her the depth of their mutual love.

Deprived of the mournful privilege of closing the eyes of his mother, Henri had at least the consolation of being present to piously render her the last sad duty. The day after the funeral, he opened the drawers which contained Madame Proquet's family documents and the property which now belonged to him. In a corner of one of the drawers he found a little packet, carefully tied, sealed, and addressed:

> 'To my son, only to be opened after my death.'

This packet contained eight rolls of 1,000 francs, each placed in a red morocco sheath. By the side of this money lay a letter without any date, but evidently written quite recently. It ran as follows:

> 'My beloved Henri,
>
> 'The life that you lead makes me very anxious. You speak of returning once more to America, to Australia, even going round the world again. Really, I ask myself sometimes whether you are in your right senses, and whether those English people have not completely demoralized you. You buy shares, you run after large dividends, instead of placing your money in State securities at three per cent. It is pure madness, my dear son. I hate speculations! If an individual attempted to come and offer me ten per cent. for my money I would order my faithful Fanchette to show him the door. There will come a time, perhaps, when the law, grown wiser, will condemn to six months' imprisonment, not only every man who takes more than five per cent., but also him who offers it. You have a million, you tell me. Well, then, my son, keep it carefully, and do not try to get others with it. You may possess a million, but if you get more the millions will possess you. There is no real happiness except in security and in obscurity. The

kind that has to be sought far afield is ephemeral. Long voyages may make life interesting, but happy, no. Happiness is only to be found at home with our dear ones. Life is so short that each time you leave your good home to seek adventures you are robbing yourself. That is Fanchette's opinion, too, mind you. Of course, all this does not prevent us from loving you and following you with our thoughts wherever you are, nor from praying the great God to bring you safely to port, but at the same time to rid your head of these ideas of adventure which torment me so. In a corner of the drawer where you will find this letter you will find also, carefully rolled and wrapped, and all in good gold coin (you may say what you please, but I do not like paper), the 8,000 francs that you have sent me on New Year's Day for the past four years. You will find them intact. God be praised! I have not needed to use them. I have taken care of them for you, and—who knows?—you may be very glad one day to have them. My regret is that you did not offer years back to send me twenty thousand instead of two. I should have accepted every franc of it, and it would have been as much money saved from that miserable American gold mine or some other speculations, which, believe me, are bound to be just as mad.

'Thank you, my darling son, for the kind impulse that prompted you to send the money. In the future buy three per cents., give up your travels, and stay at home with your dear ones who adore you. My dear, generous son, when you read these lines I shall be no more of this world. Do not forget your old mother, who has lived only for you, who has been proud of her son, and now thanks him for all the happiness that his love and devotion have brought her.'

Fanchette is installed in the fine house that Henri occupies in the Champs Elysées. He pretends to follow her advice in everything.

CHAPTER XLIV

FAILINGS AND FOIBLES OF GOOD WOMEN

Women of strong character — Obstinacy and prejudice — Tastes and temperaments — The diplomatic woman — The strong-minded woman — The superiority of woman — Monopolizers — Little women — The woman who is wrong — 'I told you so' — Why women were not given beards — Women who marry for money and for titles — The only chance of success in matrimony.

When you say that a man has a strong character, it means that when he has made up his mind to attain an object in view, nothing will divert him from the road that leads to the goal. He will take advice and profit by all the circumstances that may help him to succeed. That man, as a rule, is successful in the world.

When you say that a woman has a strong character, it often means that she is obstinate and prejudiced, and that whatever advice and arguments may be placed at her disposal, she will follow her own mind and have her own way. That woman, as a rule, is a failure in life.

Obstinacy and prejudice, which are the characteristics of even the best women, are not proofs of a strong character, but weaknesses.

Which is better for a man and a woman to possess in matrimony—similarity of tastes or similarity of temperaments?

I would reply at once: The former, by all means. If a husband and a wife have different temperaments—and, of course, love each other (this must always be granted in any discussion on 'How to be happy though married')—their lives may be all the more interesting for it, because they will have to constantly study each other, make concessions, and be diplomatists ever on their guard. People of different temperaments can get along very well, but unless their tastes are similar they cannot enjoy life together.

George Eliot says that a difference of tastes in jokes is a strain on the affections.

Fancy a humourist married to a woman who cannot see a joke!

