

LOVELY WOMAN



BY

T. W. H. CROSLAND

AUTHOR OF

"THE UNSPEAKABLE SCOT" ETC.



J. Reynval Pessin.



LOVELY WOMAN

Sixty-eighth Thousand.

THE
UNSPEAKABLE SCOT

By T. W. H. CROSLAND

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“THE UNSPEAKABLE SCOT”

&C.

LONDON

STANLEY PAUL & CO.

1 CLIFFORD'S INN

1908

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Lovely Woman

CHAPTER I

THE BLESSING

WOMAN, says the Greek philosopher, should be kept in a hutch at the bottom of the garden. It seems probable that in the beginning Eve was so housed. Until one day she made sweet moan and said, "Adam, who's a nice boy?" And heedless of grammar, Adam answered meltingly, "Me." "Then," said Eve, "do let me out a little while. I want to look round the place a bit." And Adam let her out. Hence the Pyramids. Hence the greatness of the World, and the glory and the wonder and the splendour of it. And hence, if one may say so, the black evil and squalor and misery of it all. For what is woman but the less edifying part of humanity? She came to man smiling, with sorrow in both hands. She smiled, and

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smiled, and smiled, as she still smiles ; and he who might have been a god, and walked the earth in joy, rakes straws, and groans in pits. The whole trend of experience goes to show that the man whose house is infested by a woman is the weaker and the less happy on that account. His liberty, his courage, his temper, his views, his ambitions, are all touched, and hurtfully touched, by such a presence. His life that was given to him for strenuous things is to be ordered by this bundle of fluff. Mother, sister, or wife, it is the same. My mother's wishes, my sister's persuasions, my wife's health, can make a stockjobber of a poet and a Methodist minister of a cheesemonger.

Woman runs your show whoever you are ; that is why your show is so badly run. The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world ; consider the world with a clear eye for ten minutes and you will perceive that the hand that rocks the cradle is a very fine hand indeed. Consider yourself, consider Jones, Brown, Robinson, Smith, and the rest of them. You are all right, of course, but . . . Jones is wealthy, but . . . Brown is famous, but . . . Robinson is wise, but . . .

THE BLESSING

Smith is a great man, but . . . And after each of these "buts" you could tell a pretty little tale with a woman in it. Either you haven't got her, or you don't want her. In any case she is the ivy on your oak, the poppy in your corn, the fly in your ointment, the canker in your rosebud, the phlox on your vine, the blight on your potato, the moth in your dinner-jacket. I am well aware that she is also the lily-of-the-valley and the best friend you ever had. But that is not the point.

That it was not ever thus every schoolboy knows, or ought to know. Thousands and thousands of years ago there was a rosy epoch, when man might reasonably reckon himself the lord of creation, and woman knew her place. Man disposed, woman did as she was told. In time, of course, she rebelled. It is of the essence of her femininity that she began to rebel quite early. Indeed, the rebel in her is as old as her tongue, and knowing her perhaps better than any of us have known her since, the early man kept a whip. His days therefore were a dream and a fatness, and his paths, so far as females set foot in them, were peace. In what special

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manner, and by what special methods, woman first proceeded to get out of hand, history does not say. The solemn fact that she has been out of hand for centuries, and that to-day she is out of hand to an almost irremediable extent, remains. There has never been a period in the history of mankind when life was so difficult and seemingly inexplicable a matter as it is at present. On all hands the complaint is that the pace has become impossible. The world is running away with itself. It must have money, it must have luxury, and, above all, it must make a cheerful and dazzling show. The fiat has gone forth—if you will be happy, nay indeed, if you will live at all, you must be rich. We know quite well whose fiat that is. And the universal acceptance of it for a gospel points clearly to the disproportionate and altogether disastrous influence woman is exercising in modern life. In all the places where money is to be spent, and spent lavishly, and with only the very smallest regard to necessity, woman is of the first consideration. London, Paris, Berlin, New York, wherever you will, the big item is woman. Miles and miles and miles of shops, and never a one of them

THE BLESSING

that is not chokeful of gewgaws for females ! The best of everything, the dearest of everything, blazes at you from behind interminable plate glass, and all for woman. Indeed the round globe bids fair shortly to become a sort of whirling Peter Robinson's, with a jeweller's or so and a fortune-teller's or so thrown in. Meanwhile man sprints breathlessly after the cash. He has been taught by Shakespeare and Lady Warwick that woman is the bright particular star of his destiny. She must be exalted, she must be adored, she must be obeyed. She is the Blessing, the perfect symbol of beauty and goodness on this earth. You must keep her teeth cleaned and her hair nicely waved. For the decking of her neck of snow and her creamy fingers there shall be diamonds and jewels of gold. She shall stand up in three hundred pounds worth of textile fabrics unabashed. She shall rustle as she goes, and she shall be so lapped in the spices of Araby that if she gets into a hansom cab you can tell she has been there a week after. Above all she shall carry in her hand a purse which must bulge with your moneys, or she will know the reason why. Between sprints, when you try to get breath, when you

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pull the thorns and the sharp stones of the road out of your feet, when you wonder what it is all about, and where it is going to end, —regard, my dear sir, the Blessing.

CHAPTER II

MISSY

So far as the male person is able to judge, the beginning of woman is the little girl. Shopwalkers, I believe, call her "Missy." It is a good name, and we will let it stand. In one's adult years the little girl crops up at the houses of one's friends. She is brought to one by her infatuated parents, and presented without rhyme or reason. One is supposed to fondle her, to remark in a bright and interested manner that she is a dear little thing, and very like her mamma, and to ask her pathetically if she will come and be one's own little girl. If to this inviting query she answer Yes, you say, "But what would mamma say?" If, on the other hand, she answer No, you say, "Oh—h, I don't think that is quite kind of you." Then, for the easement of your blushes, papa will talk to you about politics, what time Missy twists round the

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buttons of your waistcoat to see if they be properly fastened on, pulls out your watch and inquires how much it cost, and generally keeps you in a state of fidgets. This, as I say, is when you are an adult. For you, the little girl does not count. Excepting that she is a child, and that you wish she would go away, you have no knowledge of her. It occurs to you, perhaps, in a hazy way, that some day she will be a woman, and capable of putting all the bitternesses into some man's life, and you look at her and marvel. But that is about all. It is when you are young, when you are a little boy in fact, that the little girl is of importance to you; and it is then, if you are a little boy of intelligence, that you begin really to understand women. She was your sister possibly, or another little boy's sister. And what a time you had with her! She could pull hair, and scratch cheeks, and kick shins. She gave you away ceaselessly and without remorse. She was a past-mistress in the business of petty annoyance. She had a tongue like a whiplash despite her pinafore, and she could make faces and call names. As she grew older she became a little more reserved, but no less bitter. She kept you in

MISSY

rows and hot water all the year, and bought you an improving book for a birthday present. About this time, too, she began to read Dickens. What there is about Dickens that induces in the mind of the immature female a withering contempt for boys I have never been able to make out. But there can be no question that a properly Dickensiated Missy is a boy-hater and a cynic. She drops into your hot ears such apopthegms as "Never mind Jack, you are not half so clever as you think you are, and not half so wicked as people think you to be"; and if she is the other fellow's sister, and by a fluke you get her out at that idiot game called the post-man's knock, instead of rendering you the due kissable cheek, she glares at you coldly, and says, "Don't you think you had better go in?" And some day, like a fool, you go to a picnic, and, after hours of snubbing, she lures you on in the gloaming to ridiculous things. Whereupon she slaps your face hard, and walks off under the stars to giggle over the whole business with the rest of them. If, as has already been suggested, you are a little boy of intelligence, you will have begun to perceive that the nature of woman is not by

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any means what the poets have painted it. Roughly speaking, Woman is Missy fed up. At twenty she has all the vices that were hers at ten. At ten you found her faithless, spiteful, greedy, merciless, vindictive, impudent, unreasonable, unruly, and illogical. At twenty she is the same girl, only more cunning and a trifle more commercial. Indeed, Missy persists right through the lives of all women. I have seen the ten-year-old chocolate grabber leap into the eyes of women of fifty when devilled bones were concerned. And if you want loyalty or honour in the way that men understand loyalty and honour, you will never go to a woman for them, no matter how old she may be. It is not in woman's watery blood to be loyal. Neither can she stand up for a losing side. Get beaten by the next little boy when you are young, and see what Missy will do for you. Get beaten in the bigger fight, and note where the applause comes from. Missy, bless her innocent little heart, was ever for the boy with the most pocket money and the nicest clothes. She is sub-consciously, tacitly, or avowedly, on the side of the plutocrat to her dying day. It is her nature to. All the

MISSY

fine things about women's sacrifice and women's devotion and women's unselfishness, come out of books. There is certainly no trace of them in Missy; and the child, as Wordsworth might have said, is mother to the woman.

In view of the terrors which assail the little boy who has the misfortune to have any experience of little girls, it seems astounding that by the time he has attained to adolescence he should not have become a pronounced misogynist. As a matter of fact, I believe that most healthy boys of from fifteen to seventeen summers hate women with a profound and implacable hatred. There are reasons why this phase should not be indefinitely prolonged; but even when it is past, and the young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love, the young man invariably has a notion that he is making an ass of himself. He sees the beautiful lady, the rose maiden, the possible she, and he pursues her because he is to the manner born. But he knows full well that when he has caught and kissed her, it is a thousand chances to one that she will turn into a dragon. He hopes, and he hopes. The devil, he thinks, may have

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gone out of this woman with the lengthening of her skirts. She has an eye that would melt the living rock. Her smiles are smiles of light. She may be good. And if that amiable youth can only keep her mouth well filled, and her back well covered, and can amuse her and manage not to bore her, and let her have her own way, and make unlimited allowances for her till death do them part,—he may never come to the pain of finding out that he has only married Missy after all.

I am conscious that in venturing upon the expression of these views I run risks of no ordinary kind. The great army of lovers will not be with me; the parents of daughters, big and little, will cry Brute! and the perspiring young men who review will not be sparing of their cheap and rickety rhetoric. The man who raises his hand against a woman excepting in the way of kindness is a coward and a scoundrel. We learnt that at the Adelphi generations ago, and it is one of the bits of sentiment which every true-born Briton has off by heart, and considers to be great business. For all that, neither the noble company of lovers, nor the parents of daughters, nor the perspiring young men who review, can get

MISSY

away from the fact, that in these civilised times the relations between the sexes are not happy, and that whether in courtship or marriage the unhappiness arises nine times out of ten through want of money. The modern woman is unquestionably the victim of a rampant mania for possessing things. Love in a cottage will always do for a man. The modern woman will have none of it; she believes, contrary to all received wisdom, that in great riches there is great happiness, that money is the measure of happiness, and that the whole duty of man lies in the pursuit of wealth. Being amiable and acquiescent by nature, man in the lump seeks money in order that the desires of his women folk may be gratified. All the repose, all the dignity, the fairness and sweetness and honesty of life, are being surely knocked out of it by this universal tendency to money-grubbing. If you would have peace at home, you must get specie abroad. The wife of your bosom will not put up with the suspicion of meagreness. If you want her smiles you must pay for them. She shall fix the price, and you shall lay it, well- or ill-gotten, at her feet. There is no escape. The angel with the golden

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hair will not be denied ; you might as well reason with the Hyrcanean lion, or argue with a she-wolf. I am the daughter of the Ponsonby-Puffs, and you will treat me as such or perish ! Civilised people as a body are women-ridden. Uncivilised primitive men keep their wives in order ; they know what wives are for, and there is an end of it. Civilised man has sentimentalised himself into the slave of his own chattel. And when "dearest" snaps her pretty eyes he trembles and is unmanned. Now, the civilised peoples were no more intended to be ruled by woman, than the rabbit was intended to keep a dancing academy for bears. Yet at the present moment the hand of the woman is heavy in all the civilised lands. She runs the men. It is a great scandal, and a danger to the race. She should be put down, gently but firmly, and at once. She should shop less, and talk less, and gad about less, and have a greater respect for the only function which entitles her to any respect whatever. The perspiring reviewers will be shocked, and so will the lovers, and the parents of daughters ; but it is high time that gallantry took a little leaven of common sense.

CHAPTER III

THE THIRD SEX

OUT of the fulness and ripeness of her conceit, due largely to the fawning and subservience of man, woman has come to the conclusion that if she chooses she need not be feminine. She can put off her sex like a garment, and wade into unfeminine businesses, with a clear conscience and the highest motives. It is the boast of the vociferous ladies who babble about the emancipation of their kind that woman can now compete with man in a large number of industries and professions which were formerly closed to her. We have woman doctors, woman factory inspectors, woman poultry breeders, and woman market gardeners. Let us praise Lady Warwick for these mercies. We have also woman clerks by the million, and the offices and warehouses of commercialism are overrun with women usefully and congenially occupied in doing men's

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work at women's prices. No longer need the cultivated daughter of impecunious parents descend to the ignoble paths of governessing in haughty households at twenty pounds a year; no longer need she advertise for plain sewing, and endeavour to eke out her little income by selling ill-painted Christmas cards among her friends. Not a bit of it. Let her put in three months at a typewriting establishment, and she can 'old 'er 'ead up with the 'ighest Brixton male clerk of them all. She can get thirty shillings a week, and live in "a tiny flat," have a latch-key, and smoke cigarettes and defy the devil and all male persons whatsoever. Or, if she prefer it, she can go down to Reading, and under the sheltering wing of the Countess of Warwick she can learn to grow gooseberries and rhubarb, and eventually qualify as a gentleman's head-gardener. All of which is very pretty, and not in the least sinful. What happens to a gentleman whose head gardener is a female is probably past finding out. For as women can do nothing really well, they cannot garden really well, and gentlemen belike may not find them satisfactory. Besides, one would have thought that Adam's experience

THE THIRD SEX

of a woman in a garden would render the gentlemen of England a little shy in such a matter. However that is by the way. The trouble about the so-called emancipation of women, the danger and the difficulty of it, lie in the circumstance that it tends to create what, for want of a better phrase, one may term the third sex. That a woman should spend the best of her days in the ancient and manly occupation of keeping people's account books does not make a man of her. On the other hand, I think it can be demonstrated that such occupations go a considerable way towards depriving her of some of the chief attributes which entitle her to be called a woman. In the first place she must get up of mornings, a most unwomanly thing to do. Secondly, she must make a long journey to business, a journey often involving a two or three mile walk, or a four or five mile bicycle ride. This does not improve her temper, which is normally of the vilest. Thirdly, she must learn to be punctual and exact; and a punctual and exact woman is unthinkable. Fourthly, eight hours a day at the desk, with a meagre lunch, and a fairly reasonable supply of business worries, do not

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conduce to the preservation of either feminine health or feminine beauty. Hence it comes to pass that the great army of emancipated female workers are nimble, straight-backed, flat-chested, skimpy, hard-featured, scanty-haired persons. They do everything with a click, they wear blouses, they have indigestion, and they do not consider marriage to be a suitable career for a woman of intelligence and strength of mind. They meditate nobly upon the advantages of a system which emancipates them from dependence upon man, and they wonder between-whiles what is to become of them when they attain to the ungracious forty years of spinsterhood. At women's meetings, and in women's papers, you can hear or read a considerable deal of fizzle concerning the wonders and dignity and importance of this glorious emancipation. Freedom from dependence upon man may, or may not be, a very excellent thing; it depends on the man, and on the woman. But when the emancipated third sex flaps its wings and crows over the progress it is making in the industrial market, it rather wastes noises.

(Woman has made progress in industrialism, not because she is more competent or even

THE THIRD SEX

(quite so competent as man, but simply because she is cheaper ; and in certain cases a trifle better to look at. The greed of the time, a greed which is largely the outcome of feminine vanity, has not scrupled to exploit the third sex to its own advantage. And if the emancipated women of this country have done themselves well, they have done capital and employerdom very much better. And really the net profit is all to capital and employerdom.

It would be interesting to speculate on the probable composition and condition of society if the third sex continues to make that rapid progress in the industrial field which has been its proud boast during the past twenty years. If medicine be a womanly trade, so is the law, so is the Church. If a woman can sit with advantage on School Boards there is no reason why she should not project herself into the House of Commons. Excepting that they might be snappy to the passengers, I see no reason why we should not have female 'bus guards. Lady bookmakers, lady policemen, lady soldiers, lady sailors and lady horse-marines would no doubt follow in due time. A woman who can work a typewriter

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is in short capable of anything. With the Countess of Warwick and Lady Jeune to back her up she may attain to pinnacles beyond the dreams of the physiologists. Some day perhaps we shall have lady men. For the present it is sufficient to note that this third sex, though to all seeming self-supporting, is in point of fact a burden on society. It is hungry for unfeminine work ; and so long as you give it work it neither knows nor cares whether you pay it adequately or inadequately. The result is that in hundreds of lower middle-class families you have two or three girls bringing into the family purse sums varying from ten to thirty shillings a week what time the head of the house and his sons eat their hearts out in an interminable and futile search for employment. If the third sex has come to stay, if the noble work of emancipation is to go on and prosper, if the non-domestic labours of the world are to be undertaken by women, one supposes that the common male will of necessity drop out. And as the third sex eschew marriage and are not greatly to be desired in the capacity of wives, the Countess of Warwick and Lady Jeune will some day

THE THIRD SEX

or other be greatly put to it to keep the world going.

Of course the simple fact is that emancipation and the third sex are just a phase of feminine impertinence. It is the rebel, the kicker-over-the-traces, the out-of-hand woman come into what she considers to be her own. The domain has not proved a goodly one so far. There are salt tears in it, and much bitterness and great heartache. For though man can be extremely happy without woman, woman cannot be happy without man. She wants children, and neither typewriting nor market-gardening can provide them for her. So that I live in hopes that the third sex will cease to exist before it becomes firmly established in its frowardness. Employers of labour should set their faces against it. Women are as little to be relied upon in matters of business as Scotchmen. It is false economy to employ either. They lack brain, and really it is brain that tells in the long run. Man who has constant reason to notice how badly women manage his house should surely not be fool enough to let them poke their noses into his business. I wish the third sex no harm, because I know that it will find its level.

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In other words it cannot survive, inasmuch as it is flatly opposed to the laws of the universe. Outside matrimony the only place for a woman is a baby-linen shop.

CHAPTER IV

BEAUTY

BEAUTY is supposed to be woman's special prerogative. She may have the heart of a tigress and a few feathers where her brains ought to be ; but as long as she be beautiful men will forgive her. It is a grave question, however, whether after all there is such a thing as feminine beauty. Show me a woman with whom I am not in love, and I will show you fifty blemishes which bar her from consideration as a beauty. She has too much or too little hair ; her eyes are not of a colour ; her teeth are defective ; her nose is too sharp ; she has three chins ; she pulls a mouth like a salmon when she cries ; her hands are dumpy ; her bust is too ample for the balance of her ; judging by the way she walks she probably has corns—most women have corns ; her voice is shrill and cheap, or it is too mellow, or it is a hoarse whisper ; she laughs loudly, to the

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verge of the guffaw, or she giggles and simpers ; she is too tall, too short, too stout, too willowy. Altogether you can do very well without her. This, or something like it, is true of every woman with whom you are not in love. For the men who are not in love with her, it is true also of the woman you love. Woman, thanks to the easy-heartedness of man, has lost the art of being beautiful. A reasonable lack of good looks has latterly come to be much admired by the civilised male. This is extremely fortunate for the civilised female. One hears a great deal about the beauty of this woman and the beauty of that woman, but the man with a really beautiful wife is a very rare bird. Speaking broadly, other men's wives have usually faces like Julius Cæsar, and they walk with a martial and proprietorial tread. They are very pleasant and very gracious (to you), but nothing will induce you to call them beautiful. Among unmarried women you can sometimes come across a suggestion of prettiness, and perhaps even an occasional hint at beauty. But both are quite evanescent and speedily lost, either in the vinegar of spinsterhood or the obese complacency of wifhood.

