

A HOUSEWIFE'S

OPINIONS

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BY

AUGUSTA WEBSTER.

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THESE Essays are reprinted from the *Examiner*. Though written for immediate appearance in those lighter columns of weekly journals which everyone reads and no one recalls, they had, even the most jesting of them, all the care and thought I could have given work meant to last. Because of this, and because the matters to which I have tried, in one guise or another, to give help or hindrance are no mere momentary questions begun and ended with the talk of the week, I can ask acquittal from any charge of impertinence in venturing to make a book out of some of the "social articles"—more commonly, I believe, called "middles"—in which I have been encouraged to put forth "a housewife's opinions."

I have, of course, not thought reviews suitable to this selection. Yet one review is among the contents, and perhaps its appearance asks for a word or two here. My *excuse* is that comments occasioned by a work of Robert Browning are, as to their theme, of an importance which makes them rather a literary essay than a review in the ordinary sense of the word. But my *reason* is that in that review I had had an opportunity of saying some things about translation generally for which I could ill find like text and illustration elsewhere.

A. W.

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THE COST OF A LEG OF MUTTON.

WE have all heard often enough to be able to say it of ourselves when we are having dessert in the country that the gentleman rich enough to grow peaches pays a shilling for each individual peach on his trees. There is an impressiveness in this way of quoting the cost of production which moves us as it is given to no wholesale arithmetic to do, not even if it goes up to millions and makes its precision exquisite with decimal points: the hearer thinks of a definite peach, of a definite shilling, his roused imagination presents him with all the sensations of exchanging the one for the other, and, whatever may be his relative regard for shillings and for peaches, the conception in his mind of the expensiveness of peach-growing is distinct and indelible. How would it be if a similar calculation were applied to that most thrifty of plain joints, the leg of mutton, as it appears on the table of the gentleman of limited income? "Each leg of mutton that comes to my table costs me three guineas," the host might say, with a mixture of pride and regret, and, when his visitors had recovered the shock, he would explain the calculation, and would prove that his estimate was not too high but too low for the fact. For does not his leg of mutton require him to pay and board one woman at

high wages, who shall give her whole time and energies to it, and to supply her with another woman, at lower wages, more or less entirely devoted to her service? Does it not require him to spend the keep of a poor man's family on his kitchen fire? Does it not increase his rent by compelling him to provide it with at least a couple of kitchens and a larder for its personal uses, besides of course the bedrooms of its special attendants? Then there is the footman or the parlourmaid engaged chiefly on its account, there is—but it would take too long to particularise the household corollaries, animate and inanimate, of that time-honoured symbol of family bliss, the unpretending leg of mutton.

And, if the cost were only in money, the householder might yet be content, even although his leg of mutton makes greater demands on his purse year by year and he finds the mere necessaries of his establishment swallow up that marginal portion of his income which should purchase for himself and his wife and children the pleasures and little luxuries of their station and the means of indulging cultivated tastes. But the relations between servants and their employers are on the servants' side almost hostile, on the employers' side uneasy with disappointment and mistrust. The whole domestic system appears to be out of joint. And, whatever the causes of the present uncomfortable state of things may be—causes into which the scope of this paper does not admit of an inquiry—they are not simply, as depicted by the suave ignorance and catchpenny philanthropy of irresponsible advisers of the public writing of household life from the distant calm of their hotels or their lodgings, the despotism or the callous neglect of the employers; nor can they be removed by any amount of consideration and indulgence or any effort of organising and disciplining ability. The conditions and duties of household service are not to the mind of household servants of the present day, and cannot be made so without some such complete change in our domestic and social institutions and customs as is not possible in one generation, and, above all, not possible in this generation of household servants. In the

meanwhile, the servant of the nineteenth century is a sort of Frankenstein production, revenging itself on the society which has created it. Our wives are the first victims. The hapless mistress of the house is worn and wearied with unavailing cares. She has more servants than she can afford, but they are for each other's convenience, not for hers; and the chief purpose of her life as wife and mother is to provide for their requirements and limit their expenditure. She thought to have been her husband's companion, her children's instructress and playfellow; but she is an appendage of the leg of mutton. It gives her no respite; it frets away her good looks, her health, and, woe worth the day, her temper. If she is a true gentlewoman she feels that no work for her home, not even the lowliest of the duties her servants leave undone as beneath them, can be degrading to her if it is well that she should do it: but the kind of sordid contest in which she is perforce engaged does degrade her, and she feels it. And its deteriorating effect on her character is all the surer because she feels it.