Fancy a Wagnerian having a wife who prefers the 'Casino Girl' to 'Lohengrin'!

Fancy a poetic, romantic woman, a lover of Nature, taking her husband to see Vesuvius in eruption and hearing him remark that he has seen smoke before at Pittsburg and Newcastle-on-Tyne; or visiting with him the banqueting-hall of Heidelberg Castle and hearing that Philistine remark that it is about the same size as the dining-room of the Auditorium Hotel in Chicago!

Of course, this difference of tastes sometimes helps to smooth out difficulties. If the chicken is small, and one partner likes white meat while the other prefers black, it comes in handy.

All psychologists, ancient and modern, agree on one point on the subject of woman, and that is that vanity is her typical failing. You never need fear referring to her beauty. She is always open to a bit of flattery. You may go straight to the heart of the best woman by praising her bonnet or her baby.

Give me a tactful woman (she is a delight), but spare me the diplomatic one. 'A diplomatic woman' sounds to my ears very much like 'a woman too clever by half.' I almost prefer the dear little goose who puts her foot in it every time she opens her mouth.

No doubt the diplomatic woman is a very useful mate to the man who occupies a high official position; but in everyday life, in married life especially, the only diplomacy that a woman should concern herself about is the politics of matrimony. Under all other circumstances the diplomatic woman is only an insincere woman with a high-sounding name.

The more I think of it, the more I feel deeply convinced that, in the ordinary pursuits of life, whether a man or a woman be in question, good diplomacy does not consist in cleverly deceiving people, but in finding out who your real friends are, and, when that is ascertained, in sticking to them and for them through thick and thin.

When a husband allows himself to be ruled by his wife, the latter generally profits by it to become assertive and offensively overpowering. Woman was not meant to rule, and when she is permitted to enjoy that privilege, she too often enjoys it *en parvenue*, loudly and indiscreetly. Like Queen Victoria, woman should reign, but not rule.

With the tact and common-sense which are the salient and most characteristic features of French women, I regret that France is not under a constitutional monarchy, and that the French throne is not occupied by a Frenchwoman. The two most successful reigns recorded in English history are the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and Queen Victoria, which makes me wonder how it is that Salic law is not repealed in all those countries where man alone is allowed either to rule or only reign.

The best illustration of the superiority of woman over man in France is to be seen in the Duval restaurants. It is a woman who, in the twinkling of the eye, multiplies the number of dishes you have eaten by their respective prices and hands you the total always right. She is responsible for the amount charged. If she makes a mistake, she has to pay for it. And how I

pity the clerk at the door, always a man, who is satisfied with giving you a bill and seeing that you return it duly paid before you go out! That is all he has to do besides yawning and constantly pushing the door which the customers often leave open or not carefully closed. In business, all the responsible posts are held by women, certainly nine times out of ten. In most shops, fashionable or humble, through the little square hole over which is written 'Pay Here,' you see madame smiling, receiving the money, booking it and keeping it. Monsieur walks about the place and sees to, or, rather, looks at, everything. If that man dies, his wife may regret him, but she can do without him. She has the whole business at her fingers' ends. Instead of being the partner of the firm, she now becomes the sole mistress of the establishment.

The foible of most women, good wives and good mothers, is to be monopolizers, in France especially, where woman is queen in her home, and her empire over her children is complete and unquestioned. France will never succeed in founding a Colonial Empire until boys cease to be brought up and remain under the influence of their mothers. The Roman Empire and the British Empire were made by men who had been brought up and lived under the influence of women, but who never allowed them to rule either as mothers or as wives.

The great qualities of a woman make her admirable, but I am not quite sure that it is not on account of her many little failings and foibles that she is loveable.

A boy is a boy—a *genus* article. When a man, he will very often develop qualities and defects which he never possessed as a child. With the gentler sex things are different. A little girl is a little woman, and, when a woman, she will possess, only more accentuated, all the qualities and defects that she possessed as a child of ten or twelve. I have known very good boys become very bad men, and very bad boys become splendid men. I have known young cowards become very brave soldiers. An affectionate little girl will be an affectionate woman; a little girl passionately fond of her dolls will be a beautiful mother; and a little flirt of ten will become a terrible flirt at twenty, and a terrible coquette at thirty.