BEAUTY

A woman's ideas as to beauty are as a rule limited to the matter of complexion. For some reason or other, white cheeks with a delicate carmine bloom on them are universally coveted by the sex. Rice-powder and rouge make every woman beautiful, in her own sight. Further, the new woman imagines that to be well-nigh fleshless and transparently anæmic is to be beautiful; so that to preserve a little waist and a bony arm she starves herself and drinks potions that would destroy the alimentary system of an ostrich. That she wears corsets is to her credit; if she did not, ninety-nine per cent. of her would have no figure at all. The gloved hand, too, is always a great deal prettier and more effective than the nude. I let off these small observations boldly because I feel that every woman worth her salt will agree with me about them. If the perspiring reviewer cannot concur, let him hasten to the wife of his bosom, or any other convenient woman, and say unto her that in his opinion Miss or Mrs. So-and-So is rather good-looking. He will be met forthwith with a curt, "I don't see where it comes in." Women—who know what beauty is—are quite sure that women are

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not beautiful. Why should the sand-blind male dispute with them on such a matter? Pretty, yes; interesting, yes; charming, yes; but not beautiful, Dick, not beautiful! There is really only one beautiful woman in the world, and you have got to be in a jump-down-Etna frame of mind about her before you can see her. In other words beauty is not only skin deep; it does not exist at all, except for the fatuous. Even the Venus of Milo has no arms to speak of. Herein lies the extreme wickedness of modern woman-kind—she is well acquainted with her manifold physical imperfections, but she will not own up to them. She expects you to take her as if she had just come out of the foam, and as if there were no such thing as gold tooth-filling. She expects you to write sonnets to dubious eyebrows. You are to take bone for billowness and adiposeness for grace. In brief, you are to lie to yourself, because a woman looks at you in a certain way. You do it, and, being a decent man, you keep it up for whole years; but you have never doubted that it is mere illusion, and neither have your friends. As to the importance of being beautiful there cannot be any

BEAUTY

question. It is the first duty of woman, and that perhaps is why she commonly neglects it. If she consider it at all with a practical eye it is with the assistance of the beauty-books. Such books are not good. They deal only with detail, leaving the main matter to take care of itself. The main matter, however, is still the main matter. The modern civilised female does not understand it. If she did she would not frizz her hair so much, neither would she reek of Rimmel, or be so clothed on with bargain sales. It is not for me to suggest remedies. I merely put down the facts. The beauty of woman, as we know her, is a very doubtful quantity, and it has no lasting qualities. The matrons of the time are a standing witness to the truth of this statement. Catch them after thirty. You will be hard put to it to find a gracious personality among them. Waddle, heavy-footedness, sternness of presence and sourness of visage are the charms by which you shall know them. And as for their minds and manners, the less said about them the better. Imaginative persons believe to this day in the matron excogitated and portrayed by the late Mr. Du Maurier—a creature of comfort

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and joy, if a trifle tall and a trifle ample. But you shall search many days and not find her. It is the gorgon, the "I'm-master-here" type of female, or the spiritless, anæmic, suffering martyr, that the drawing-rooms offer you. The fact is that twenty years' supremacy has well nigh ruined woman, physically and morally. She has rid herself of the bonds of domesticity; the placidities of honest wifedom are not for her; her heart is not in her household. Marriage she holds to be a matter of arrangement, maternity a thing to be avoided. All the paint, and massage, and dentistry, and chiropody and beauty treatment in the world cannot save such a woman from the natural doom of such women—namely, early unpresentableness. Homelessness and childlessness in women are sins against heaven, utterly destructive of the feminine soul, and subversive of everything that tends to make beautiful the feminine body. The only really sound recipe for the preservation of beauty is—marry and keep house, and do both in the sense that your grandmamma did.

CHAPTER V

SWEETHEARTS

OF woman at the period when man is prone to seek her out for marital purposes enough nonsense has been written to stock a Carnegie library. Mr. George Meredith has written nonsense about it; so has Miss Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler. So, in fact, have the majority of the fictionists. The tendency is to invest the wooable creature with all the virtues, corporeal and spiritual. She is always radiantly beautiful, and her "fresh young spirit" takes the winds of March with beauty. Men who have been through the mill read such prettinesses with their tongues in their cheek. For, as a matter of fact, sweethearts are seldom radiantly beautiful, and their "fresh young spirits," when they have any spirits at all, rather distress one. As a rule it is the fresh young spirit of calculation that imbues them. There are men in the world

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who have fallen in love at first sight. A woman never makes a mistake of this kind. When you go to her she will droop her eyelids, and blush, and say it is sudden; but depend upon it she has had you sized up and your whole dossier at her fingers' ends for months past. I do not say that this is wrong, but I do say that it is not romantic. Further, assuming that in the eyes of Miss Giddy you happen to be everything that can be desired, or as near it as she thinks she is likely to get, what does she really do to you at that immense moment of acceptance which so ravishes the fictionists? Nine times out of ten she says "Yes," and looks extremely stupid. Then you kiss her, and she says that it is a nice day. Within twenty-four hours she has got a hold of you which has precious little Mr. Meredith about it. The engagement ring is never exactly the ring of her dreams, and if by sap, siege, and parallel or reading off the box she can compass the name of the jeweller who sold it to you she will be round there on little wings of haste to inquire the price. Then, between kisses, she will venture on the opinion that you do not wear the right shape of collar, and that you

SWEETHEARTS

really should turn out your toes when you walk ; and beneath the moon when you feel like saying, "On such a night as this," she will incontinently hazard the suggestion that you should shave off your beard if you have a beard, or set about growing one if you haven't got one. In brief, you have become hers, and you are in no danger of being allowed to forget the circumstance. Being hers, all that you can do is to wait patiently until she becomes yours. Meanwhile you will have to put up with a year or two's slavery compared with which penal servitude is paradise. Her radiant beauty keeps you steadily on the ache, week in and week out ; her fresh young spirit plays havoc with your fresh young nerves what time she simpers through the West on your theatre tickets, and introduces you to all the old and young frumps in Christendom as "Mr. Brown, my *fiancé*." A muzzled bear led for a show by a couple of savage Frenchmen has no worse time of it. Of course there are men who take no notice of these things, or who set them down to playfulness, and say "How quaint !" But that is not Sweetheart's fault. With the help of a large charity you can

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forget the indignities and the ignominies to which she put you. They were there, however, and neither Mr. Meredith nor the whole school of fictionists can wipe them out. Woman resembles certain small men in this—give her the least authority and she becomes a tyrant. And on the whole she cannot be considered a success as a sweetheart. Unfortunately, man cannot get any other kind of sweetheart, and therefore he has to put up with her. But she can be taught to mend her ways, and if she will turn to the last chapter of this book she will find there a few hints which will prove invaluable to her. If she mean well she should really try to grasp the truth about herself—the great truth that it is only because man is infatuated that she is either beautiful or desirable.

The big trouble about Sweetheart in these ultra-civilised days is that the wooing of her has to be a fairly longish job. One supposes that long courtships were invented by women in order that they might give themselves a chance. Although the maiden may have said yes, and become “properly engaged,” she seldom or never considers her promise in the light of a contract that may not be broken.

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The man, of course, is grappled with hooks of steel. If he change his mind he is a scoundrel of the deepest dye, and runs the risk of having his fatuous amours rehearsed before a giggling court of law. No man really wishes to change his mind in such matters. Woman, on the other hand, always hopes secretly, and, it may be, sub-consciously, that a better, or handsomer, or wealthier suitor will come along. In which case we pick a quarrel with poor Dick, and enter into a newer and brighter alliance with dear Charlie. A man usually marries his first, or, if he gets jilted, his second sweetheart. A woman usually marries her fifth *fiancé*. Lengthy courtships should be abolished by Act of Parliament. The notion that time spent in wooing helps men and women to understand each other is an entirely mistaken one; for in woman there is nothing to understand, and in man there is precious little that a woman is capable of understanding. Men who have any care for their own peace of mind and their own dignity should insist on "naming the day" for themselves. I have known a wedding to be put off because a gown wasn't ready, and I have seen a bride go snarling to

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church because her bouquet had not arrived. And what lectures and wiggings long-engaged men have suffered in the boat-train heaven only knows! Dr. Johnson is credited with a saying that much can be done with a Scotchman if you catch him young. It is the same with woman.

CHAPTER VI

THE WIFE

(FROM a man's point of view the frightful part of having a wife is that you cannot marry another one. Woman knows this, and glories in it. She casts it in your teeth in a thousand little ways, and for her final triumph makes a point of outliving you. So that a wife, as a rule, is an abiding possession. Having married her you seldom lose her. In the early stages of your married life she has a winning trick of going home to her mamma on the slightest provocation. But she always comes back again for her gloves, or her keys, or the prayer-book that Aunt Priscilla gave her; and when she finds that her departures have ceased to perturb you, and that her callings back, on flimsy pretexts, no longer induce you to crook the pregnant supplicative hinges of the knee, she throws up the sponge and sticks to you closer than

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a brother ever after. A newly-married couple consists usually of a fool and a hoyden. The hoyden persists, for a couple of years, or it may be three; and the fool, in his folly, has a great life of it. Gradually he becomes wise and callous of heart and very obedient. Gradually she becomes staid and implacable, and very masterful. She is your wife; you must not contend with her. Give her what passes for her head—therein lies the only way of peace. Wife, wife, wife—what does it not mean to poor misguided, infatuated, bemused man? Husbands may be divided, roughly speaking, into three classes. First of all, and most beautiful in the eyes of womankind, comes the idiot regiment of blitherers. These dear men always have their hair parted. They are punctual, garrulous, and passionately fond of beef. Their conversation makes you ill, they speak of woman as “the sex,” and they are for ever thanking God, publicly, that they married Mrs. Smith. “My dear sir, believe me, I owe all I am to my wife!” “The best little woman in the world, sir!” “Brings me a cup of tea to bed every morning!” “Never had a cross word from her in my

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life !” Secondly, there is the vast company of grey-hearted men who have wives at home, and sense enough to say nothing about them. And thirdly, and lastly, come the tyrants, the married bachelors, the men who never go home till morning, and never stay there any longer than they can help. All three varieties are to be commiserated ; all three are the product of the unreasonableness and stupidity of the woman who is in a position to call herself wife. It is not seemly that a man should owe all he is to his wife. She is the inferior creature, and if she has “made him,” rest assured that he too is an inferiority, no matter how eminent. Neither is it seemly that a man should keep in his house a monster in petticoats who renders his life a sadness for him. Neither is it seemly that, possessing a wife and a home, a man should be compelled to do his best to avoid both. Half the misery in the world is caused by wives, just as pretty well all of it is caused by women of one kind and another. As a maker of trouble and a general purveyor of unpleasantness, the modern wife may be reckoned absolutely without rival. She has a malign influence upon the household. She indulges the belief

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that she, being a woman and a wife, is by far the more important of the two parties to the marital contract, and physically, mentally, morally and intellectually, a sweeter, sounder, and wiser creature than her husband. If she has the good taste not to proclaim these illusions from the housetop, which is seldom, she still cherishes them, and comports herself accordingly, and her view of the matter, expressed or unexpressed, is usually shared not only by her female relations and friends but also by her servants and dependents. So that it comes to pass that while man is master in his own house to the extent of being summoned for the taxes and writing cheques for the beer, his mastership is apparent rather than real, and built on the rottenest of foundations, inasmuch as all the women of his household, from madam his wife down to the merest kitchen wench, are in league against him, have no respect for his authority, laugh at him behind his back, and ultimately consider him in the light of a necessary evil. The surest method of finding one's way to the good graces of the twentieth century wife is to say to her, discreetly, unkind things about

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her husband in his presence. Nothing pleases her so vastly as a little corroborative adverse criticism out of the mouth of an unbiased party. When she has told you that she has always considered James too reckless in his business dealings, and you have cooed with a twinkle that you have often thought so, you can say almost anything you like about the man without rousing her to anything more serious than nods and smiles of concurrence. To protest, to attempt the smallest counter-stroke, never enters her disloyal little head. And if any of your shafts hit home to the tune of a writhe on his part, madam at once ascends palpably to the seventh heaven of delight. To the private and inner eye of their wives all men are scoundrels. When men praise her husband, the woman looks at him askance, and says, "Good Lord!" "Ah, my dear!"—accompanied by a little choking sob—is the final verdict of most wives upon their husbands, good, bad, or indifferent. Indeed, the wife, as wives go, is just a pretty blend of contemptuous arrogance and meek martyrdom, the contemptuous arrogance being reserved for her husband, and the meek martyrdom for the sympathetic public.

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That she is an ingrate, a serpent in the bosom, and a friend of one's friend the enemy, cannot be doubted. That men who know neither fear nor scruple where their fellow men are concerned should be full of tremors and solitudes when it comes to the matter of wives, is, on the face of it, ridiculous. A wife, after all, is a possession. She belongs to the man. He should not be afraid of her. Neither should he encourage her in the belief that he belongs to her. To love, honour, and obey, is the sworn business of wifeness. The amount of honour and obedience, not to say of unqualified love, that the average husband gets out of the average wife, could be placed comfortably on a threepennybit. Infatuation has been man's ruin. The woman knelt before him in the dust. He looked into her eyes and sent for a priest and said, "Rise, little one; take thou my seat and let me do the kneeling." And little one hopped into his seat forthwith. And she still keeps him grovelling. Of course, the proper thing to have done would have been to send for another chair. For kings and coal-porters a wife bears her true relation. For intermediate men the relation is

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a false one. The supremacy of king and coal-porter alike is beyond dispute. Their consorts walk humbly before them. This is as it should be.

CHAPTER VII

MAMMA

To have a mother is the common lot. To praise her and call her blessed is the common convention. In the story-books, horse-thieves and dipsomaniacs are observed to hit other horse-thieves and dipsomaniacs on the head with a decanter, because they, the other horse-thieves and dipsomaniacs, have spoken slightly of the original horse-thieves and dipsomaniacs' mothers. All white men are like this. If you say "Mother" without rolling up your eyes, they proceed to hit you with a decanter, metaphorical or otherwise. On the whole, therefore, I prefer to say "Mamma." Somehow nobody seems to mind what you say about Mamma. For example, if one were to assert that there are two kinds of mothers, good and bad, one would be met with loud and angry cries of dissent and threats of the decanter. On the other hand, the assertion

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that there are two kinds of Mammias, good and bad, excites no comment and arouses no angry passions. In point of fact there are nowadays at least twenty kinds of Mammias, all of them, of course, women; and all of them, therefore, defective. From the very beginning your average Mamma makes frightful mistakes: she clothes you stupidly, she feeds you improperly, and she brings you up in the fear of bogies and the flat hand. Her ambition in life is to make you corpulent and a snob. "Eat your crusts, my child, and do not play with the low children next door," is the principal article of her philosophy. She cries over you when you have the chicken-pox; she is very tender in the matter of bee-stings and ankle-sprains, and she gives you moral support at the dentist's. All this while you are very young. On a later day you will wake suddenly to the knowledge that Mamma has hopes of you. She becomes pathetically anxious about your future. Clearly, and whether you like it or not, you must be educated. Miss Primchin and Fraulein Vonpepper mark you for their own. In due time you make the acquaintance of dear old snuffy Dr. Swishem, who in further

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due time hands you duly over to the higher educational authorities — tutors, examiners, syndics, and what not. These excellent persons endeavour to impart to you such knowledge as they profess, and Mamma looks on and smiles approval. If you carry to her at suitable intervals a pretty certificate or two, a cheap Macaulay bound in tree-calf gilt, and the news that you have won the Tripe-dressers' bursary and the Archbishop of Canterbury's prize for Sanscrit Limericks, she is a highly pleased and cheerful Mamma, and maps out a career for you in the Church, in the Law, or in Medicine, which simply flames with triumphs. If, on the other hand, you are voted a dull boy, Mamma never forgives you, inasmuch as you take after papa's family, and will have to grub along in the City. In the main, until you attain your majority, Mamma is really your guardian angel. Of course papa has a certain hand on you, and desires that you should take such and such courses; but, for weal or woe, it is Mamma that holds you and determines the figure in which you shall appear before an expectant world. The newer generations of men are distinctly what their Mammias make them.

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You can tell a Mamma-reared man a mile off. He is always a fool and very cunning, and his logic and temper are feminine. He has been to Oxford, and when you talk to him you find that he is quite unfitted for any kind of honest labour, and that his only chance in life would be to start a *crèche*. Having placed her darling upon this proud pinnacle, Mamma might very well leave him to his own reflections and devices. But her Mamma's heart still beats for him, and being a woman she begins to plot for his proper betrayal into the hands of the sex. The dear lad must marry. Mamma has six beautiful maidens up her sleeve. Mamma has selected these maidens with great care, because it is more than desirable that the dear lad should make a happy marriage—as if there ever was such a thing on sea or land. The six beautiful maidens have not been consulted on the subject; neither has the dear lad. In the end he marries either Mamma's cook or some beautiful maiden of whom Mamma has not previously heard. The result is just the same in any case, and it affords Mamma ample scope for the exercise of her prerogatives as a Mamma-in-Law. Of Mammias-in-Law in general I

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shall treat at length in a subsequent chapter. Meanwhile let it be noted that in her capacity of plain Mamma woman is usually a failure. Few men can look back upon the periods of childhood and nonage with anything approximating to unmitigated satisfaction. Mamma's ministrations did not somehow pan out for the best. One has to spend a considerable portion of one's time unlearning what she taught one. She was an excellent Mamma, and she primed one with worldly wisdom of the most approved sort. Curiously enough, however, Mamma's brand of worldly wisdom is seldom of the slightest use in the great world. Hence you have to forget it, and you learn to wish that you had never learnt it. Poor Mamma! Shall we write evil of her? Shall we reprove her with phrases and punish her with printer's ink? It would be wicked of us to attempt anything of the kind. Mamma indubitably meant well. Foolish people always do mean well. Mamma—well, Mamma was Mamma, and we loved her. It was not her fault that she was a woman, neither can it be considered to have been our misfortune. But she was a woman for all that—incompetent, irresponsible, over-sanguine,

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over-greedy, over-snoobish. And you and I, and all of us, have much to thank her for. And Mammias, though not usually blamed, have been the ruin of many a fair youth and many a goodly damsel.