But Paterfamilias is beginning to reflect that he does not get anything like a return for his expenditure on his housekeeping. He perceives that increased outlay does not increase the personal comfort of himself and his wife and children, and that he is in fact keeping an establishment for his servants. Not only is he spending far too much for the results, but he is likely to spend more, for prices are rising and wages are rising, it takes more servants to do less work, and servants at all are becoming scarce relatively to the demand. It is time for him to do something; but what? Social philosophers tell him of co-operation. Some of the philosophers, being of a second-hand turn of mind, do not exactly know what they mean, and the thing that most of the others mean is not co-operation at all; however, that matters little—they offer him escape. "Come," say the sirens, "come and co-operate, amalgamate the kitchen fires, divide the legs of mutton. Come and co-operate, and sixpence shall be sixpence and a guinea a guinea, and your meals shall be seasoned with contentment, and your soul shall be free

of the cook. Resting on your sofa, irresponsible for its dusting, you shall smile to think of life that knows no troublous change or fear, no unavailing bitter strife that ere its time brings trouble near." Only, if he will go to the sirens and learn their "new wisdom," he must give up his separate outer walls, his individual backyard, his kitchen area apart from the world. No more will he have his flight of four doorsteps all to himself, no more will the slates of his roof cover his family alone.

Just so, say his friends, the modern Joshuas who, if they do not exactly succeed in making the sun and moon stand still, resolve at the least to stand still themselves in hopes that it will come to the same thing, just so, he must give up Home—Home as understood in that most domesticated and useful-companionable of lyrics, that "Rule Britannia" of the British fireside, the guileless lay of the guileless bard who, as is well known, cared nothing for pleasures and palaces and found his modest joys in Home, sweet Home. Home, they argue, is, like most of the virtues and all the respectabilities, a peculiar possession and privilege of the Briton. It is an institution envied us by all foreigners, but understood by none. Without it, manly virtues, feminine graces, conjugal trust, family affection, Christmas puddings, cannot exist. And it cannot exist without a separate front door on the street.

And indeed to give up home would be too great a sacrifice to be repaid by any amount of comfort and freedom from cares, if by home is meant room and privacy for family intercourse and the intimate sympathies of close relationships, for independence of the outside world and the power of being alone, for the indulgence of individual tastes and the enjoyment of pursuits in common. But home is where *we* are, where husbands and wives, parents and children, live their lives together. House and Home must surely cease to be synonymous in days when houses are built not to last one ordinary lifetime, and when railway extension and the growth of suburbs proceed at such a rate that the cottage near a wood which saw the birth of your firstborn may have disappeared in

a cutting or an Albert Terrace while your youngest is still wearing the family christening frock. We cannot form a strong attachment to walls which will not last and premises which are always going wrong in their drains. The old house which held the history of the family in its bricks and mortar, which saw the children come back to it old men, might well get so identified with the idea of home that it, in its material existence, and not those living within it, should be the picture the word would first summon up. But why, apart from such associations, should one sort of receptacle for our furniture and ourselves be more sacred and domestic than another? Why must Home be a separate compartment of a street? Why may Home not be horizontal as well as vertical?

If domestic life cannot be made enjoyable without the sacrifice of that appearance of isolation which to many people represents the possession of a home, it would surely be wise to yield the appearance for the reality, to seem to have no home for the sake of having a true one—that is a place for happiness and rest. If, by any departure from the system to which English family life used to owe its comfort, the comfort can be continued or restored, we had better depart from the system and achieve its former results. And if expenditure of money, of time, and of health, on the mere brute necessities of existence can by any method of co-operative supply be lessened without loss of those necessities and with gain of higher enjoyments, will our leg of mutton taste the worse?