The most painful feeling for a woman to have is to know that she is wrong, because she will not acknowledge it. While she is consuming her own smoke, pity her, and never aggravate her by saying, 'I told you so!' There is such a damnable look of self-satisfaction on the face of a man who says to a woman, 'I told you so!' If I were a woman, I could not resist the temptation of slapping the face of a man who *told me so*.

Poor thing! It is quite bad enough for her to be wrong, without having to suffer a sneering reminder.

The man who tries to prove, or, worse still, who succeeds in proving, to a woman that she is wrong has not a particle of gentlemanly feeling in him. He is an idiot, a bore, and a brute.

If your wife is wrong, cast down your eyes modestly, smile, and say nothing. If she does not know she is wrong, she will admire your courtesy; if she does, she will admire your self-control. A woman always admires these two qualities in a man.

And when she is right—mind you, perhaps she may be: the most extraordinary things *will* happen—don't be mean. Be sure you allow her the fullest enjoyment of the victory.

So, whether your wife be right or wrong, always treat her as if she were right. You will thus pay the lady either her due or a compliment, and you are sure to win.

Alexandre Dumas said that women were not given beards because they would never have been able to keep still and silent while being shaved.

Women's tongues have been the eternal theme for men's sarcasms. Yet, for the gift of the gab, for gossip and scandal, give me a few old men together in the smoke-rooms of their clubs. Women are not in it!

I see no difference between women who marry for money and women who sell their favours, except one to the advantage of the latter, who may have been prompted by love, temptation, or poverty to commit actions which the former have the impudence to ask the Law to sanction and the Church to sanctify.

A man who marries for money is still much more despicable, because he has not the excuse of many women, who may not have been able to discover any other way of getting a living.

A woman cannot love or respect a man who allows himself to be purchased for a title of nobility, and a man cannot love or respect a woman who buys him, and thus degrades him in his own eyes. There is no possible element of happiness in such marriages. If there is something in nobility, it should be nobleness of character in those who belong to it. What has become of the old motto *Noblesse oblige*?

The only chance of success in matrimony is that there should not be one single reproach which, in the inevitable moments of friction, may ever be hurled by one at the face of the other.

A marriage is called a match. The parties who contract it should be matched, and should therefore choose and accept partners of their own rank. Handsome people should not marry ugly ones. They should be equal, with perhaps a touch of superiority in age, size, fortune, and intellectual attainments to the man's credit—to atone for all his shortcomings.

Mésalliances always turn out badly.

Little tiffs, sulkings, fits of temper, and even of jealousy—have as many as you like, they will act as shovels of fuel to keep love and interest alive; but reproaches about origin, antecedents, former poverty, early associations, claims to gratitude especially, will only lead to the inevitable and somewhat logical answer, 'If you married me, I imagine it was because you thought I was as good as you.'

There is no remedy known for the harm done by such reproaches and claims to gratitude.

CHAPTER XLV

CUPIDIANA

Stray thoughts on women, love and matrimony.

Few lovers are sure of each other. If you doubt it, listen to what they say, and you will constantly hear them repeat: 'Do you love me?' 'Will you always love me?' or 'How long will you love me?' They will often wake each other in the night to repeat these questions.

Men should cease to be jealous when they discover that they have real ground for being jealous. I do not believe that jealousy comes from true love; but justifiable jealousy should cure one of love.

Love sanctifies everything. Men and women, who really love each other and are faithful, are

virtuous.

If you love a woman from the depths of your heart and soul, no words can be found adequate to convey an idea of it.

You cannot blame a man or a woman for being in love any more than you can blame them for having the toothache. If the love they feel is a misfortune to them, or the cause of unhappiness to others, pity them all.

Friendship is the old age of love. Happy the husband and wife who, when the days of love and passion are gone, find real happiness and blessed rest in friendship.

There should be no other law than love to bind a man and a woman together. The day they cease to love each other should be the day on which the contract determines, and they become friends.

The intelligent, artistic, refined man is a gourmet in love; the foolish and brutal man is a gourmand.

Men in old age often give young ones salutary advice as a consolation for being unable to give them bad example.

However ill you may speak or think of women, you will always find a woman able to do it better than you.

Why are women far less indulgent than men for the faults of women?

If I were a beautiful woman, oh, how I should hate women!