CHAPTER VIII

MAMMA-IN-LAW

MOTHERS-IN-LAW have long been a vexed question. Comic writers and artists live on them. A man and his Mother-in-Law are supposed to be for ever at loggerheads. In suburban confession-books you may see written against the question, "Who is your favourite character in fiction?" the witty reply, "My Mother-in-Law"; and occasionally you may read in the public prints a letter to the editor in which "Paterfamilias" asserts for the benefit of all and sundry that he has known his Mother-in-Law twelve years, that for six years she has honoured him by residing with him, and that during the whole period of their acquaintance they have lived on the most friendly and affable terms. Also, if by any chance the good lady should be removed from his midst, his hearth would be desolate and his life a hollowness. Plainly, therefore,

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there are two sides to the Mother-in-Law's character. She is a pragmatistical nuisance. She is a boon and a blessing. For my own part I shall not attempt to deal with her. She may be fair or foul, but I prefer not to discuss her. The Mamma-in-Law, however, is a different proposition. I do not remember to have seen anything uncomplimentary to Mamma-in-Law in the comic papers; and she does not figure as a butt either in the suburban confession book or on the music-hall stage. About the very phrase Mother-in-Law there is a touch of the opprobrious; whereas on the face of it the term Mamma-in-Law is without offence, and it has the merit of sounding quite young. Briefly defined, Mamma-in-Law is simply a prolongation or projection of Mamma. She has all the qualities and all the defects that made Mamma delightful, plus a certain acerbity and a certain grimness, without which no properly constituted Mamma-in-Law can be considered complete. To a very large extent she is a woman of one idea, that idea being that you, her darling boy, have married the wrong woman. This is quite true, because the right woman does not breathe the breath of life. But nobody can

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bring out the facts about it so beautifully and so convincingly as Mamma-in-Law. She is sure that poor dear Gertrude will be your ruin. Gertrude is so flighty, my love, and quite flippant, and her ideas about religion are simply shocking. What she will do if she has children I really don't know. It is a mercy that she has *me* to look after her. Otherwise I wouldn't answer for either of their futures. And if Mamma-in-Law, as is not infrequently the case, happens to be the Mamma of dear Gertrude, and not of the dear boy, the boot of course is just on the other leg. For the Mamma-in-Law on the distaff side the dear boy is a stuck-up little prig, absolutely without manners or decent feeling, sure to get into trouble before he is much older, and how my poor child came to marry him passes my comprehension. "My extraordinary daughter-in-law!" and "my beautiful son-in-law!" phrases which are supposed to carry great contempt, are familiar on the lips of Mamma-in-Law as household words. She cannot brook the interloper, the alien, the acquisition to the family. A wealthy Duke of my acquaintance—I say wealthy for obvious reasons—

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once told me that the only poetry he could remember was this couplet :

A sweeter woman ne'er drew breath
Than my son's wife Elizabeth.

He said that to his mind the couplet seemed an almost uncanny thing, purporting as it does to convey the opinion of a mother-in-law about her daughter-in-law. The Duke is a married man, and I have seen the dowager kiss his Duchess, till the poor little thing's face must have smarted. "We should ha' been 'appy enough if it 'adn't been for 'is mother," whimpered a girl of eighteen who was charged at Bow Street with sticking a carving-knife into her husband's cockney ribs. Oh, Mamma-in-Law, Mamma-in-Law, what have you not got to answer for?

Happily for all concerned, however, Mamma-in-Law does not as a rule last very long. Like the poet's little systems she has her day and ceases to be. That is to say, she ceases to be Mamma-in-Law, taking upon herself instead the benign pomps and dignities of the Grandmamma. I am no lover of women in the sense that I can blind myself to their

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general frailty and wickedness ; but I am free to admit that the sudden transformation of the caustic champing critic into the tender worshipper is one of the most beautiful things in nature. The arrival of a little stranger tends normally to rid the family of much discord. It invariably softens Mamma-in-Law, which is a good job done. A Grandmamma somehow cannot make rude remarks. It is not her rôle. She must be all smiles and dill-water and diddums-then, or go to pieces. It may be that when a woman sees herself reflected in the child of her child, the felinity dies down in her failing blood. Anyway Grandmammams are comfortable creatures and greatly to be preferred to the choicest of Mammams-in-Law. Thus is the bitter made sweet, and she that was sharp-tongued kind. Thus at a time of life when she is no longer wooable does the woman grope dimly after the attributes with which ingenuous gallantry credited her at eighteen. By this time, mayhap, she is a relict. One who would have given the ears off his head to be as good friends with her as is that hiccouging babé on her lap lies mouldering in the grave. If he could see

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her now he would kick the top of his coffin off. And if he did, she, good soul, in spite of her newly learned lesson, would hobble briskly to his side and rate him shrilly for disgracing her in a respectable cemetery.

CHAPTER IX

SHAKESPEARE

By way of an interlude it may be convenient for us to examine for a moment some of the influences which have helped to bring civilised man to his present shameful view of woman-kind. Who first taught him to set the foot of woman upon his stupid neck? By what specious blasphemy against humanity was the master thrust into the place of the slave? How came the last to be first, and the first to be last? Who so instructeth the stripling that he learns to see in women's faces a light less tolerable than the sun at noonday? It is safe to say that woman herself, no matter how fierce her desires in these directions may have been, could not have brought them to fruition. For such a task a certain amount of intellect was required. Mere subtlety would not avail. The tricks and fetches and wiles of femininity, irresistible

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as they might be where small matters were concerned, could neither create nor sustain a movement which would ultimately involve a reorganisation of the social system. It seems probable therefore that the culpable party was man. Unfortunately for himself man is a creature possessed of more or less imagination. The highly imaginative man, of whom we may take the poet to be the type, cannot, excepting by an effort, see things as other people see them. For the ordinary person, for most women, for dull men, and for men whose imagination is not more than average, a woman is simply a woman, a person in feminine garb, of a feminine smoothness of face, and of a feminine conversation and turn of mind. She may walk through a meadow in the dawn, or go simpling on a hill, or steal down under the moon to one that waits for her by a pool, without in the least disturbing the mental processes of the unimaginative. For a poet, however, these things wear a very different complexion. He sees in them food for what he is pleased to consider high thought. The woman and the dawn are to him two rosy sisters ; a woman simpling on a hill is blue heaven and sunshine and flying breeze

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and warm earth incarnate; the woman that steals down under the moon to her lover is Dian's self. By continual imaginings and assiduous search after the fairest imagery and metaphor, the poet evolves for woman attire which angels might not scruple to don. "Oh! thou art fairer than the evening air clad in the beauty of a thousand stars," and so forth. Even the skimpy Scotch have managed to note that her brow is like the snowflake, her neck is like the swan. The story is an old one; it has been told time and time again since the world was young, and all men know it and have gradually let it get the grip of them. So far as the English-speaking races are concerned there can be no question that the chief promulgator of these pretty falsehoods has been one William Shakespeare. Just as the Scotch are morally, or perhaps one should say immorally, what Burns has made them, so Shakespeare runs riot in the blood of every English-speaking man. The man may not be aware of it, but it is there nevertheless. When he begins to play the fool about women, when he begins to see stars where there are only eyes, pearls where there are only teeth, coral where there are only lips, and little mice where there are

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fairly healthy feet, it is simply Willie Shakespeare asserting himself. When one comes to examine the poets since Shakespeare, one is forced to the belief that in him the fine art and practice of woman-worship found its highest expression. Of all the candles which glow and glimmer on the feminine altar, Willie's still burns biggest and brightest. The others to a candle have been lit off Willie's. On the right, at a respectful distance from Willie's, is the candle of Mr. Keats :

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,
As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon ;
Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest,
And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
And on her hair a glory, like a saint ;
She seemed a splendid angel, newly drest,
Save wings, for heaven :—Porphyryon grew faint :
She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

On the left, at a respectful distance from Willie's, is the candle of Mr. Tennyson :

Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white ;
Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk ;
Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font ;
The fire-fly wakens ; waken thou with me.
Now droops the milk-white peacock like a ghost,
And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

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Now lies the earth all Danaë to the stars,
And all thy heart lies open unto me.

Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves
A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.

Now folds the lily, all her sweetness up,
And slips into the bosom of the lake :
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip
Into my bosom and be lost in me.

Then there is the austere and lanky dip of
Mr. Wordsworth :

The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her ; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.

And one descries too the tallowy short eights
of my Lord Byron, of Mr. Thomas Moore,
of Mr. Browning and his good lady, and of
Mr. Swinburne. My Lord Byron's offering
sputters palpably ; the wicks of both the
Brownings would be none the worse for a
little snuffing, and the candle marked A.C.S.
gutters and flares as if a wind blew upon it.
The show as a whole, however, is imposing.
No woman could pass it dry-eyed ; no man,
uncaptivated. But, when all is said, it is a
one-candle show, and that candle is Willie's

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Willie, need it be mentioned, wrote "Romeo and Juliet," thereby giving the death-blow to the independence of man, and opening the way for Lady Warwick, Lady Jeune and the divided skirt. I defy any man above the quality of a pork-butcher to read "Romeo and Juliet" without being tremendously impressed. It is a refreshing and a heartening piece of writing. It makes a young man sing inside himself. For that young man there is a Juliet at the Post Office round the corner. *Laus Deo!* And, blessed thought, he need not have recourse to an apothecary. And when an old man reads in Willie's book, "It is my soul that calls upon my name; how silver sweet sound lovers' tongues by night, like softest music to attending ears!" he looks over his spectacles right beyond the frump before him, and remembers with a glow the lambent-eyed baggage that played the devil with him in the sixties, egad!

Shakespeare himself, like all the rest of the men who have married, was unhappy in his marriage. This is one of the few biographical details that we know of him, and we might have guessed it without being told. Capulet's orchard proved a sorry place

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for him, poor soul; and I daresay that many a time during his married life he thought of his tragedy of "Romeo and Juliet" with his tongue in his cheek. If he had known what the effect of it was going to be, if he had known that his love-tragedy was to fire the imagination, and obscure the judgments of generations of unhappy men, he would probably have wished it unwritten. But the deed is done. "Romeo and Juliet" persists for all time. Somehow you cannot keep it away from the hands of youth. It is the apotheosis of love and woman. It exalts both to preposterous pinnacles, and the world suffers accordingly. Had there been no Romeo and Juliet, there would have been no Peter Robinson's, Messrs. Spink would have been in the butter trade, and Mesdames Marie Lloyd and Ada Reeve might not have been glorious. It was Shakespeare who taught the torches to burn bright, and who instilled into men the exaggerated awe and worship for a maid which has been man's ruin. Just as Burns instructed the Scotch in the consumption of pecks of malt and gay doings among rigs of barley, so Shakespeare read the lesson out for honest wooers, and

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would fain have converted woman into a goddess, and the pursuit of her into a sacrament. If the Countess of Warwick and Lady Jeune, and the others possessed a spark of that unfeminine attribute men call gratitude, they would have a self-denial week wherein they would refrain absolutely from the purchase of new sunshades and general fal-lals, and they would erect with the money thus saved a monument to William Shakespeare, the like of which had never before been quarried.

CHAPTER X

PROPS

A FAT man discovering himself poised with one foot on the cross of St. Paul's and the other on nothing in particular, would immediately conclude that he had no real business in that situation. Even so, woman looking down gingerly from her exalted position in society is not without qualms. But it would never do to climb down, and woman therefore hangs on like grim death, and keeps up her courage by shouting. If the seats of the mighty were intended for her accommodation she would sit in them sedately, and without turning a hair. She knows, however, that she has no business in those chairs, and, woman-like, she must be for ever justifying herself. For this purpose, of course, she has nobbled the press. All persons who need support nobble the press. In the organs of the obtuse and the obvious their opinions are

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set forward with respect, and the obtuse take them for granted. By steadily asserting in the daily prints that woman is the equal if not the superior of man, you gradually create a feeling in the minds of the obtuse that the assertion is the truth. The dodge is an old one, and so excellent a one that not a few of our most eminent politicians and financiers depend upon it for subsistence. Hence it comes to pass that the daily newspapers abound in women's columns, and the writing of womenfolk about women. On this Monday, March 23, 1903, I open by chance a copy of that sloppiest of all the "great" dailies, the *Daily News*. The *Daily News* has the credit of being owned by a philanthropic manufacturer of chocolate, and edited by the Pharos Club. It is the complaisant eulogist of all that is slack and sour and sleek and Scotch in letters. It pins its faith to the very remarkable critical pronouncements of Mr. A. T. Quiller Couch, and to the easy paradox of Mr. G. K. Chesterton—our darling G. K. C., whose name we contrive to mention every day, and whose "brilliance" is such a long time compelling itself even on the indiscriminating retina of Noncon-

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formity. Sheets of this character no doubt have their use, and they certainly help the common horde of persons with red ties to eke out an income. Also, they invariably welcome the woman who believes in women. The woman's column in the particular issue of the *Daily News* before us is headed "A Woman's View of Things." We are told in parenthesis that the author is Mrs. Fenwick Miller, and the sub-heads are "Eastern Women's Enfranchisement," "Women under the Pharaohs," "The Women of Egypt's Great Days," and "In Private Life." Mrs. Miller begins by hanging her harp on the willow-tree. "In the unchanging East," she says, "women have for centuries past been held in the very lowest depths of subjection . . . Debarred from any social intercourse with men, they are necessarily unable to learn or practise any non-domestic professions or occupations . . . Imagine our women writers, trained nurses, doctors, business women of all classes, equally hidden away each in their own domicile, and reduced to silence, inactivity, and ignorance of the densest sort, both as regards learning and as regards life!" Terrible, terrible, terrible, indeed, Mrs. Fenwick Miller! The

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obtuse mind absolutely refuses to imagine anything of the kind. But Mrs. Fenwick Miller goes on to betray that feminine lack of cocksureness, and that trembling eagerness for justification, which convinces one that the women of England have bitten off more than they can chew.

Mrs. Fenwick Miller has found a clever author, "himself an Egyptian holding a position in the Government." What could be more respectable or more inviting to the obtuse mind? The gentleman's name is Mr. Attia Wahby. "He is one of a group of young men who, loving their country and desiring ardently to see a renaissance of her national spirit, and some approach to a return of her ancient greatness, have anxiously studied the causes of her decadence, and recognise that the position of Egyptian women is a main factor in the case. These advanced and clear-thinking men perceive that in no other way do Oriental nations differ from Occidental ones so completely as in the degree of freedom allowed to the women of their communities. The American and the English nations are those that to-day head the world in enlightenment, morals, political freedom,

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and ever-increasing material prosperity, and it is just precisely the same nations that most fully recognise the rights of women to be equal to those of men. The other great nations of the Western world, it is not too much to say, appear to advantage in the human family, and prosper and improve internally, in close proportion to the degree to which they admit their women to equal rights. The obvious inference is drawn by these enlightened and thinking young Egyptians, that the need most urgent in their own social state is to remove the veil from their countrywomen, literally and metaphorically, and to set free for education, activity, and moral influence the companions of their own lives, the mothers of their future race." Mrs. Fenwick Miller goes on to say that "Egypt was the cradle, four thousand years ago, of art, religion, science, literature, and philosophy"; and assures us that Mr. Wahby is convinced that of all the peoples of antiquity Egypt was the only one that recognised fully the rights of woman. Not only did the women of ancient Egypt hold an important place in public life, but they had also "large domestic rights." "Amongst the Egyptians marriage

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was a sacred contract, which placed the wife on the same footing as the husband. She was in the household equal with the man. The family was the hope and purpose of the household. Fidelity was equally demanded from both spouses ; the distinction too often made in modern law between the adultery of the wife and that of the husband was unknown in Egypt. The wife, like the husband, could divorce the spouse. A girl was entirely free to choose her husband. From the equality of women in the family, it followed that a daughter had equal rights of succession with a son, and every hereditary right was co-equal ; there was no privilege for the eldest, no decay of a family because it consisted only of girls. The woman had her own patrimony, and disposed of it freely ; and in the marriage contract her annual allowance and her compensation in case of abandonment were fully arranged." It is quite clear that Mrs. Fenwick Miller takes a motherly interest in the state of the poor Egyptian females, and that she heartily approves of Mr. Wahby's view of things ; and it is quite clear that Mr. Wahby's view amounts to this: The American and English nations lead the world

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because they fully recognise the rights of women, and if Egypt had continued to give her women a free hand politically, and in the household, her decadence would have been less absolute than it has been. Both Mrs. Fenwick Miller and Mr. Attia Wahby, however, quite overlook the fact that when the women of a nation succeed in obtaining what they conceive to be their rights, that nation begins to decay. The Egyptians, we may suppose, gave woman her rights even to the extent of worshipping her pussy cat. At present there is no more dejected, dispirited, down-trodden kind of man in the world than the Egyptian. America and England lead the nations! The women of America are "notoriously" advanced. The fine flower of them eschew sentiment and babies, and go in for culture and independence. Their intellects will not permit them to love their husbands. In England woman has got the whip-hand. She has got it on grounds quite the reverse of intellectual, and she is exercising it with conviction. Of the decadence of America I shall say nothing, a country that can produce Messrs. Rockefeller, Carnegie, and Co., is quite beyond criticism. But

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England, with her disgraced army, her stove-pipe navy, and her high places crowded by dull Scotchmen, has surely started the easy descent. It is a case of Maud at the prow and Donald at the helm, and it means ruin of the bluest sort.

Mrs. Fenwick Miller's paper in the *Daily News* is quite typical. No species of periodical publication dare show its crested head unless it contain something for women. And that something is usually of a nature which will tend to foment and bolster up the great woman theory. One woman is as good as a man, and a little bit better. This is what the crowd of writing women would have us believe, and they are continually putting it before us, either by suggestion or in plain unvarnished words. It is a false and arrogant assumption, but that is of no consequence. The point is to keep on rubbing it in, and thus secure for womankind the supremacy which the imagination of doting man would bestow upon her. A man of parts may do considerable things in this world while he is still quite young. Keep the women away from him, and you cannot fairly put a limit to what he may achieve. It is not so with a woman.

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(Like something in Euclid, a woman has neither parts nor magnitude. A man's achievements tend uniformly to the development of his manhood, a woman's to the destruction of her womanhood. When all is said and done a man who is married to the head mistress of a school, to a lady doctor, to "a busy lady journalist," or "a clever little actress," as the case may be, may expect even less connubial felicity than is usual. So that on the whole, and in spite of man's ready acquiescence, the notion that woman is his equal, and possibly his superior, requires a great deal of asseveration and reiteration to enable it to pass muster. That it has got such a hold of public opinion is due to the sycophancy of weak-minded men, and the cunning of "strong-minded" women.

excellent

CHAPTER XI

LITERATURE

WHAT do women read? What book is that which confines Ermyntrude to her boudoir and interferes with the orderly progress of Jemima's labours in the scullery? What book is that which Mrs. Julius Agricola sternly forbids the Misses Julius Agricola to peruse, with the result that the Misses Julius Agricola purchase surreptitious copies on their own? What book is that which the Daughter, on purely ethical grounds, had fain keep out of the way of the Mother? And what fat marvels of journalism are these which litter Madam's table and are crammed away in the fragrant bodice of Madam's parlour-maid? For the books, ninety-nine per cent. of them, are catalogued by librarians under the general head of fiction. The fiction of the time is a curious and various product. Nobody knows or cares who writes it; everybody knows that

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women read it. In the main it deals more or less frankly with the subject of love. It goes to show that woman is a mixture of angel and devil, principally angel, and that man is a mixture of idiot and angel, principally idiot. It is free of all the intimacies of life from parturition to dissolution. It is the highest form of art and the lowest form of literary commercialism. It is the great stand-by of booksellers and publishers and libraries, and if the supply were suddenly cut off the sun would probably stand still, and the weekly reviews go into bankruptcy. Mudie's vans are as essential to the life of maid and matron as are the vans of the excellent Mr. Whiteley and the never-to-be-forgotten Mr. Peter Robinson. No woman worth the name is happy without her six shillingworth. If she did not have it she would surely become as the beasts of the field. For in the six shillingworth is wrapped up all the philosophies in so far as they affect woman, and for that matter man. The young thing of eighteen who comes to you with views of any sort or kind usually gets them out of a novel. It is the same with her mamma, and with her grandmamma, with her sisters, her female

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cousins, and her aunts. Intellectually, sentimentally, and spiritually, they are all creatures of the novel. Hence their mental poverty, their kaleidoscopic emotionalness, and their general want of balance. And even as the novel makes woman, so woman makes the novel. Persons who write fiction write no longer to please themselves, or to exercise themselves nobly in the conventions of an art. They write simply to please the women, woman being, as everybody has learnt, the market. Woe be unto him who spends his life in the pleasuring of such madams, even though he pleasure them innocently and without the stirring up of dubiety. His glory shall be as that of the late Mr. William Black or the late Sir Walter Besant, Kt., and the fruit of his labours shall be bitter to him. Yet there are many men writing consciously and unblushingly for women—and the six shillingses of women's husbands—at the present juncture. I do not suppose that any word of mine, or of anybody else's, is likely to give them pause; and I am aware that the six shillingses are sweetness, even after publishers and booksellers have laid predatory paws upon them. All the same, our bewitching

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writers may one day remember that they saw it printed in a book, that it is better to be a sweeper of workhouse stairs than to be a purveyor of reading stuff for women.

Journalism for women may be reckoned a comparatively new branch of money-getting, and the general drift and tone of it coupled with its indubitable remunerativeness offer quite remarkable evidence of woman's intellectual inferiority. In a single number of one of the most popular of women's papers, I find the following electrifying items: "Women Men Like for a Friend"; "The Earl Valet" (complete story); "The Time to Give Up Singleness"; "When a Proposal is Expected: Questions that a Girl should ask Herself"; "Plain Girl's Secret Charms"; "No Jealousy, No Affection"; "Do Men Like Timid Girls"; "The Wedding Cake"; "The First Love"; "His Sweethearts" (poetry); "Sweetheart's Inks"; "Alone in the Wide World" (serial); "How a Girl Shows her Affection"; "How to Manage a House and Save Money"; "Pretty Cissy Miller" (a long complete story); "Boudoir Gossip for the Girl who would be Beautiful"; "The Engaged Girl"; "How

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to Select a House"; "Am I Really Plain?" "Lady Judith's Secret" (the story of a haunted castle: "a powerful and mysterious romance"); "On her Bridal Morn" ("a charming serial story"); and "Confidential Chat," by the "Editress." I have examined the whole of the items carefully. They amount, for the most part, to so much slobber. For example, in the article "Women Men Like for a Friend," we get the following: "By careful observation of the girls we constantly meet, it is not difficult to trace the distinction between the girl who has been brought up in the society of men and her whose youth has been mostly spent among her own sex. Men generally find the former the more fascinating, for, through constant intercourse with the opposite sex, the man's woman gains a better knowledge of the dispositions and natures of men, and instinctively knows what to do and to say to please them. She is a woman who never dreams of complaining to them of trifles. She keeps her troubles mostly to herself, and has early learnt that most necessary virtue *silence*, on much that she sees and hears, which give men confidence in her, and they appreciate her friendship." Further on

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in the article, "When a Proposal is Expected," we are told to remember that "life is not all champagne," and the girl in the matter is bidden to inquire whether the man in the matter "possesses the qualities and characteristics that will wear." Also, "Have you ground for believing that you have enough in common—mentally, artistically, in literature, hobby, or sport—to found a life-long friendship that will grow with increasing years?" (*sic*). All of which, including the statement that life is not champagne, is the sheerest twaddle, calculated to put the silly minds of silly women into seas of doubt, and to import delay and misunderstanding into honest courtships. In the article entitled, "Do Men Like Timid Girls?" we are assured that "timidity is a virtue when you are a woman and single." When you are a harridan and married, of course, it doesn't matter. "Man," says the fair essayist, "is like a great oak, and he wants woman to be the ivy that clings to him. That is right and proper. A man loves to go out and play football and fight, and hunt wild beasts. . . . When you go to the seaside and creep to the water's edges, and put one toe into the great ocean, don't ever think

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that a man despises you for it." Which also is twaddle. Let us append a portion of the essay on "How a Girl Shows Her Affection." "You may know if a girl likes you by the way she behaves when you meet her. Don't be taken in by the mere fact that she changes colour. Girls do that from a thousand different causes, and there is no reason why she should be in love with you merely because she blushes. But there will come a look of pleasure into her face. Her eyes will brighten, and her lips will smile, no matter how hard she tries to conceal it. If she looks down-cast and sad when you say good-bye, you may hope. Did you ever feel her hand tremble in yours? It doesn't tremble if she doesn't like you. Did you ever happen to wonder how it is she so constantly wears your favourite colour or the flowers you like best? . . . Does she hear everything you say, even when you are speaking to some one else? Does she find it impossible to look happy when you talk so much to other people, and don't devote yourself to her? Does her voice sound sweeter when she addresses you than in ordinary conversation? . . . Does she let you crush her prettiest

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ball-gown unrebuked, and give you a flower from those she is wearing, though it spoils the effect of her costume? Then, indeed, she likes you." Which again is twaddle, of the most irritating order.

But perhaps the silliest morsels in this salmi of silly morsels are to be found under the head of "Confidential Chat." Here one is treated to such delightful paragraphs as the following :

"I have a remarkably strong liking," says 'Nena,' "for the man who sings in the choir at our church. We have never spoken to each other, but it has suddenly dawned upon me that I am growing to love him. Please can you advise me in this matter? I know I ought not to speak to him first."

"Of course you ought not. Neither of you can take any such step unless some third person introduces you. It is not that an introduction is a magic formula, but simply a guarantee on both sides that some one makes himself responsible for your being the kind of persons whom it is desirable may know each other."

* * * * *

"I am nineteen," writes 'Constant Reader,'

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"and I love a certain man. I don't know whether he loves me, but we go out together a great deal. He has never spoken of love to me. How can I test his feelings? When we are alone he is very attentive to me, but in the presence of others he does not seem so affectionate."

"That surely ought to suggest to you that he feels something. People do not brandish their liking for each other in the face of the public for the most part. You would surely not expect him to make love to you before other people? The mere suggestion robs the thing of its bloom."

* * * * *

"I courted a girl for two years," says 'Deceived,' "and we loved each other dearly. Then we had some words, and parted, and I thought we had made it up till I found her flirting with other men. She has never replied to my letter of remonstrance over this part of it. What do you advise me to do for the best?"

"It would probably be for your happiness to try to think no more about her. I am afraid the love she professed for you was not very genuine, if she could behave as she has done

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all through. It will be a wrench, no doubt, to make up your mind to part with her, but, as she seems to have taken the initiative, there is really nothing else for you to do."

Artemis, what questions! Cytherea, what replies! Can it be that the women of England, the dear emancipated intellectual man-despising women of England, devote the shining afternoons to the reading of such articles, and the manufacture of such correspondence? The "Editress" of the journal from which I have quoted—she dubs herself "Editress"—would no doubt inform me on inquiry that the issue dealt with is an average issue, and that she is proud to be able to say that her vast army of readers includes representatives of all classes of society. So that between ourselves the women of England stand confessed.

CHAPTER XII

WOMEN WRITERS

THE woman writer is an offence in the sight of Olympus. Leaving out Sappho who may have been a man, and Homer who may have been a woman, there are luckily no women writers among the classics. And when we turn to the moderns, it is not until what were practically Victorian times that the woman writer begins to turn up. The friends of emancipation, male and female, will tell you that woman's contributions to literature prove, beyond a doubt, that in certain departments of letters woman is distinctly the compeer of man. They will point you triumphant fingers in the direction of the following ladies : Charlotte Smith, Miss Blamire, Mrs. Barbold, Joanna Bailey, Mrs. Inchbold, Mrs. Hemans, L. E. L., Miss Edgeworth, Miss Austen, Miss Mitford, Eliza Cook, Elizabeth Barret Browning, Miss Proctor, Mrs. Trollope, The Brontés,

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Mrs. Oliphant, George Eliot, Miss Braddon, Ouida, and Mrs. Henry Wood, and in our own time Mrs. Humphry Ward, Mrs. Meynell, Mrs. Chesson, Miss Cholmondeley, Madame Sarah Grand, Miss Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler, and that daffy-downdilly of authoresses Miss Marie Corelli. Heaven forbid that I should make pretence to having read the complete works of the whole of these admirable females, but I have dipped into most of them, and I should say that English literature would not be the poorer for the loss of quite two-thirds of them. The more popular of the earlier women writers, Mrs. Hemans to wit, is chiefly famous for having inflicted upon our childhood a couple of ghastly and uninfantile dithyrambs, known respectively as "Casabianca" and "The Graves of the Household." Who does not remember the grime and tears amid which one was taught to say :

The boy stood on the burning deck
Whence all but he had fled ;
The flames that lit the battle's wreck
Shone round him o'er the dead.

Yet beautiful and bright he stood,
As born to rule the storm,

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A creature of heroic blood,
A proud though child-like form.

Also

They grew in beauty side by side,
They filled one home with glee ;
Their graves are scattered far and wide,
By mount, and stream, and sea.

The same fond mother bent at night
O'er each fair sleeping brow,
She had each folded flower in sight ;
Where are those dreamers now ?

One midst the forests of the west,
By a dark stream is laid ;
The Indian knows his place of rest,
Far in the cedar's shade.

And one, o'er her the myrtle showers
Its leaves by soft winds fanned,
She faded midst Italian flowers,
The last of that bright band.

And so forth. Mrs. Hemans clearly, though she may stick in the memory, might be forgotten without disadvantage. To Miss Austen, who was the next lady that matters, belongs the credit of having lately been published in sundry noble editions which do not appear to have gone off. Eliza Cook, of course, wrote fatuously about an old arm-chair :

I love it, I love it, and who shall dare
To chide me for loving that old arm-chair.

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Well, I dare for one, Miss Cook. When it comes to Elizabeth Barrett Browning, one has to admit that here the women of England have rather got us, for Mrs. Browning has left behind her a good deal that is undoubtedly poetry. "The Portuguese Sonnets," "He Giveth His Beloved Sleep," "The Swan's Nest," "The Cry of the Children," and "Toll Slowly," being obvious cases in point. Miss Proctor I am afraid wrote nothing that keeps save "The Lost Chord," which is pretty bad. The Brontës would have been forgotten long ago had it not been for the painstaking researches of Mr. Clement Shorter. And as for George Eliot, Miss Braddon, Ouida, and Mrs. Henry Wood, people are rapidly learning not to read them. To the moderns one may offer a stammering meed of praise. I have never been able to get on with any of Mrs. Humphry Ward's volumes. Butler's "Analogy" always does me quite well when I feel like that kind of reading. Mrs. Meynell looms up in one's mind as a lady who has written one or two moving trifles; and who omitted Gray's "Elegy" from an anthology, which was supposed to be a choice among the best English

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poets. Mrs. Chesson, perhaps better known as Norah Hopper, is Irish, and a poet by the calendar. That is to say, she will knock you off a poem for every day in the year, and keep on doing it, in a rather pretty way. Miss Cholmondeley wrote "Red Pottage," a story which made a hit, and is likely to be forgotten. Madame Sarah Grand once lectured to me on "Mere Man." That is why she receives honourable mention on this page. Of the work of Miss Marie Corelli I have a low opinion; it is as bad as that of Mr. Hall Caine, who, let it be remembered, in his late capacity as reader to Bentley's, is understood to have turned Miss Corelli down. Of Miss Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler I will only say that I wish she had never been born. She appears to be one of the many startling finds of that literary Barney Barnato, Dr. Robertson Nicoll. For the purposes of the present chapter I purchased, and tried to read, Miss Fowler's latest opuscle, entitled, somewhat clumsily, "Fuel of Fire." When one comes to think of it, fuel could not be fuel of water, nor fuel of cheese, not fuel of elephants. To say fuel of fire is redundant, and therefore inelegant. Inside the book Miss

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Fowler irritates one at every point. First, there is her fatuous dedication :

For such as take my tale and read it through
(Unlike the unregenerate reader, who,
By furtive glances at the final page,
Anticipates the wherefore and the why,
Spoiling his pleasure and my work thereby),
I write this book, and beg their patronage.

Which reminds us of nothing so much as the effusion of the poet, who, in welcoming the Prince of Wales to Brighton, wrote :

Here's a welcome to the Prince of Wales,
Also to the Princess, who
Would have come if able to.

Besides, consider the parenthesis ! Then for a motto to her book, Miss Fowler knocks off this jingle :

First by the King, and then by the State,
And thirdly by that which is twice as great
As these, and a thousandfold stronger and higher,
Shall Baxendale Hall be made Fuel of fire.

The fact that higher is a dissyllable and unrhymable with fire, which is a word of one syllable, will probably be considered trivial in Nonconformist circles. And mark the bright slangy middle-class way in which Miss Fowler opens her story.

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“‘It strikes me, Nancy,’ remarked Anthony Burton, looking critically at his cousin, ‘that Laurence Baxendale is inclined to admire you. I wonder at the fact, I confess, but my eagle eye cannot help perceiving it.’

“‘I doubt if he has the sense,’ replied Nancy; ‘but it would do him all the good in the world.’

“Anthony tilted his straw hat still farther over his eyes. ‘Your lack of humility, my dear child, is only equalled by your lack of justification to be anything else but humble. What there is in you to induce any man, not bound to you by the ties of relationship, to think about you twice, I fail to imagine; but the fact remains that our friend Baxendale does think about you twice; and facts have to be “reckoned with.”’

“‘Twice?—and the rest,’ said Nancy, laconically.

“‘Now, if he thought twice about Nora, I should find more excuse for him,’ continued Anthony, turning his attention to his younger cousin; ‘Nora—though far from being all that I could wish—has certain claims to good looks.’

“‘Thank you,’ responded Nora.

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“ Nancy’s good humour remained unruffled.

“ ‘ Yes ; there is no doubt that Nora is much better looking than I am. I’ve discovered that it is a universal law of nature that of two sisters the second is always the better looking and the taller, from the days of Leah and Rachel downwards. If there are any brains going about, the elder sister generally fixes upon them ; but as there are no brains going about in our family, this doesn’t affect us.’

“ ‘ Speak for yourself, my dear,’ demurred Anthony. ‘ Nora and I are simply bursting with brain power. But we do not despise you for your inferiority in this respect ; we merely pity.’

“ But Nancy was not attending. ‘ I’m very glad you’ve noticed that Mr. Baxendale is rather taken with me, for I’d got an idea that way myself ; and it is a comfort to find it confirmed even by such an idiot as you, Tony.’

“ ‘ Allow me to tender you a hearty vote of thanks for the kind—the too kind—terms in which you are pleased to refer to my intellectual endowments,’ murmured Anthony.”

How any sentient being can wish to read

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further passes one's comprehension ; though of course, it must be remembered that Miss Fowler writes for women, and that possibly her only two male readers are the inspired Dr. Robertson Nichol and her own papa, the Right Honourable Sir Henry, whom I last beheld on the Calais boat eating buns out of a bag. What sort of a story-teller Miss Fowler may be I do not profess to know, for I have not read in "Fuel of Fire" beyond the fateful word Anthony, which finishes our excerpt from Chapter I. But the title of her book, and the quality of that excerpt, convince me that she is not by any means an accomplished writer. Neither is Miss Fowler a poetess, though she tops the chapters of "Fuel of Fire" with little rhymes. Over Chapter I, for example, I read :

"A merry heart goes all the way,"
As Shakespeare once was pleased to say.

That Shakespeare never said anything of the kind is a detail. Chapter II. is topped up with:

Upon a hill the old house stood,
Commanding stream and field and wood.

And Chapter III. with :

The pride that goes before a fall,
Had ruled the master of the Hall.

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Neither of these couplets can be considered epigrammatic. Prefixed to succeeding chapters are the following flights :

“The woman tempted me and I did eat,”
Such the apology once made by Adam,
Who paved a way more trodden by men’s feet,
Than any fashioned by the great Macadam,
To give a dog an unrespected name,
As hanging seems to be about the same.
Love evermore is fresh and young ;
So may it please your Royal Highness
To banish from our mother tongue
Such words as *Finis!*

Thus is wisdom justified of her children. Thus may we see that even in her highest emanations woman lacks skill, and finish, and discretion. Dr. Nicol should have looked to these graceless rhymes. As a soaring human poet he should have known better than to allow such doggerel to get into print. Perhaps he had no say in the matter, inasmuch as popular authors are apt to be a little autocratic. Let us give him the benefit of the doubt. But we cannot excuse Miss Fowler, who has no business to be writing at all.

Briefly, you are bound to discover in the work of women, whether literary or otherwise,

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defects of the gravest and most vital character. Women and Scotchmen do things well only by a fluke, and seldom at that. Mrs. Browning, Ouida, and Mrs. Meynell seem to me to be the only three women writers of English who have accomplished work which, in point of execution, is super-feminine, and worthy to rank with the work of competent men. There is not too much of Mrs. Browning that comes into this category; at times Ouida flops about in the most lamentable fashion, and Mrs. Meynell has written but little. So that, on the whole, the female writers make an indifferent show. Let them go in peace.

CHAPTER XIII

CLOTHES

WOMAN without her clothes is about as pretty as a plucked bird of paradise. Dress her, and, metaphorically speaking, she becomes more or less presentable. Stint her in the matter of frocks, and she deteriorates at once into dowdiness. A man who thinks he has a beauty for wife, might very well take thought and consider how much is wife and how much is clothes. The whole philosophy of feminine beauty lies hidden in that *cri de cœur* of femininity: "What shall I wear?" Among savage tribes the answer is feathers, and frizzy hair and nose-rings and a loin-cloth. With us it is feathers and frizzy hair and ear-rings and confections. Woman has been wanting to know what to wear ever since Eden. By now one would think her inquiries into the subject would be well-nigh complete. As a general rule, however, she is

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just as ignorant as was her mother Eve, and had she been left to herself she would still be going about in inadequate garments of leaves. But through the centuries man, the infatuated, has brought the force of his gigantic mind to bear upon the question of woman's dress. All along he has recognised that there was something wrong with his goddess. He idealised her and set her upon a pedestal; yet she was not satisfying. When he started giving her clothes, the colour came into life. Here possibly was the fatal mistake. For where clothes are concerned woman is the daughter of the horse-leech, and screams give, give, give, till she dies. So that the world is populous with man-milliners and its warehouses groan with dress goods. Clothes in themselves, twentieth-century feminine clothes, that is to say, are not by any means un-beautiful. A man who has any sort of an eye for what is delicate and decorative and soothingly tintured, may come across quite a procession of delights in women's shops. And if he can shake off the soapy shopwalker and say neither yea nor nay to the hideously grimacing counterskippers who serve in these temples, he may come out refreshed and feel

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his idea of womanhood properly edified. There is something good in her after all he will argue, for has she not a sweet wardrobe and a pretty? Alack for the real woman however. Here are clothes unlimited, and beyond the dreams of Queens of Sheba; but where shall you find the woman who can take out of the mass the particular garments she and no other should wear. In an assemblage of maids and matrons you will invariably find Mrs. B. gushing in the garments of Miss A., Mrs. C. wearing a charming conception which belongs by good right to the back of Mrs. D., and so on, and so forth. Once in a while a woman does appear in a costume which really suits her. But when you compliment her on the fact she will say, "Do you think so? For my part I think it is horrid," and you never see that costume again. Questions of climate on one side, it seems more than likely that woman was not intended by nature to dress. She has no gift in that direction, her taste is execrable, and her only canon is, "THEY ARE VERY MUCH WORN JUST NOW." Furthermore she is possessed of a fixed idea that there is some subtle connection between good dressing and lavish

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expenditure. Woman who has brought haberdashery and Manchester goods to the pitch of two-three is absolutely regardless when it comes to the price of a hat or a gown. To women whose dress allowances are over £100 a year value in hats and gowns would seem to be impossible. A chip shape with a velvet band, and a pigeon's wing stuck on one side of it, should run you into eight golden guineas if you go to the right shop for it. A gown intrinsically worth a five-pound note, comes out in the wash at anything up to or beyond three hundred guineas. The woman who gets such a hat or such a gown is for the time being supremely blest. She has managed to spend some more of Charlie's money. The hat is a duck, the gown divine, and next day you will find her arranging to have the velvet on the hat made into bows for a muff, the pigeon's wing becomes the perquisite of the milliner, and the chip shape somehow doesn't seem worth retrimming. As for the divine gown, when it has been worn once or twice, who shall say what does not become of it. One never sees a dead donkey, nor a postman

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on a holiday, and one can never acquaint oneself with the fate of those divine gowns. Probably they are torn up for dusters and dish-cloths—in economical households of course. I have seen it complained that when men indulge in public animadversions of women's dress they omit to say precisely how women should dress. In order that this reproach may be spared me I offer the following hints gratis :

- I. REMEMBER THAT YOU WEAR CLOTHES FOR TWO PURPOSES—FIRSTLY, TO KEEP YOU WARM ; AND, SECONDLY, TO PREVENT CAB-HORSES FROM SHYING AT THE SIGHT OF YOU.
- II. THE DUCHESS OF ——— IS NOT THE BEST DRESSED WOMAN IN EUROPE.
- III. NEVER DISCUSS THE PRICE OF A HAT TILL YOU HAVE TRIED IT ON. THE INEXPENSIVE IS NOT NECESSARILY THE UNBECOMING.
- IV. BE VERY CAREFUL NOT TO DRESS LIKE THE LADY NEXT DOOR.
- V. IF THE PREVAILING FASHIONS MAKE YOU LOOK LIKE A ZULU LET THE PREVAILING FASHIONS ALONE.