The woman who has never succumbed to temptation, often because temptation has never been in her way, is inexorable for the weaknesses of her sex.

Nine times out of ten the ugly woman will at once accept as reliably true any gossip she hears on the subject of a beautiful woman. She draws herself up and thinks: 'No one could ever say such things of me.' And she is right: no one would who did not wish to be grossly flattering.

Only the woman who has yielded to temptation is charitable, and will help the fallen angel. Like Dido, she says:

'Non ignara mali, miseris succurrere disco.'

It is because I love and revere woman that I pity the fallen one, and cannot say an unkind word of her.

I think that men should go down on their knees before the fallen women, and implore their pardon, in the name of their sex, for the injury—the criminal, irretrievable injury—that has been done to them by the curs and scoundrels who are the cause of their present condition.

A woman is a wretched coward who, having had, in succession, the protection of a father and of a husband, does not pity and help, if she can, the beautiful, unprotected girl who has tried to fight the battle of life by herself, and has been wounded.

Woman is an angel who seldom appreciates a man who has not a bit of the devil in him.

The most religious woman will postpone an interview with her Maker for an appointment with her dressmaker.

Matrimony is like any other contract: an agreement signed by two honourable persons, each of whom, in every clause, takes the other to be a dishonourable one.

A loving woman will keep her heart warm as long as she lives, and her hair black as long as she dyes.

Woman is an instrument given to man for his happiness and his delight. If the instrument gets neglected, out of tune, and broken, man should blame himself alone. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred, the instrument is right enough; it only wants to be in good and careful keeping.

There are only two places in the world where a beautiful woman, fashionably dressed, can walk comfortably without being stared at by the women like a Barnum's freak out for an airing—Paris and New York, and perhaps Bond Street, London, during the season. Everywhere else she has to ride or hide. There is only one spot of the earth where such a woman can go about in all freedom and security without running the risk of being followed and otherwise annoyed by idle men, and that is Fifth Avenue, New York.

In matrimony, to retain happiness and make it last to the end, it is not a question for a woman to remain beautiful, it is a question for her to remain interesting. Not the slightest detail should be beneath her notice in order to keep alive the attention of her husband.

Love feeds on illusions, lives on trifles. If a man loves his wife, a rose on her head, her hair parted the other way, a newly-trimmed bonnet, may revive in him the interest he felt the first time he met her, nay, the emotion he felt the first time he held her in his arms. The very best dishes may become insipid if served with the eternally same sauce.

There comes a time when a woman has to make up her mind to choose between being called a 'dear old soul' or a 'crabby old thing.'

I love and admire the woman of forty who admits that she is ten years older than her daughter, the woman of fifty who is proud to show me her grandchildren, and does not object to being photographed with them, and the woman of sixty who does not expect me to admire her shoulders at a dinner-party.

Painting, music, and women are often admired or criticised by plucky people who are not afraid of exhibiting their ignorance.

Women are born mothers or sweethearts. When they marry, they become mother-wives and take their children into first consideration, or sweetheart-wives, and bestow their best care and attentions on their husbands. But for the former ones, many clubs would have to put up their shutters.

A woman who is constantly blushing must be terribly well informed.

As long as it is man who proposes, matrimony will be promotion for a woman.

The woman taken in adultery was formerly burned or stoned to death; later on she was condemned to three months' imprisonment. Nowadays she goes scot-free, and her husband is turned into ridicule. What more does she want?—the Victoria Cross or the Legion of Honour?

There is no *esprit de corps* among women.

America is the only country where you hear women speak well of their sex. It speaks volumes for them, and it enables American men to be polite and even gallant, and do the same.

Woman is made to love and to be loved. She may live on love and die of it. For a man, love is the occupation of a few moments; for a woman, love is the occupation of a lifetime.

If a man hears men speak ill of women, he should, before joining in the chorus, remember his mother. Then he will be sure to take their defence.

Women should have two great aims in life: trying to be beautiful and succeeding in being pleasant.

Whether I think of woman as a grandmother, a mother, a wife, a sweetheart, or even a little girl who, by-and-by, will bear all these titles in succession, I believe that men ought to spend most of their spare time in strewing with flowers the ground upon which a woman is about to tread.

There are men who complain that roses have thorns. They should be grateful to know that thorns have roses.

The roses of life are the women.

THE END

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