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- VI. YOUR HUSBAND'S TASTE IS ALWAYS TEN TIMES BETTER THAN YOUR OWN. AND WHEN YOU THINK HE IS THINKING BANKING ACCOUNT HE IS NOT.
- VII. GOOD THINGS ARE NOT ONLY THE CHEAPEST IN THE LONG RUN, BUT CHEAPEST ALL THE TIME ; AND GOOD THINGS ARE NOT, AS A RULE, MORE THAN MODERATELY DEAR.
- VIII. A TURNED SILK IS BETTER THAN A HARASSED HUBBY.
- IX. NOBODY'S HUSBAND CAN AFFORD TO BUY EVERYTHING.
- X. TAKE CARE OF YOUR FROCKS AND YOUR BILLS WILL TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES.
- XI. GREAT WEALTH DOES NOT EXCUSE VULGAR DRESSING. NEITHER DOES £350 A YEAR.
- XII. IF YOU WEAR FINE DINNER-GOWNS YOU SHOULD GIVE GOOD DINNERS.
- XIII. HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH CHEAP FURS, CHEAP LACES, CHEAP SILKS, OR CHEAP SUNSHADES.
- XIV. TRIMMINGS ARE THE DEVIL.
- XV. AN ILL-DRESSED WOMAN WEARS AWAY LOVE.

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These maxims may require to be expounded by some male person before their value becomes plain to the female mind. But they are good maxims, and worth keeping next the heart.

CHAPTER XIV

PUBLIC WOMEN

A PUBLIC woman is a woman who makes up her mind to go out into the world and do good. In America she is typified by Mistress Catherine Nation. In these happy islands our most obvious public woman is Her Grace the Duchess of Sutherland. If I am properly informed fair Mistress Nation devotes her time and talents to window smashing. What it is that the Duchess of Sutherland does I have not been able to ascertain. But I have seen her name several times in the papers. I do not suggest for a moment that all public women are like Mrs. Nation, or, for that matter, like the Duchess of Sutherland. What I do know about them is that one sees their names in the papers, and that their intentions are of the best. The Duchess of Sutherland, for example, opens, I believe, an occasional bazaar. This is really admirable,

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and he would be a churl who took umbrage at it. On the other hand, the public woman has little or no right to exist. As a public woman she is bound, in the first place, to base herself upon oratorical qualifications. At home, of course, when the curtain of repose is gathered round the aching breast, woman can talk, but there is all the difference between talk at home and talk abroad, and all the difference between talk and oratory. A female delivering speeches from a platform is a sight that not only lacks seemliness—it moves you in quite an uncanny way. It has the same effect upon you as the sight of a hen trying to swim ; you can neither laugh nor cry at it. You feel that here is ridiculous, and, at the same time, woeful ineptitude. It is not worth noticing except as an anomaly. In any case it wants dignity. Curiously enough, many of our public women are married women. Perhaps marriage has driven them to it ; but I often wonder where their husbands are, and why they allow flesh of their flesh, and bone of their bone, to make such exhibitions of itself. A husband who can sit in an auditorium and hear his wife pant forth her views on the affairs of the

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nation must be a hero. Any other kind of man who can sit at the feet of a female orator and enjoy himself is a washerwoman. Women were not meant for the platform. Oratory from a woman is a physiological impossibility. She has neither lungs nor voice enough for the job. Hens seem to me to be possessed of sense; they do not insist upon natatory exercises. But if anybody gets up a public meeting of the right quality and invites ladies to address it, he can always get half a dozen or so down for nothing. Curiously hollow and vapid and unnatural as women's voices sound in public halls, the public woman is so fond of the sound of her own voice that having once started on the downward path of public oratory she cannot stop herself, and she is for ever turning up in the most remarkable of corners. Indeed, it is an easy step from the "I declare this bazaar open" of the blushing neophyte to the twenty minutes oration of the old stager; so easy, indeed, that one wonders why, in the present state of the feminine mind, it is not more generally taken. It is one of the few things creditable to womankind that public women are not very numerous. Women

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who listen to them and applaud always seem to have a sort of "I shouldn't care to do it, my dear" feel upon them, and quite properly so. A whistling woman, like a crowing hen, is proverbially to be deprecated. A speechifying woman may be reckoned ten times more offensive. Of course, I shall be told that women acquit themselves to admiration on the stage, and that there is therefore no reason why they should not shine on the platform. The differences between platform and stage, however, are obvious. On the stage, women merely say the lines allotted to the character they represent, and, as a rule, that character is a female character. The playwright has taken good care that the words put into the woman's mouth shall be words suitable for a woman to use, and that the emotions she is made to portray shall be feminine emotions and well within her compass. When a woman has to take a male part she usually mulls it, be she ever so competent. There is not a woman breathing who could play the part of Hamlet with the proper weight and effect, and there is no woman in the world who is likely at any time to succeed in making a Balfour or a Rosebery

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or even a Campbell-Bannerman of herself.

Heaven knows that one of these gentlemen is a poor enough orator, but for all that the public woman cannot hope to come within a mile of him. The circumstance that we have any public women at all is entirely due to the arrogance and conceit which have latterly played such havoc in the female bosom. Of old, man had his provinces, woman hers. Nowadays there must be no province which is exclusively man's. If fat, wheezy, bald-headed Mr. Snubbins can address the assembled populace, why not I? It is true that I am only a woman, but heaven has given me a voice, and while I have a haporth of breath left, that voice shall be lifted in the cause of liberty and freedom for my suffering sisters. It is very fine and excellent business from the point of view of the women's rights faction. I think, however, that it were better for the world if such voices were never raised louder than is necessary in inquiring what kind of sweet you would like for dinner to-day, my dear? Somehow, nothing in the world can say "pie" and "plum" and "chicken" and "dear" and "baby" like a woman's voice. Why in the name of all that is wonderful

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should such an organ be wasted on such words as suffrages, autonomy, decentralisation, consolidation, franchise, aggrandisement, and denominationalism? The Countess of Warwick and Lady Jeune will no doubt be able to tell me why.

CHAPTER XV

SERVANTS

It speaks volumes for the inferiority and ineffectuality of womankind, that even in matters which peculiarly concern herself woman is a distinct failure. A house divided against itself, we are told, cannot stand. Yet in 90 per cent. of the happy homes of England furious and implacable warfare is raging at the present moment. I do not refer to the steady bickerings which take place between husband and wife, mother and daughter, brother and sister, and so forth, but to the bitter hostilities which prevail between women and their female servants. The affairs of domesticity are after all so simple and so limited in their nature that one would have thought they might be very readily conducted without friction. It does not require an extraordinary amount of generalship to keep the front doorstep clean,

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or the knives polished, or the hearth well swept. Also one would imagine that a woman, at whose footfall a burly six foot man trembles, could manage to maintain a little discipline in dealing with a couple of frowsy maids of all work. The solemn fact is, however, that Mrs. Julius Agricola becomes as a little child before her servants, and gets just as much service out of them as they choose to give her, and no more. The women of the middle and upper classes have so far neglected the study and practice of the arts of housewifery, that they are entirely at the mercy of the women of the lower classes, and we all know that the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel. At certain times and in certain situations even a cultivated woman is a little better than a wild beast. Drive her to fury, as she puts it, and you will hear about it. On the whole, the women of the lower classes are simply ambling savages, indolent, ignorant, and greasily complaisant, and always more or less dangerous when roused. Hence the bliss that reigns in most men's houses. If you ask a mistress wherein lies the fault, she will tell you that the fault is the servants'; if you ask the servants they will tell you that the fault is

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the mistress's. As both parties are women you take their statements with a large grain of salt and blame both. There are undoubtedly "'orty mistresses." At servants' registry offices you can see three hundred a year and a thousand a year telling eighteen pounds a year and no beer, not to come near, please. And you will have to take off that disgraceful fringe, don't you know, and I don't allow young men followers. On the other hand, eighteen pounds a year is frequently sullen and intractable and a mine of impertinences. Pretty well all the year round discussions are going on in the public prints which tend to show that the mistress is as bad as the maid, and the maid quite as bad as the mistress. From one such causerie now in full blast in the *Referree*—which seems to be quite a lady's paper—I cull a pair of sad cases :

“ I'll just give you an idea of the servant of to-day. My housemaid came to me a few weeks ago, saying, ‘ Oh, please, m'm, next Sunday is *not* my Sunday out ; and I've heard that my young man is coming up from the country for the day, and I've not seen him for four months. Would you allow him to come and see me ?’ I replied, ‘ Well, I don't allow

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young men visitors, as you know ; but as you are engaged to this young man, and not merely "walking out," you may have him to dinner next Sunday.' 'Oh, thank you, m'm.' The day arrived ; the young man turned up about twelve o'clock. It was a cold day. I sent word down to ask if he'd like a cup of tea, cocoa, or a glass of ale. He, of course, had his dinner with the maids (the same exactly as ours), and afterwards my husband sent out to him a cigar and some cigarettes. The young man stayed till eight o'clock in the evening.

"The following Sunday when it *was* the housemaid's afternoon and evening out, I went to her about ten minutes to four o'clock and said, 'Jane, I should like you to call next door and inquire how Mrs. So and So is, I hear she has been ill, and then leave this note for me at No. 16 (seven doors from our house); you need not wait for a reply.' The maid answered, 'I am not going that way, No. 16 is to the left, and I am going to the right when I leave the house.' I replied, 'Are you going to catch a train?' 'No m'm.' 'Then,' said I, 'please do as I tell you.' The next morning I asked, 'Did you

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leave that note at No. 16?' 'Yes m'm.' 'How is Mrs. So and So?' 'Oh, I *didn't* go!' And this was the girl whose young man I had allowed to spend the day at my house.

"When I remonstrated with my cook yesterday about her impertinence, and said 'I wondered how she could speak so rudely to a mistress who had been so good and kind to her and her family,' she replied, 'Oh, yes, I know you've done several things for me, but I never *asked* you to do them!'"

* * * * *

"For the last four years I have allowed my cook and housemaid to take the daily walk so advocated in your paper. I have also given them a large part of every Sunday, a fortnight's holiday in the year, and many single days besides. What is the result? My house, though a small one, is not kept clean, my bells are not answered, my friends are kept waiting on the doorstep, and I have to do a great part of the work myself; for, though frequently changing, I never get a better servant."

Now the condition of things here brought

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to light is little short of appalling. In the first instance the mistress waives an old-established rule as to men followers, and actually goes the length of inviting her maid's young man to "a cup of tea, cocoa, or a glass of ale." Furthermore, "a cigar and some cigarettes" were sent out to him, and he was allowed to stay till eight o'clock in the evening. Yet when the mistress wanted the smallest of favours at the hand of her maid, a simple call at No. 16, and a simpler call at the house next door, the maid cannot bring herself to oblige. It would be difficult to put one's finger upon a case of blacker or paltrier ingratitude. Then again cook's "Oh, yes, I know you've done several things for me, but I never *asked* you to do them," may be considered about as wicked a retort as mortal tongue could frame. Nobody but a woman would be subtle enough to make such a remark. And when one learns that the mistress of these desirable maids pays one of them £22 a year, and the other £18, that "all the washing is put out, and a man employed to clean outsides of windows, and the maids are given an afternoon and evening out every week; every other Sunday the same hours, together

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with an entire day's holiday once a month, an afternoon for shopping whenever they like," the enormity of their conduct becomes obvious. Instance number two tells a similar tale, and I make no doubt that thousands of mistresses are in no better case than this poor lady whose bells are not answered, and whose friends are kept waiting on the doorstep. It is interesting to note that the statements I have quoted are the outcome of a suggestion on the part of the *Referee* that the feminine readers of the paper should band themselves into a League of Merciful Mistresses. If the boot had been on the other leg, and the *Referee* had suggested the formation of a League of Merciful Servants, we should have heard the other side of what is at best a squalid and unprofitable story. There can be no question that in the average household the relations between mistress and maid are far from amicable, and that on the whole the maid gets the pull. Such a state of things would not be tolerated in any establishment or organisation conducted by men. In the household you have two, three, or four women under the rule and direction of another woman. The result is mutiny, anarchy, and

true

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a breaking up of domestic peace. In business houses you have larger numbers of men and large numbers of women controlled by men, and, broadly speaking, matters work smoothly. The fact is, that when all has been said that can be said as to woman's capacity as a housekeeper, your only really capable housekeeper is man. It may perhaps be admitted that even a man cannot get on with the brand of cook and general nowadays supplied by the registry offices. But we must remember that the servant girl, like femininity in the bulk, has been demoralised by the modern craze for feminine equality and independence. If you teach a maid that she is as good as her master, it soon begins to occur to her that she is as good as her mistress. Quite frequently she is, as a matter of practice, a great deal better than her mistress, in the sense that she can do things which her mistress cannot do, and that her mistress does things (to her husband) which the servant girl would scorn to do. Hence the mistress is brought into contempt, and the maid practically rules the roast. The man who wishes to have his house managed on the lines of efficiency and economy should dismiss his female servants and try the

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true (male article, making it responsible to himself alone. One man of the right kidney can get through the work of three maids any day, and a manservant, if you treat him with anything like consideration, really does not know how to be disobedient or impertinent. There will be no settlement of the servant question till some such step be taken. "Intelligent" women have forsworn the cap and apron in favour of the quill and the typewriter. Why should not the large number of male clerks who have thus been thrown out of work turn their attention to domestic service? The dullest of men can make himself master of all there is to do in a house in a couple of days. He can clean boots, he can clean windows, scrub floors, polish silver, cook and wait at table far more skilfully than the best woman of them all. Why should he not advertise himself right off as cook-general, and demand a hundred a year for his reward. In view of the increased comfort a competent manservant would bestow upon the household, people would soon learn to pay him his price without grumbling, and there would be peace in the bosom of the family. I know several householders who have ventured upon the

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experiment, and in no case has it proved a failure. The only point to make sure of is that you have a proper understanding with John, and do not hand him over entirely to the clutches of your wife.

CHAPTER XVI

THE SINNER

As a criminal woman excels. There are certain mean forms of criminality which she has made peculiarly her own. It takes a woman to throw vitriol for example, and it takes a woman to run a baby farm with weekly killings for a few pounds. History and Madame Tussaud's are standing witnesses to woman's criminal competence. For the sake of decency we will draw a veil over both history and the waxworks. It is a hard saying but a true one that a bad woman is very bad indeed. And most women are more or less bad. The truth is not in them. Many of them drink. Some of them are kleptomaniacs and shoplifters. Some of them are wicked in other ways. If one were to believe the novelists and the women's rights people, one would be convinced that butter could not melt in a woman's mouth.

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Innocence of the most blue-eyed character is, according to these worthies, woman's chief attribute. She is too proud to beg and oh! she cannot steal. When she does steal it is for her child. All her failings lean to Virtue's side. When you catch her red-banded with a dozen of Mr. Whiteley's excellent spoons in her fingers, it is because the family at home are wanting spoons. One must make every allowance. The poor thing was distraught. She had had a difference with her husband, or words with the milkman, so that she could not resist the sight of blouses lying round loose with nobody to hold them. It is moral aberration and quite excusable even if found out. I shall probably find myself in great hot water for saying it, but I am of opinion that moral aberration is just as common among women as kissing. They simply cannot keep their little hands from picking and stealing. Persons who have shops have no doubts on the subject. They make provision for it in their profit and loss accounts. I have seen a woman slip a bottle of preserved fruit into her muff while the shopman wasn't looking, and step into her carriage in the sweetest way imaginable. And

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a well-known woman of fashion came away from a yacht launch the other day with three pairs of pliers and several small though useful brass fittings in her pocket. If you have a pretty and portable porcelain box, or a jewel case, or a little book, or a tiny ornament that you specially value, nail it down when women visitors call. This is very rude of me of course. Perhaps it shows that the character of my woman visitors—though I never have any—is not choice. But you, my friend, whose woman visitors are absolutely without reproach, do you not when you have had a crowd of them miss from their places sundry small articles? They were there, they are gone. It must be the servants or the cat. You do not discharge your servants, and you do not upbraid your cat. You should have kept the confounded thing locked up. So you should. Then there is the female toper. If she belong to the lower orders, she is a frightfully flagrant example. On the new black list, which is to save the country from alcoholic ruin, there are already more women than men. A man can carry a skinful of liquor like a gentleman. A woman never gets drunk like

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(a lady. The worst kind of woman toper, however, is never likely to appear on the black list; she is too secure in the remote fastnesses of her boudoir or bedroom for that. But she drinks, and drinks, and drinks. It may be Eau de Cologne, it may be whisky, or sweet champagne from the grocers. In any case there it is, and the man who has to pay and put up with it all could tell you things that would raise your hair.

(I am afraid that the most frightful and most prevalent of feminine wickednesses must not be named in print. It is a wickedness against the person, and against the constitution of the universe. Woman who would at one time be shamed at the thought of it, now apparently glories in it. She will talk of it to her women friends, married and unmarried, without restraint. Everybody knows about it, though it is not polite to write about it. And one cannot consider it without perceiving that one's contempt for the modern woman is based on very sure grounds. Not to put too fine a point upon it, she has brought her contempt for mankind and the order of things to the pitch of being at perpetual war with the prime duty of

not- and true

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womanhood. She will be wooed ; why of course—maids were made to be wooed. She will wed ; certainly she will wed—there is soft living in it. She will bear children—*will* she ? One perhaps, two perhaps, three perhaps. And then—well, three, my dear, is two too many. So that broadly speaking the British family shows a decided tendency to shrinkage. And it is women who giggle and tell one another why. Of old, women were respected because they were either chaste or the mothers of children. Nowadays they exhibit a tendency to be neither one nor the other.

CHAPTER XVII

GENERAL OPINION

LONELINESS in any crusade is not entirely desirable. In bringing one's hand down heavily upon a popular illusion, one likes to feel that the great and wise have supported one, at any rate, up to a point. Hence I venture to print the following string of apothegms culled from the writings of the great and wise. I hope sincerely that the perspiring reviewers will find them useful :

He knows little who tells his wife all he knows. My only books were woman's looks, and folly's all they've taught me. Had women no more charms in their bodies than in their minds we should see more wise men in the world. He seldom errs who thinks the worst he can of womankind. Were it not for women there would be no damnation. In wickedness the wit of woman was never yet found barren. Women are, at home,

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devils. Of all the plagues with which the world is cursed, of every ill a woman is the worst. Woman is mistress of the art of completely embittering the life of the person on whom she depends. Women, priests, and poultry have never enough. Oh, woman, woman, thou shouldst have few sins of thine own to answer for; thou art the author of such a book of follies in a man that it would need the tears of all the angels to blot the record out. A young man married is a young man marred. A ship is sooner rigged by far than a gentlewoman made ready. Better the devil's than a woman's slave. Men have many faults, women have but two; there's nothing good they say, and nothing right they do. There is hardly a strife in which a woman has not been the prime mover. A woman, a dog, and a walnut-tree, the more you beat them the better they be. Woman's preaching is like a dog's walking on his hinder legs—it is not done well; but you are surprised to find it done at all. Women's hearts are made of stout leather; there's a plaguey sight of wear in them. It is the cowardice of women makes them such intense haters. Most women have no character at

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al. Every woman is at heart a rake. Woman is seldom merciful. Woman's at best a contradiction still. Believe a woman or an epitaph. Frailty thy name is woman. Woman's faith and woman's trust—write the characters in dust. Heaven gave to woman the peculiar grace to spin, to weep, and cully human race. For never was it given to mortal man to lie so boldly as a woman can.

Some wicked wits have libelled all the fair,
With matchless impudence they style a wife
A dear-bought curse and lawful plague of life,
A bosom serpent, a domestic evil,
A night invasion, and a mid-day devil.

There never was a looking-glass that reflected an ugly woman. If you meet a woman on the way you are stepping heavenward. A woman and a white elephant do not pay for their keep. New wine and old women are abominations. A bad woman is worse than three Frenchmen. If there were no women there would be no churches. A woman wishes life to be one long moneymoon. There are no women angels. From the sea comes salt, from woman comes evil. There's nothing half so sweet in life as love's young dream. The woman is so hard upon the

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man. A man who can buy a parrot does not need a wife. A woman can make butter and trouble.

The foregoing clearly are shrewd sayings. Some of them are both ancient and hackneyed. All of them have come out of the mouths of either genius or experience. The fact that they may be found in almost any common dictionary of quotations is also in their favour. Woman has left more or less of a bitter feeling in the hearts of a great number of persons who were capable of writing down what they felt or what they had observed. If one were to apply oneself to the task, it would be possible to compile a whole volume of obiter dicta against women from the works of gallant modern writers. Even the treacliest of them knows in his heart that woman fails and is unsatisfactory and merits reproof. Truth like murder will out, and the carpet knights and ladies' men of latter-day fiction, not to say the cheeky irrepressible feminine writers thereof, do set down the truth sometimes. On the whole woman cannot be said to have been really popular at any time during the past thousand years. Saint Paul knew them, so did John Knox; so did Milton, so

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does Mr. Swinburne. Their record will not bear examination; they have had to be thumped into doing their duty by the race ever since the beginning of time. At present they need all the thumping the severest of men could find it in his heart to give them. Yet there is nobody to do it. It is all hats off, cloaks in the mud, and noses to the pavement—my lady will pass. You have to be civil to the sourest of them. When they make silly remarks you must applaud or be voted an ill-conditioned fellow. When they forswear the path of duty for the path of notoriety, you must say, "It is well, for the world is progressing." When they say, "I the Female am even as thou the Male," you must say, "Madam, I beg leave entirely to agree with you." I have no wish to be rude, or singular, but the spirit of my fathers rises within me when I think of such things. And between ourselves I will not have it.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SPORTSWOMAN

IN a certain sporting journal I have seen woman described as "a pal" and "one of the best." No doubt she is both, though one would like to be informed what the terms "pal" and "one of the best" really mean. In any case, woman nowadays takes a considerable hand in what is commonly called sport. She hunts, she shoots, she motes, she golfs, and she rides the bicycle. Also she goes racing, she lolls about on yachts, she plays billiards and hockey, and she is not unknown at the gaming-tables of the European littoral. All of which no doubt makes her a pal and one of the best. Time was when a little croquet, a little tennis, and a little discreet cycling, sufficed her. In these present days of grace she must needs go the whole sportive hog. It is the custom, among writers of belles lettres, to squeeze in a kind and respectful

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word for the British sportsman. That he is a fine, hearty beef and beer consuming fellow arrayed in large checks and fantastic riding breeches goes without saying. He is always willing to back his fancy ; he loves a horse as William Rufus is said to have loved the red deer ; he is fond of big cigars and whisky and soda ; he turns up at all the race meetings and hunting fixtures within his reach ; he gets through considerable moneys in these pursuits, and there are people who regard him as the backbone of the country. There are other people in the world who do not like him. They find his manners obtrusive, his talk futile, his get-up irritating, and his social usefulness questionable. It is with these persons that the present writer is disposed to agree. And deploring, as he does, the existence in our midst of an enormous body of professional and lay sportsmen who are simply sportsmen and nothing more, he cannot view with complacency the steady increase in the number of women who have gone over to sport, and apparently mean to stay there. A horsey woman is really not liked even by horsey men. Doggy women are perhaps a trifle less objectionable. because, when all is

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said, there is no great harm in being fond of a dog. But the shooting woman usually spoils the shoot ; yachting and women have nothing to do with one another ; no woman can play golf ; no woman should be trusted with the wheel of a motor-car that can make more than eight miles an hour ; no woman should be allowed to ride more than ten miles on a bicycle on any given day ; women who play billiards are the clothmaker's friends ; hockey is a ridiculous game when women play it ; and gambling on the part of women is downright wickedness. I am sorry to be compelled once more to stroke the perspiring reviewers the wrong way. They will rise in their thousands and quote what has just been said as an example of arrogant assertion unsupported by facts. For all that, I maintain that the facts are overwhelmingly on my side, and that any man who has at heart the best interests of any given sport is always sorry to see women dabbling in it. If it were not that the modern man is wholly given over to a sort of sprawling gallantry, women would never have been allowed to frivol with masculine pursuits at all. The modern man goes out for a bicycle ride, he spins merrily into

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the heart of the country, and his thoughts are still and peaceful. Suddenly there overtakes him a large female in a divided skirt. She bids him good morrow as one who is on an equality with him, and could he lend her a spanner and tighten her front tire a bit? Now if that early cyclist were not a glozing mass of gallantry, he would turn sharply on that female in the divided skirt and bid her avaunt and quit his sight. But being gallant, or as who should say decadent and soft, he is as a sheep overtaken by the butcher, and his spanner and his air-pump, not to mention many crawling bows, are at madame's service before she can say Jack Robinson. It is so right through the whole of the sports of the moderns. To go round the course at golf with the average woman simply knocks the bottom out of the game. One has either to get flirting or flattering, or both, and if at the last hole one has not flopped down on one's knees and uttered a pious declaration of love, one feels that the woman is somehow disappointed. Nine out of every ten sporting women go into sport either out of sheer vanity or for the purpose of raising a love-affair. And sport that is worth the name

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knows nothing of vanity, and nothing of erotics. The moment it associates itself with either of these things it becomes a flabby and decadent matter. So that it can more than spare the kind attentions of women.

Furthermore there is the ordinary stay-at-home, come-day-go-day man's side of the question. It has been noted by such an one that :

Of all the words of tongue or pen
The saddest are "New tyres again !"

A woman who does her duty by the Brighton road is not seen to more than ordinary advantage in the nursery. The "fearless horse-woman" may be the cynosure of grooms and stable-boys, but it is a hundred to one that if she bear you sons they will be unable to compete in the matter of mind with the average middle-sized rabbit. Sport and the management of households do not chime. A mortgaging of lands to pay a woman's racing debts is a sight to make the angels weep. Money spent in niblicks for women were far better spent in feeding-bottles for children. Sport in both maid and matron makes for masculinity, unattractiveness, hair pulling in

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the family circle, and early graves for all concerned. A man with a sporting wife is greatly to be commiserated; there are no buttons on his shirts, and his larder does not drop fatness. His wife is a sort of walking "Ruff's Guide"; the marvel is that she does not turn pugilist, and you can never be sure that she will not take it into her head to join a circus. Young men who feel it incumbent upon themselves to take a wife should flee all golfing, cycling, hunting, shooting, motoring, and skittle-playing women as they would flee the pestilence. It were better indeed to marry an apple-woman than any of the women who come under these categories. Croquet, lawn tennis, and the very least amount of cycling are all that a good woman should permit herself. Even calisthenics should be eschewed after leaving school. A woman with prize-fighter's muscles is bound to get hitting you sooner or later. Of late years husband-beating, though not a recognised form of sport, has become quite unpleasantly common. One does not hear about it because the proud spirit of man draws the line at the police court. Gallantry

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demands that you should take your licking like a gentleman. Above all you must not hit back. Hell holds no fury like a woman beaten at a scrapping match.

CHAPTER XIX

WIDOWS

THE common view of widows is coloured with a suspicion. Since that great middle-class writer, Charles Dickens, put it into the mouth of a gross person of the name of Weller to say, "Beware of vidders, Samivel," it has been impossible for a widow to show her head out of window without derision. Apart from the fact that a widow is a woman deserving of one's tenderness, inasmuch as she has lost the greatest blessing which woman can compass, namely, a husband, it seems a thousand pities that the public mind should have allowed itself to be prejudiced by the ill-considered dictum of a Daily Newsy author who spent the best part of his life caricaturing his own species. There is no reason in the world why one should be warer of vidders, Samivel, than of any other sort of woman. In the present state of society all women are dangerous, and

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the wise man will avoid them in so far as he is able, but he will not avoid or be ware of widows specially. Indeed it seems probable that so far from being the worst kind of women in the world, widows are really the best, that is to say, if there can be any best where women are concerned. It stands to reason that a woman who has buried a husband is either relieved or feels the loss of him. And in either case her understanding must be broader and ampler than that of her maiden sister who knows man only in the guise of a lover, or of her married sister whose husband is still in the land of the living, and in feminine eyes therefore an object of pity scorn, and contempt. The widow in short has been through the mill. Charles, no doubt, was not the choicest of husbands. His failings were manifold, including perhaps a fondness for good living, and an utter lack of social ambition. While he lived, poor man, he was starved and nagged. At times he irritated to the verge of apoplexy the lady who now weeps for his memory. She did not approve of his manners, she did not approve of his friends, she loathed his idiot quips, and grew in time to hate every

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particular inch of him. But the man is dead and all these things are forgotten. In point of fact the widow's private opinion is that he was a jolly good sort. And this is not the sweet spirit of forgiveness, but the awakening of one who has lost something that she did not know how to value. Hence, as I have said, the widow should be the wisest of woman-kind. Being a woman it is hard for her to change her spots, and perhaps she never succeeds in getting altogether rid of them. But I believe it is safe to say that, as a rule, she does her best. I do not find in widows that undisguised ferinity which characterises other women. When she sees a man, no matter how imperfect he may be, she remembers Charles, and the stony feminine heart of her softens. When married women go to her with cackle about the brutality of the men who ought to be their lords, she does not egg them on to defiance, nor talk glibly of judicial separations and the breaking up of homes. She agrees that the ladies' lords are brutes, but she does not get much of the accent of conviction into her voice when she says it. That is why the women with live husbands privily do not love her. And when

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Miss Giddy bursts in upon her with confidences about Rupert's clumsiness and bad taste and want of enterprise in the matter of outings, the widow sighs a bit and says that she wonders why it is that young people cannot agree as they did in the golden day when she and Charles went a-courting. On the whole widows are very decent women. They have learnt their lesson. At least five of the seven devils that frequent a woman's bosom have been cast out of them. The two that are left are sometimes sufficient to keep the temperament nicely soured and the eye prettily jaundiced. The rest, however, instead of being venom and fury is meekness and skim milk. When I look out upon life in my calmest moments I am prone to wish that all women were widows. If they were, the amount of human suffering on the earth would, to say the least, be sensibly reduced. And when one went a-wooing or a-wedding one would be appreciated at one's true worth. The courting of widows would appear to be a much less nervous matter than the courting of maids. As a rule it is rapider, and more economical. If you say to a widow "Wilt thou be mine?" after a ten minutes'

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acquaintance, she neither faints nor calls for the police. It is not so with maids. If you marry a widow you don't have to furnish a house. Neither do you have to invest large sums of money in works of art, your bride's possessions in the way of portraits of the late Charles being more than sufficient to cover all the walls. There is, of course, just a chance that the late Charles may prove a sort of ghostly fly in the ointment of your wedded bliss, but if you take your spouse's generous panegyrics of the late Charles as a philosopher should take them, you will find them quite soothing. For when all is said and done they amount to the gratifying admission that man is only a very little lower than the angels. Dr. Johnson married a widow and lived to a reasonably ripe old age. He was a wise man. He liked women better than he liked Scotchmen, which goes to show that his widow-wife did not greatly annoy him. If Shakespeare had married a widow, the whole aspect of literary woman-worship might have been changed. Somebody ought really to write a love play with a good round white-cheeked sensible widow for Juliet. The affair would not end in tragedy and bloodshed, but in oily and comfortable peace.

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For widows who, as it were, remain single out of respect to Charles's memory, I have nothing but praise, provided they can prove that no live man has lately sought their hand in marriage. Charles's memory is undoubtedly worth respecting, and it is the business of every widow worth the name to make up for the scandalous way in which she treated him by respecting it. At the same time, and other things being equal, respect for Charles's memory should not be allowed to deprive James Henry of a delectable wife. James Henry is one of God's creatures, and if he has had nous enough to fall in love with a widow, he should not fail of his reward.

Of grass widows little need be said. They are an empirical, base, and colourable imitation of the real article. They are also the devil in petticoats, and the mammon of unrighteousness with its hair done up. It were better to flirt with a crocodile than with some of them. The grass widow's ways are the ways of foolishness, and the end of them is folly. She seeketh whom she may devour, and if she once gets hold of him she invariably devours him. You shall know her by the

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cock of her head, and the very taking nature of her blouses, not to mention the neatness of her shoes, and the unreserved character of her conversation. Also she has pretty hands, and pretty eyes, and pretty lips, and a way on her that would interfere with the ordered pulsations of the heart of a bishop. All the same, she is the woman of women, and therefore a deadly upas tree. Go not near her, flee from her, pass by on the other side.

CHAPTER XX

PROPERTY

IN deciding at King's Bench a difference between husband and wife, one of his Majesty's Judges lately remarked that since the passing of the Married Woman's Property Act a wife appears to have no duties or responsibilities at all, and the relations between husband and wife appear to be a matter of business. Here clearly is a Daniel come to judgment. Mr. Justice Lawrence—let us give him his name—puts his finger on the place and says, thou ailest here and here. There can be no doubt that the Married Woman's Property Act is the great bulwark of the emancipated woman faction. It is not so much the practical working of the Act that matters as its moral effect. The right of single women to properties which they might inherit or otherwise acquire has never been questioned. Any decently constituted man,

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having the fortune or misfortune to marry a woman so blest, would in the nature of things see to it that her own estate and general belongings remained hers after marriage, Married Woman's Property Act or no Married Woman's Property Act. I do not suppose for a moment that the Act has made any but the very slightest difference in what has long been the general custom in such a matter. Men do not want women's property. Nothing is less dignified than the position of a man who lives upon his wife's means, and of a thousand and one kinds of undesirable wives the least desirable is the kind who has more money than one's self. Usually, however, the property of the woman one marries consists of the garments she stands up in, a trunk full of odds and ends, and an assemblage of electro-plated articles and photograph frames, which have come to her in the guise of wedding presents. And to give her her due, at the beginning of things she is disposed to be rather generous, and to allow you to use the electro-plated fish-knives at your own table, and to put a photograph of your sister into one of the photograph frames. There is little or no *meum et tuum* about the aver-

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age bride. People who possess nothing do not commonly insist upon the earmarking of possessions. Even later, when the blushing impecunious bride is lost in the implacable I'll-spend-your-money-for-you wife, community of goods and income between husband and wife is the rule. And although the Married Woman's Property Act enables a woman to transfer sums of money from her housekeeping account to a purely private account, and makes those sums absolutely her own, few women have sense enough, or enough of the spirit of economy, to take advantage of the opportunity. Neither does a woman seem to be aware that if she purchases, say, a piece of furniture with her husband's money, and the shopman makes out a receipt in her name, the piece of furniture is absolutely hers and not her husband's at all.

In the larger practice, therefore, the Married Woman's Property Act is a dead letter. There was never any real need for it; there is precious little real need for it at present. Its moral effects, however, have been of a most serious nature. Women, like savages, are exceedingly susceptible to the moral effect. Fine clothes, a judicious display of

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diamonds and sovereigns, a clean shave, a winning smile, and a pretty manner go incalculably further with womenkind than all the down-at-heel wisdom and honesty in the world. Also, like savages, women have subtle and inexplicable means of communicating with each other without spoken, written, or other concrete messages. Nine out of ten of them will tell you quite truthfully, if you tackle them on the subject, that they have never heard of the Married Woman's Property Act; they are not acquainted with its provisions, and they cannot call to mind an example of its operations. Yet since the passing of that Act, seventy-five per cent. of English women have been transformed into what one may term boudoir-lawyers. Give them half a chance, and they will enter hotly into the most sordid discussions as to ownerships, and in true forensic fashion back up their arguments with leading cases, which they remember vaguely as "something I saw in the paper the other day."

The idea of separate estate has indeed gradually given rise to the idea of separate interest, and separate interest as between husband and wife is about the most woful

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thing that can happen to them. In the bad old days when separate estate and separate interest were not thought about, a man was master of himself and of his household. It is certainly by the man that the family, as we nowadays know it, has been established and sustained. It was the man who took a wife, and who provided herself and her offspring with food and shelter thereafter. It was the man who defended the woman and her offspring from all possible harms. He fought for them, hunted for them, and necessarily stood between them and the wind. His reward was the devotion of the woman and the respect of the offspring. To this day he remains what he has always been, namely, the husband or houseband. And if you look properly into him you will find that, as a rule, he is considerably more of a domesticated animal than the average woman.

Formerly a wife's place was by the side of her husband; nowadays she gads about at her own sweet will, and spends from three to six months of the year in other people's houses. In most properly constituted house-parties, married women and bachelors preponderate. It is reasonable to suppose that

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the husbands of the married women do not violently object to their spouses' little jaunts, but objection or no objection the little jaunts are religiously indulged in. If you talk to these absentee wives, as it were, if you inquire, say, after the health and whereabouts of the men they have promised to love, honour, and obey, you may see some pretty smiling, and come deviously to many choice instances of wifely love and separate interest. That tittering Mrs. Private Member, for example, will tell you that Mr. Private Member, otherwise Dick,—who, by the way, went into Parliament to satisfy the caprice of this same titterer,—simply cannot tear himself away from that stuffy House of Commons, and those idiotic Committees. Besides (and this with confidential looks), he considers Lady So-and-So (her hostess) a quite wicked old woman. “I think,” adds Titterer, plaintively tapping her dainty shoe, “she is a dear old thing. All the same I know she doesn't like Dick and Dick doesn't like her.” The good old rule that a wife should choose her friends among the friends of her husband is, of course, an antiquated, outrageous, and intolerable rule. If Dick doesn't like my friends,

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so much the worse for Dick ; trying nights in the House, the lone man battling gloriously and from the back benches for the things I want, do not matter the twinkling of a shoe buckle to me. His love is abounding. Perhaps it hurts him that I should be here, but I don't think it does, otherwise he would insist upon my going back to town. And you know there is such a thing as being too kind to a man. If it were only in the matter of friends that separate interest crops up men in the lump might grin and bear it—and take measures. But there are countless other questions. A man is fond of the country ; his wife dotes upon the town. A man cannot abide motor-cars ; his wife could set up her everlasting rest in them. A man loves yachting ; his wife cannot abide the sea. A man is devoted to horticulture ; his wife considers gardens a great nuisance. Examples might be multiplied indefinitely. In the old day such differences do not appear to have occurred. The ancient bear and forbear principle seems to have smoothed things along, and the tastes of man and wife were to all intents and purposes identical. In this twentieth-century time it is considered rather

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smart to differ radically from one's husband in the matter of one's pursuits. A woman should have a mind of her own, my dear, and if, as is generally the case, she has no mind at all, she should at least pretend to have one. It promotes discord in the marital relation, and that is very good for the husband. Complacent wives, you know, are invariably neglected. If you let a man have too much of his own way he is sure to be a brute to you. In short, if you agree with your husband in any particular matter, important or unimportant, the poor man will wax fat with contentment and die suddenly of apoplexy, which, of course, would never do. Keep him on tenterhooks, live with him only half the year ; when he wishes you to go this way, be most careful to go the other ; thwart him at every point. If he wishes to go to Paris, decide that it is absolutely essential that you should go to Brighton. If he wishes to buy a house at Broadstairs, tell him that nothing in the world will induce you to live out of South Kensington. If he admires a picture, tell him it isn't art. If he says thick soup, always say clear. If he says it is a nice morning, don't believe him ; he is luring you

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on. In brief, never weary of being incompatible. It is incompatibility that keeps husbands at home and the clubs empty. Besides, never to concur with Charlie is a plain and untraversable indication that you are a woman of character and independence.

The separate interest is working greater harm in society than pretty well all the other ills to which society is susceptible put together. Without it the married bachelor and the grass widow, who now so cumber the ground, would scarcely exist. Half the scandals which come to light in the divorce courts are purely affairs of the separate interest. Mr. B. didn't hunt, Mrs. B. did. So did Mr. C. Hence two fine fat fresh cases for Mr. Justice J. I know a man well who asked to be introduced to his own wife at a country house. He had not seen the lady for eight months, and meanwhile her hair had come out of its peroxide of hydrogen. Even among the lower middle classes the splitting up of families, particularly at holiday seasons, has become quite usual. Ma and Maud have a fancy for Yarmouth, and to Yarmouth they go. Pa and Claude, on the other hand, yearn for the lake district, and the lake district gets

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them. There is absolutely nothing wrong about it, excepting that it did not ought to be. The blackest of pessimists can foreshadow no more appalling condition of society than that condition of society which will be the logical outcome of the tendencies of the present moment. When woman has once established her independence; when she has made herself the equal of man socially and legally; when she has made the marriage bond as little of a bond for herself as it can be for a certain class of men; when she has whistled maternity down the wind, and chastity out of the category of the virtues, she will not have gone much further than she now pretends to have gone. But she will have brought about the destruction of the family, the humiliation of the race, and the complete degradation of her own sex. A home, a fireside, a husband, children, a little church-going, a little reading of innocuous writers, thirty years of small joys and small sorrows, thirty years of faithful love and careful housewifery, may mean a commonplace and undistinguished life. On the other hand, all the wisdom, and all the philosophy in the world, can suggest no better, or nobler, or

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more satisfying life for a woman. In other directions she may compass a certain degree of achievement ; she may attract momentary attention to herself by doing something nearly as well as a man could have done it ; she may be bracketed equal with a senior wrangler ; she may found a league, or rake together the money for building a hospital ; she may scrub the stairs and put vinegar on the aching heads of her drunken sisters in the slums ; she may devote the fine flower of her wifehood to rescue work or tract distribution, or teaching in school, or running bucket-shops, or banging typewriters ; but the end of it all is dust and ashes, apples of an exceeding bitter flavour ; a maimed and incomplete existence ; a lonely and unbeautiful old age. The separate interest will not do. The separate estate is not of the slightest consequence.

(The only property, that amounts to anything, a woman can really have is a good husband.

CHAPTER XXI

JEWELLERY

THE bride cannot forget her ornaments. Rings on her fingers, bells on her toes ; coral clasps and amber studs ; diamonds, opals, pearls ; amethyst, emerald, turquoise, ruby, beryl, onyx, chrysoprase, jade, and jet—women will have them. If you watch from a high window in the West the stream of carriages proceeding to the King's Court, or look casually at a Covent Garden audience on a big night, you may begin by child-like dim degrees to understand what it means to be a jeweller. It seems probable that the early man who possessed women folk marked his sense of such possession by adorning them with irremovable necklets, armlets, or anklets of metal. The modern man comes along with his fearful and wonderful engagement rings, with his broad bright band of guinea gold, with his subsequent and very occasional

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offerings of pearls on strings, and diamonds or paste in tiaras. The woman who can withstand such blandishments has not been born. She will hug you for them,—one hug for a cheap ring, two hugs for a dearer one, three hugs for pearls, four hugs for diamonds. On the whole it is worth it. One's difficulty lies in keeping up the supply. Gentlemen who own diamond mines, and can produce fresh goods every morning at breakfast, must lead lives of unalloyed bliss. For the woman who comes down to kidneys and bacon, and finds a new plateful of diamonds in front of her every time, really couldn't be unkind to you, bad lot though she may be by nature. Diamonds are the last infirmity of women and starting-price bookmakers. Both of them glory in a scintillation which is taken by all the world to indicate wealth beyond the dreams of avarice. When one comes to think of it Golconda and Kimberley are women's affairs. Sweat and blood, slavery, fraud, millionairedom, and innumerable other ills, all for the decking of a milk-white woman with bits of glitter! Vulgar sequins and the broken looking-glass of commerce were more honourable. That snowy bosoms

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should lift and lower fortunes as they rise and fall is no doubt highly interesting from a dynamic point of view. Also the bigger the fortune that madam may display the greater no doubt is her husband's credit, and the greener the envy of the other women. I suppose, too, that the smoulder and twinkle of these accumulations of jewels have an æsthetic value. All the same, nobody but a woman would wear them. The maddest exquisite that ever got into breeches could not bring himself to the diamond necklace. It is as though somebody donned a ruff of thousand-pound notes. There would be a crinkle and a stiffness and a want of ordinari-ness about such a ruff, that might be reckoned entirely distinguished. And I am not so sure that æsthetic value might not be made to come in in view of the obvious prettiness of the papers. But the thing will not be done till some woman tries it; and then all the other women would be frantic to follow suit. Meanwhile, we who have got them go on with our diamonds, and we who have not got them go on with our paste. I am pretty sure that the devil smacks his lips at the sight of it all.

From the wearers of diamonds the lower

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orders of women take their pattern. They cannot let themselves alone, they must have necklets, and bracelets, and brooches of sorts. Nine carat gold and good imitation are better than nothing. There is no quarter of London so slummy that it cannot boast of its jeweller's shop. The jewellery may be cheap—all on this tray 1*s.* 6*d.*—but it is there in profusion; women buy it and wear it, and bestow some slight percentage of it upon the male persons whom they are doing their best to inveigle into marriage. It is quite true that men of almost every class wear a certain amount of jewellery. Even the late Dr. Parker had diamond studs to his shirt; but I believe that they were a present from a lady. Somehow men do come by rings and pins and sleeve-links and “gold alberts” in that way. It is difficult to refuse the gifts of the temperamentally ungenerous. Hence no doubt Dr. Parker's diamond studs, and many another good man's stupid scarf pin and belcher ring. But if the world were populated only by men the jeweller would starve. A man with three rings is aware that there is something woefully wrong about him. A man with a bracelet—save and excepting, of course, our Sovereign Lord, King Edward the

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Seventh, whom God preserve, and who has a right to do what he blooming well likes—should be eschewed. Woman, on the other hand, puts four rings on her finger, and jingles as she goes with bracelets and bangles, and nobody says her nay. Her vanity, her love of display, her tenderness for the bauble and the gewgaw, are so generally understood that they pass without comment. I do not for a moment suggest that women should cease from adorning themselves with jewels to the limit of their means. If they did not practise some such art they would scarcely be worth looking at. But the very fact that their beauty needs, as it were, a little touching up, that without artificial and adventitious settings off they can face neither the light of day nor the lamps of night, points its own moral. Besides, if you take, as you reasonably may take, each piece of feminine jewellery to represent even a moment's gratitude and kindly feeling on the part of the woman that wears it, there is some soul of goodness in it after all. That pair of blobby ear-rings which so offend the little stars—John was kissed when he brought them home; surely therefore there is a blessedness about them. That

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brooch mayhap marks the patching-up of a silly misunderstanding, brought on no doubt by the woman, but nevertheless better patched up. For each of those rings, for that fat bangle, for that necklace, for that brilliant headgear, perhaps an equally good word might be said. Let us hope that it is so. A love-token, a token of love renewed, or of a truce between wranglers, is not to be despised, even though the price of it be great, and the end of it vanity.

CHAPTER XXII

THE BUN-SHOP

BUN-SHOPS, one takes it, are more or less of a modern institution. When men had homes and competent wives they ate their meals in the place of domesticity made and provided for such purposes. A man breakfasted at home, he lunched at home or went to some good inn where an ordinary was served, and he dined at home. All that, however, was yesterday; to-day for a very large number of men who have to work for their livings it is bun-shop, bun-shop, bun-shop all the way. In London and the larger English cities bun-shops are almost as plentiful as blackberries. They must number many thousands; they pay, and they are always populous. It is difficult to understand the peculiar charm such establishments exercise upon the minds of male persons of the clerk and counter-attendant class. At first blush

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one might imagine that these excellent young gentlemen took their meals at bun-shops because of the reasonableness of the average bun-shop tariff. But on inquiry, and after a week's investigation in sundry extensive bun-shops, I have come to the conclusion that tariff is not really the secret of the bun-shop's success. Neither does the food, though on the whole appetising and cleanly served, account for the rush of male customers at the hours of lunch and late tea. In point of fact the glory of the bun-shop is the bun-shop girl. She wears a white cap, a white apron, and a black frock. She brings to you cups of tea, pieces of cake, chops, eggs, and brown scones briskly and always with a dash of hauteur. She is an emancipated woman to the extent of appearing to have no heart. The common impression that she will flirt with you at sight, as it were, is entirely erroneous. Her favours, even to the tune of a smile, are not to be lightly won. If you will get on nodding terms with her you must visit her particular bun-shop and sit at her particular table at least twice a day for a week. At the end of this period of probation you may venture, without fear of

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being snubbed, on a small remark as to the niceness of the day. You receive a reply which is obviously intended to be a trifle kind, and not merely civil. And thereafter the bun-shop girl is yours. You may go to her shop all the days in the year and be sure of a welcome, and a little more attention than is shown to the chance customer. I am credibly informed that the proprietors of bun-shops experience some difficulty in retaining the services of their bun-shop girls for any lengthy period, the reason being that the bun-shop girl is greatly desired in marriage by the clerk and the counter-attendant. She may serve your turn for a year, and bring no end of trade to your bun-shop, but she has the defect of her qualities; that is to say, she may be snapped up at any moment by a customer who wants a wife. It is the fashion to credit the bun-shop girl not only with flirting, but with a tendency to unseemly giggling with her pet customers, while customers who do not enjoy the advantage of her friendship are left to fume over coffee that never comes, and hot pies that were ordered quite ten minutes ago. These aspersions against the fair fame of the bun-shop girl are,

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in my opinion, almost without foundation. I have lately had twelve meals at twelve bun-shops, and the twelve bun-shop girls who waited upon me treated me like a man and a brother. Of course their waiting is not as good as men's waiting, neither do you get from them the unobtrusive affability which is a competent waiter's chief charm. Broadly speaking, however, they do their best, and I should imagine that complaints about them are few. On the other hand, the fact that they marry in such numbers and with such expedition rather baffles one. For if the truth must be told, the bun-shop girl is not, as a rule, pretty, and she is really none too young. Her conversation is limited; if you say anything funny to her, she has a painful way of saying "Goo-on!" she is quite frequently anæmic and ill-built, and she is so "practical" and businesslike that somehow you cannot conceive of her as the heroine of even the mildest of romances. Yet the fact remains that she marries. This fact possibly does not amount to much in a sociological sense. At the same time I regard it as a fact of considerable significance. It helps to throw the right kind of light

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upon the modern woman. It points to a condition of affairs which is at bottom deplorable. The real secret of the prowess of the bun-shop girl lies in the circumstances that you may woo her only at odd moments. A look, a momentary pressure of the hand, a hurried whisper, a subdued smile, these in the main are the stuff out of which the courtship of the bun-shop girl is compounded. You cannot walk out with her every evening; you cannot have lengthy talks with her; you seldom see her in her home. So that you have to take her all for granted, and marry her in order to get to know her. Other kinds of girls do not possess these fascinations. They are available to be walked with under the moon, they play tennis with you, they ask you to tea at their parents' houses, and they give you delightful opportunities for declaring any small passion that may have flickered up in your withered heart. Somehow, if you are a clerk or a counter-attendant, the whole business bores you, and in the long run you "chuck it." I believe you are wise, just as I believe you are foolish, when you marry Miss Bun-Shop. She will probably feed you for ever on bun-shop.

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Her imagination as a caterer is bounded on the north by brown-bread scones, and on the south by cold 'am and a roll and butter. She is a woman, and a woman who, when you come to think of it, has had very bad chances.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE STAGE

THE majority of women are natural-born actresses. Give her the semblance of a doll, and your female child of five is a touching mamma. She exudes all the tricks and all the tendernesses of the elder variety. On the whole, she is a good deal kinder and more attentive than the elder variety, and on the whole distinctly more amusing. With years her acting loses much of its spontaneity, not to say its innocence. Some time in her teens woman becomes a conscious actress. She pulls her gifts together, so to speak; the arts of deception grow upon her, and she gets the better of you in all encounters. Mothers, who were once daughters themselves, naturally understand their daughters, and if you canvass them on the question, you will find that in their private hearts mothers do not entirely respect their daughters. A

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full-blown ruddy-faced matron of fifty is herself an excellent actress, but she has got so used to her part that she plays without knowing it. On the other hand, she has perception enough to recognise that the young thing of sixteen who calls her "Ma" is as full of subterfuge and pretence as an egg is full of meat. I have known full-blown ruddy-faced matrons, who could not say a sincere thing to save their lives, to weep in secret over the deceptions practised by their daughters. The very finest acting in the world is commonly done by maidens who are in the happy process of being wooed. The infatuated cometh up as a flower exactly when he is expected. He pours forth his idiot tale into that virginal ear, and the blue-eyed one knows that it would never do to be natural about it. She knows further that Claude is not beautiful. He is ungainly of build; his trousers bag at the knees; in the heat of his passion he perspires freely. Taking him all for all, he may fairly be set down in your tablets for a ridiculous object. The blue-eyed one, however, is well aware that the moment of her unmarried life has arrived. Instead of picking up

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Baggy-Trousers and kissing him as an honest girl should, she assumes a far-away look, and there is a sufficient touch of pain in her fresh young face. She has read something in Longfellow about "Standing with reluctant feet, where the brook and river meet, womanhood and childhood fleet." According to the books her fragrant girlhood is now slipping from her like a dream; the whole fibre of her is expected to tremble and to shake; and tremble and shake it invariably does. She wrings her little pocket-handkerchief, as who should say "I am sick of this seeming show," and the poor devil in the baggy-trousers is made to feel that he has perpetrated the grossest of outrages. In point of fact it is very pretty of blue-eyes, and it is also, and to a very considerable extent, histrionics of the purest kind. Of course Baggy-Trousers never suspects till it is too late. How should he discern, poor fellow, that the lady was really dying to take him? And when you come to think of it, what good would it have done him had he discerned? During a lengthy courtship, possibly, he begins to smell histrionic rats. He perceives that certain smiles are unreal, certain

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speeches palpably theatrical, certain winning fetches, airs, graces, and what not, palpably put on. His faith falters within him. If he said "Please do not grin like that" or "Will you do me the favour to remember that I am more than seven?" there would be poutings and flushings and a scornful flinging away of his ring. So that he keeps his mouth shut and learns his bitter lesson. Then there is the wedding-day. The bride is pallid. Brides have to be. She says "I will" in a voice that is not her own, because it is the thing to do. She weeps upon her mother's neck after cold chicken and wedding-cake, because if she didn't the company would cry shame upon her. And all the way to Dover she does her best to pass herself off for a married lady of many years standing.

Taking woman's married life from the day that it commences to the period when she dons the cap and frills of age, it is safe to assert that you will find therein an amount of play-acting which, from sundry points of view, is nothing short of astounding. At the beginning of his tragedy *Baggy-Trousers* is treated to a fresh dramatic trifle almost every day. "Going Home to Mother" is, as

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has already been pointed out, one of the most striking items in Mrs. Newly-Wed's repertoire. But she has plenty of other pieces in stock, and all of them are calculated to rend the heart of the audience for whom they are intended. For example, there is that famous bit of theatricality "Hysterics: or How I Get my Way." This little work is calculated to make pale the beefiest Baggy-Trousers of them all. Also it makes him feel a brute, it humbles him, brings him to his knees, and destroys his self-respect. Likewise there is "I am Sitting up all Night, Willie," a bewitching morceau trotted out on the occasions of good Willie's latenesses at the office. It is worth mention that "I am Sitting up all Night, Willie," is usually preceded by a sort of curtain-raiser called "The Lady and the Telegram"—doors open about the hour of dinner, performance entirely for the benefit of Madam's servants. The big thing in the show, of course, is the handing in of the telegram. Madam clutches at it as who should say, "He was and he is not." She reads the thrifty sixpennyworth of words. She gasps. She strikes her lilywhite hand against her Paris corsage. She says, "Oh,

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my poor husband!" She faints. The gaping attendants sprinkle her with the dinner water; they clap her palms and burn feathers under her nose; and inquire of deaf ears if they shall send for the doctor. Madam comes to and asks pathetically where she is. Her eye catches once more that fateful orange envelope. With a little sob of resignation she says, "You may serve dinner." And they serve it. Later, she retires to her piano, or her novel, and eats much post-prandial chocolate. Go to bed, indeed! Not she. And Baggy-Trousers arriving circumspectly at something to 2 A.M. finds her fully robed in a lounge chair, simulating the sleep of exhausted childhood. He "wakes" her with such kisses as are at his command. She starts. She gazes for a moment at Baggy-Trousers as one distraught, and she pushes him from her. "You have been drinking," she says. "My own precious," says Baggy-Trousers, "I have partaken but twice of the whisky and soda." "We are drifting apart," saith she, wringing her little pocket-handkerchief; and with a Parthian "That it should come to this!" she has swept from the room. Curtain. At

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breakfast next morning, Act II. Madam very pale and chilly, Baggy-Trousers repentant and broken-hearted. Madam declines all offers of fish, ham, eggs, marmalade, and toast. She makes an effort with half a cup of coffee, but each sip palpably chokes her. She has no conversation. To Baggy-Trousers's trembling inquiries and suggestions she answers in old, unhappy, far-off monosyllables. She wishes Baggy-Trousers to weep. If he is a fool he will weep. If he is a wise man he will eat all the breakfast, and go off to the city. By the time he has got as far as the breakfast-room door a pleading voice will say, "Baggy-Trousers." He will turn miserably on his heel and say "Yes, dear?" Then the pleading voice will say, "Kiss me, Baggy-Trousers." He will do it. Madam weeps, is patted on the back, and smiles through her tears. Curtain.

In middle life, as I have said, women become chronically insincere. Their days are a pretence; they vaunt themselves before the neighbours; all their energies are bent on the keeping up of ridiculous appearances. The middle-aged matron invariably lives not

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in the station of life to which it has pleased God to call her, but in a station of life which is at least one and often two or three stations above her. Her father who kept a shop and died shopkeeping has been play-acted into a sweeter condition; for Madam will tell you that he was a colonel. Her mother who, prior to marriage was for a season tenth parlourmaid to the Duchess of Kilburn and Brondesbury has been play-acted into the cousin of her Grace, and "a lady in her own right," whatever that may mean. Thus have we military and noble blood in our veins, and we may therefore look upon the people next door with contempt, and implore our sons to be gentlemen and our daughters to be ladies. Likewise we have our "afternoon," our little dinner-parties, and our small dances, as is the manner of the highest in the land. It is of no consequence that our "afternoons" seldom come off, that our dinners are filthy and served on other people's plate, and that the small dance, given after a couple of postponements in the height of the off season, makes serious cracks in the dining-room ceiling. One must do as Rome does. Baggy-Trousers, by this time waxing bald

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and bankrupt, winks at it all, and does his best to play the great gentleman to Madam's great lady. At times, however, he sighs, and at times he shivers. Why, oh why, cannot we be ourselves? he wonders. The eternal play-actress has ordained that it shall be otherwise, O Baggy-Trousers, and it is idle for thee to kick against the pricks of "long descent" and deep-seated snobbery.

In all the circumstances, therefore, one cannot wonder that on the mimic stage, which is not life, women do occasionally contrive to make a do of it. Some of them indeed have shone thereon, and been called stars. There are many reasons for supposing that the actor's art is the lowest and meanest of all the arts. On the face of it, it is largely a matter of deceptions. The person with the greatest gift for representing himself to be other than he really is, may be reckoned your greatest actor. The tricks of the business are innocent enough; but they are tricks nevertheless, and to play them in private life is to be a poseur, or a charlatan. Actors are born not made; hence it comes to pass that if you are a born actor brains and education do not matter. The majority

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of actors have neither brains nor education. With half a dozen bright exceptions they are the shallowest and least cultivated men in the world. It is only of late that they have dared to consider themselves respectable, and they are just as respectable now as ever they were. With remembrance of the thwacks which were once administered to Mr. Clement Scott before me, it were well, peradventure, that I said no word about that paragon of all the virtues, the female actress. Yet here goes, pardie. The female actress is a woman. Quite frequently she is a vulgar woman. Almost always she is an overdressed woman. You cannot get the women who sit in the stalls to admit that she is always a modest woman. Unless she is extremely lucky the parts given her to play are not calculated to develop the better side of her womanhood. A woman who can play the heavy courtesan, or the bright cocotte for three hours every evening may be as chaste as ice and as pure as snow, but she will never get anybody but men to believe it. Somehow, really good women can fill really wicked parts to perfection. We are aware, however, in what

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precise words Mr. Alexander Pope would have explained that. Lastly, the female actress, like the male actor, is, as a rule, eaten up with an idiot vanity, a superfeminine tendency to hysteria, and a moral benightedness, such as is probably shared by the female hottentot. As a rule, it is difficult to take delight in her either on or off the stage. She is a trifle too staccato in the one place, and a trifle too bohemian in the other. She may be amusing, but she is not good for posterity.

While women as a body have, I think, a contempt for the female actress who plays her part in public, there comes a time in the history of most maidens and young wives when they pine for a career upon the stage. This is especially the case with young women whose fathers or husbands have suffered reverses, or have been fools enough to take their daughters or wives too frequently to the play. The proper treatment for a stage-struck woman has not yet been devised. You might as well attempt to cure the moth of its yearning towards the candle. Unless drastic measures be taken at the outset singed wings are not infrequently the result. The

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only way out is to get your woman invited to some sort of a function where she may meet a dozen or so rough and tumble female actresses.

CHAPTER XXIV

WASHERWOMEN

IN the golden prime of things before we had steam bakeries and steam laundries the washerwoman was a type of female creature known of all men. Either you had her for a mother (or it may have been a poor relation) or she came to your house once a fortnight, and did up your household linens, flannels, and dickies in the approved style. So far as one remembers her she was a worthy and reasonably subdued female. Her bonnet and shawl of a dingy black, her pinched red nose and angular red elbows, not to mention her clawy hands, which crinkled so in the suds, are not to be forgotten. Also one has a notion that this washerwoman was a rare gossip, blessed with a garrulity which never wearied, and that she possessed, too, an appetite which compelled her to five hearty meals per diem. She drank beer all day and a little drop

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of gin to go home with. She used mottled soap and a dolly-stick ; if you caught her in the garden her mouth was full of pegs. Her hair was done in a curly grey knot like a little pig's-tail, and her conversation bristled with "which's." On the whole you seemed to have been remarkably good friends with her, and some of the tales she used to tell you about the little boys or "young masters" in other houses which she visited fill you with envy to this day. When the family wash was finished and the linen sent to dry, the washerwoman took her frugal supper of cheese and bread and onions, with a pint of ale, warmed, you remember, by the simple process of stirring it up with a red-hot poker, and went out into the night, bearing in her hand the simple cloth-full of broken victuals and cast-off clothing, which it was understood would be of use to her in the bosom of her own family. There was a touch of sadness in her going away, she bade you good-night with a sort of quaver, and insisted upon kissing you limply. She said that she "knowed" that you would one day grow up to be a great and good man like your father. And so she passed, and the garden gate clicked behind her. I

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am inclined to think that taking her all in all we shall not look upon her like again. Usually she was a widow, she did her work well, and there could be no doubt that she was a continual source of entertainment to kitchen-maids and small children. Nowadays, of course, she is almost as extinct as the dodo. No longer does she put the house into its fortnightly pother of steam and soapy smells, and the garden gate clicks after her no more. When you want any washing done you send a postcard to a laundryman, who calls round with a van and last month's account, and takes away your goods in a prosaic basket. At the same time the washerwoman of sorts has not entirely disappeared from our midst. The older variety, it is true, is dead; the newer variety, however, is with us, and bids fair to remain. Most Scotchmen, for example, are washerwomen, and we do not seem able to get rid of them. And to whatever department of life you may turn, you will find more or less comfortably ensconced therein, large numbers of sad, uncertain, inept persons whom it is only just to describe as washerwomen. To all intents and purposes the washerwoman of to-day is a man who has so

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far forgotten what belongs to his sex as to let himself down to the mental, moral, and intellectual plane of the woman. In nine cases out of ten this débâcle has been brought about either by uxoriousness or by living too long with mother and sisters. Where the grey mare is the better horse, or the man stumps the country supported by his sister, there you may depend is a washerwoman. Scotchmen are prone to be the creatures of their womenkind. Hence are they washerwomen almost to a man. The Opposition benches of the present Parliament swarm with washerwomen—all married and all damned. And there are washerwomen on the other side, some of them bachelors. It is the same in journalism. There is a Review, for example, which formerly had a reputation for brilliance. It has been run by a washerwoman from the first number. At the outset he had great luck. But he was a washerwoman with a wife, and he could not carry corn. And his Review is going all to pot. There are washerwomen on the ——. Hence if one may say so—the ——. The —, the —, the —, not to mention the — and the —,

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owe themselves, as it were, wholly to the washerwoman. The —— is selling atlases, the —— has become a weariness, the —— sends touting letters to advertisers, and the —— blithers, and calls Mr. J. M. Barrie a fairy, all because of the washerwomen. And consider the ——! It is dullness and cold gin twaddling on the philosophies and the arts. It is the barren rascal of Samuel Johnson projected into an obtuse and oblique age. It is washerwoman, and very old, old, old woman let loose. In the minor professions and in trade, commerce, and barter, you will always discover a proper sprinkling of proper washerwomen—barristers who cannot plead, physicians who make you ill, parsons who have no theology, colour-blind painters, jingling musicians, penny-wise speculators, timid merchants, cheating shopkeepers, and unimaginative hawkers—washerwomen, washerwomen, washerwomen. It may seem incongruous that in an essay specially reserved for the discussion of womankind male washerwomen should find mention. But I repeat that the washerwomen of the present day and generation are the handiwork of feminine women—men who, as the result of

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feminine precept or example, have fallen from grace and become, as it were, unsexed. The real reason why these washerwomen are allowed to keep their places in the world has its roots in gallantry. To be for ever reproving Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, or Mr. Balfour, or the *Times* newspaper, or the *Spectator*, or one's washerwoman acquaintances in the law, or medicine, or commerce, were a tedious and uncharitable office. One cannot spend one's life training up a woman in the way she should go. It is easier to be pleasant and civil spoken, easier to bow and scrape, and say your servant. To do this, to be magnanimous, to forgive, to make allowances, to be pretty of speech, and crooked of knee, is to be gallant, and to enjoy the good word of women. When men have learnt how to treat women they will know how to deal with washerwomen.

CHAPTER XXV

ADVICE

OF all the men in the world commend me to the plain blunt critic. He is the salt of the earth, the saviour of his kind. He is not loved, for a froward child has little appreciation for the birch. But the plain blunt critic does not greatly desire to be loved; it is sufficient for him that he may say his say, and if the need arises love himself. It is commonly imagined by the vulgar that a critic who is not complacent and mealy-mouthed must of necessity be destructive. In a sense this is true. But to show a woman her faults, to emphasise and dilate upon each one of them, is to hurt and shake her. It is no more pleasant a business than the whipping of small boys. On the other hand, having hurt and shaken your woman to your heart's content, there is no reason in the world why you should not endeavour to set her feet on

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the right path, and to provide her with hints and directions which will keep her from further stumblings. A woman who has been at the pains to read the preceding chapters, might well cry with an exceeding bitter cry, "What shall I do to be saved?" If she be a true woman, and properly emancipated, she will have snorted somewhat and snuffed somewhat over the word that has been unfolded to her. She may, or she may not, desire to improve. She may still be convinced that her course is the right one, that it is her business to be puffed up, that man is not the predominant partner, and that it is for his good and the good of his children that his house should be pervaded by a screaming cockatrice. On the other hand, she may have blushed, nay, she may have even trembled, to perceive that she has gone considerably further than she intended, and that, so far from cutting a noble figure before the world, she has simply been playing ridiculous and fantastic tricks. If she be unrepentant she will still be curious; if she be repentant, her heart will be humble and contrite. So that the appended advice is offered for what it is worth. O lily-maid, O ruddy

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matron, O tough spinster, take heed of these, one's remarks, and be wise. Woman that is born of a woman is neither a superior nor an inferior animal. She is just a woman. All the shouting in the world will not make a man of her, and it is by no means desirable that she should take on even the smallest of the masculine virtues. One does not expect her to be brave, or strong, or profound, or witty. When she has brought herself into the middle of the picture by writing a novel, or making a speech, or figuring in a beautiful law-case, she has not really impressed anybody, save and excepting herself. She may be "well-known," "popular," even "famous"; it is all the same; nobody possessed of a ha'porth of judgment cares two pins. In public life, of whatever character or hue, woman is felt to be an intruder, an interloper, and an excrescence. The notion that women might be made useful in politics was no doubt considered in the light of a wonderful discovery by the person who first hit upon it. When it resolved itself into a simple question of Duchesses going about kissing cobblers, it seemed rather a useful notion. Hence it was taken seriously in

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hand and developed, and developed, and developed, until in your bad old nineteenth century you find yourself face to face with a becking, nodding, giggling, shiny-eyed Primrose League, and an equally distracting and bewildering Women's Liberal League. I suppose that the hoary fathers and chieftains of both the Conservative and the Liberal Parties have often looked upon those Leagues and smiled. They were supposed to mean votes, and the maintenance of an intelligent political interest at the family breakfast-table, and in the nursery, the basket, and the store. What they have really amounted to has been the slow but sure demoralisation of the Party system, and general apathy and indifference to all political questions whatsoever. When you have heard Mamma talking Imperialism, and Matilda discussing the Education Bill, you have heard quite enough politics to last you for the rest of your natural life. And when the election agent or his myrmidons capture you in your armchair, or button-hole you in the street, and inquire tenderly whether you are in favour of such and such movements, and such and such reforms, if you are a wise man you'll refer them to the Missus.

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On the whole, therefore, women will be well advised if they let politics alone. It is far greater and nobler to bring a female servant to order and keep her there than to have secured any number of votes for Mr. Clap-trap, or to have addressed a meeting of the sisters convened with a view to impressing on the Government the imperative necessity of a franchise for women. Nay, if you ask me, I will tell you that I would rather make a successful pie than be the grandest Primrose Dame that ever stood on two trembling legs. Pie, my dear madam, does not amount to much, but I can assure you that properly considered it is one of the finest things humanity is capable of producing. You should study its domestic manufacture from your youth up. If you do, your husband will praise you in the gate and your children call you blessed. If you don't, you will go down to your grave unwept, unhonoured, and unsung. That is to say, the persons with whom you have been brought into intimate contact will always remember that in spite of your beauty, your tenderness of heart, your eloquence, your pretty taste in frocks, and your skill and grace in the gay fandango, you

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could not make pie. In this place I may mention for your instruction and for the benefit of the race that there are several kinds of pie, to wit, apple, cherry, rhubarb, steak and kidney, rabbit, veal and ham, game, pork, pigeon, and many more besides. They are all duly recorded in the cookery-books, and the way to make them properly set forth. Concentrate the ingenuity, the cunning, the duplicity, and the general femininity of your nature upon this great question; determine that you will be the best pie-maker of your age and generation; turn out pies of which it can be said that they are a dream, and you will have done something with your intellect and your life.

Mr. T. P. O'Connor, who is an Irishman and a retailer of slack personal paragraphs about people who do not matter, lately issued to a gasping world an article which he called "Literature, the Consoler." If Mr. O'Connor wishes to do us good, he might do worse than try his hand on an essay headed "Pie, the Consoler." In point of fact, pie is a good deal more consoling than the best literature Mr. T. P. O'Connor ever took to his bosom. When I reflect that the women of our beloved

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country are losing the "light hand" and the culinary skill and grip which have made the hot pies of Old England famous in song and story, I could shed tears. A man who advises you to make pies, to study the pie-woman's art, to excel therein, has really given you all the advice that you need to make a perfect woman of you. For I have observed that a good pie-maker has usually a placid face and quiet eyes; her thoughts are continually of good things; she has no time to gad about with the gossips. She is anxious for her pies. In her absence they might burn or be underdone; she would consider a failure in the pie-way to be a woeful happening; she has no failures because she sticks to business. I have observed, too, that the competent pie-maker's children are of a pleasant and rosy countenance, and that her husband has a contented mind and an unimpaired digestion. Indeed, for womenkind, the gospel of pie rightly interpreted has everything to recommend it. I should be sorry if what has been said were to be misconstrued into a suggestion that woman should devote herself wholly to pie-making and to nothing else. In point of fact nothing of the kind is intended. The

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domesticities include numerous other duties. There is the management of servants, for example, the supervision of children, the entertainment of guests, and, last and of course least, the delectation of one's husband. In all these branches of feminine accomplishment woman should excel. It is her business in life to excel in them, and in so far as she falls short from excellence in them just so far does she fall short of authentic womanhood. As a rule, however it will be found that the capable pie-maker fulfils all the other duties of woman with sufficient ability. So that on the whole womankind may safely base herself on pie-making. The prevailing attitude of the modern woman towards man is an attitude which spells pity, scorn, and contempt. All ladies who write in papers and shout on platforms exist by the steady reiteration of opinions which, in the long run, claim for woman the whole of the finer attributes of human nature. And when the finer attributes are taken away, as it were, you have a base residuum called man. And as he is a base residuum you treat him accordingly. Women who do this cannot be capable pie-makers,

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for the very good reason that a woman whose heart is in pie-making has an ineradicable respect for the materials or media in which she works. And that being so she naturally and without question respects the purveyor of those materials, who is always a man. That the fact of a man's bringing in the daily bread, by which even emancipated women live, should entitle him to some little consideration at their hands does at first sight seem ridiculous. It is man's duty, you know, to look after that part of life—the law compels him to it—and when one comes to think of it there is no special credit in doing either one's duty or what the law compels one to do. For centuries man has acted as purveyor to the household uncomplainingly, and there can be no doubt that until the other day he had his reward. But the twentieth-century woman expects him to go on purveying not only in the absence of inducement but in the presence of downright discouragement. Where is the use of slaving one's life away at a bank counter for a woman who would not be satisfied if she had the income of a duchess, and who backs up her assertion that "if you were a man at all you would be

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making a thousand a year," with such easy, and in the circumstances, damnable adages as "Where there's a will there's a way?" Or where is the use of keeping up establishments for a woman who seldom honours them with her presence, and whose existence is given over to expenditure and frivolities which are quite irreconcilable with her husband's views as to the purpose of life. The man who has to wife that eloquent aberration the public woman no doubt knoweth his own bitterness. To be for ever spoken of as Mrs. So-and-So's husband, to stand, feebly bearded, in an assemblage of females who are beaming, clapping, and waving pocket-handkerchiefs in response to the half-baked sentiments of that other female, your own true love, is an experience which fate perhaps imposes only on gentlemen who deserve it.

Speaking broadly, married women who desire to make a success of their lives cannot do better than remember certain promises, certain vows which they took on their respective bridal morns, and, remembering, go softly along with their living. For unmarried women, their way will be made exceedingly plain to them if they cultivate housewifery

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and good looks and refrain from the vanity which takes a girl out of her father's house into the office or bun-shop of a man who is in no wise responsible for her. To a woman there is something very choice about earning her own living, because a woman so seldom does it. Between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five she is tickled to death to reflect that the dress she wears and the food she eats are the fruits of her own labour. In the long run, however, she will be sorry for it. The world is possibly a rather pleasant and comfortable place for the female worker who has youth and beauty on her side, but when she gets into the thirties the curse comes upon her. If you are young and beautiful and unmarried, or if you are young and not beautiful and unmarried, my advice to you is, stay at home till the heavens fall. And whatever be your age and whatever your degree of ugliness, if you are married keep house with all your strength and all your mind.

I can well imagine that both Misses and Madams will turn up a very contemptuous nose at all this. They believe that the flowing tide, like the flowing beard, is with

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them. There is no man in the West with the courage to tell them precisely where they stand. There is no man in the East who dare tell them. The Commons, the Lords, and the newspaper offices are filled with ladies' men. Even Mr. W. T. Stead believes in women. Julia, whitewashed or unwhitewashed, has warped his judgment. But Mr. Stead and the rest of them will, I hope, live to see the day when women will be relegated to her natural sphere. If ever anybody required to be set back a little it is womankind. At the present moment she resembles nothing so much as a slow runner who has been ridiculously favoured by the handicappers. She is well ahead of the men. Hitherto it has been her part to run behind with the bottle. Now she runs in front with the carrots. Men have given her the start. If she had been content to win and take away the silver pot without making a noise about it, they might have been content. But when she turns round and gibes at you on the track it is high time something was done. Far be it from me to suggest an immediate return to the whip, or the thin stick—within the meaning of an Act of

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Parliament. For all that, I do suggest firmness, and that of the most immediate and unmistakable kind. Less freedom, less pin money, less incense, less deference, less power in the household, a less frequent appearance in public places, fewer dresses, fewer jewels, fewer compliments, might bring the enemy to whatever small senses she possesses. I do not quite know who is going to bell the cat, but I implore all able-bodied men to purchase a bell, even if they have not the pluck to take it home.