CO-OPERATIVE HOUSEKEEPING.

TRUE co-operation has not yet been tried on homes and housekeeping, and there seems no present likelihood that it will be tried. Complete schemes have been devised for enrolling a company of tenants to be their own landlords and divide the rents, to be their own purveyors and sell themselves what they consume, to be unitedly master of a united corps of servants, and to let their legs of mutton share fraternally the glow of one kitchen fire, just as we human beings have to share the warmth of only one sun. Such an institution would have its affairs governed by an elected committee responsible to the shareholders; and, as all the tenants, and only the tenants, would be shareholders—the committee, of course, being chosen from among them—it is presumed that the strong interest which each individual must feel for his own sake in the efficiency of the administration will keep the electors and the elected alike soberly conscientious in their functions. Then, too, each tenant having a shareholder's regard for the financial prosperity of the company as landlord and purveyor, there is argument against anyone's making unreasonable and expensive demands; each would be able to see that, even if a disproportionate outlay for his individual gratification did not noticeably affect his part of the common balance, whether of money or of comfort, it would create a precedent whose mischievous results he himself would have to feel. And yet—and yet—one would scarcely wish to be a member of that committee.

And, in spite of the sound economical principles expounded by the advocates of this thorough-going system of domestic co-operation, it would appear that converts are few or faint-hearted, since up to this moment it has not been possible to get up a company to carry out the scheme. Yet it is an experiment which all who, thoughtfully watching the progress of disruption between the drawing-room and basement estates of the domestic commonwealth, perceive that the old order is changing and must give place to a new, cannot but wish to see fairly tried. It must be owned, to be sure, that most of us feel that form of enthusiasm which nerved Artemus Ward to his willingness to spend every drop of his relations' blood, and of his wife's relations' blood, in the good cause of his country. Our zeal has a vicarious vigour; it is to see co-operative housekeeping tried that we yearn, trying it ourselves is another matter. *Fiat experimentum in corpore alieno.*

But if no institution for co-operation, in the strictly accurate sense of the term, as to board and lodging, has yet been able to pass forth from the dim world of projects into material existence, there do exist arrangements which are so far co-operative that they owe the advantages they offer to their departure from the older and more distinctively English system of unit-ism in every detail. And, as a matter of convenience, the epithet co-operative may reasonably be applied to them, after due apology to the sternly accurate in nomenclature—all the more that the British public, fond of a handy word without too definitive a meaning, has already got in the habit of applying it without the apology. So far, at all events, as homes and housekeeping are concerned, any applications of the principle of combination, in contradistinction to that more familiar principle of domestic economy which the absent-minded philosopher unintentionally exemplified when he cut in his door one hole for his cat to pass through and another for his kitten, is popularly known as co-operation; and it is perfectly possible for one person to include in his ideal of co-operative housekeeping the isolated calm of a hermit-like retreat, and

for another to connect the phrase with club fellowship and the animation of evening parties for a permanence.

The simplest and most natural form of co-operative housekeeping, in this unrestricted sense of the term, is evidently that of the family communities so frequent on the Continent and so perplexing to the minds of English folk aware that a resident assemblage of ourselves and our children, together with our fathers-in-law and mothers-in-law, our married brothers and sisters with their spouses and children, and a few promiscuous uncles and aunts and cousins, would by no means constitute a little heaven below. The secret of the possibility of different households of one family thus inhabiting the paternal dwelling lies, of course, in the fact that their intercourse as a family is by no means of that gregarious and dependent nature which we English connect with the notion of family life—especially as regards the women of the family—as if all belonged to a great boarding-school in which everybody must do the same thing at the same time, and in which sitting-rooms and meals and pursuits and acquaintances must always under all circumstances be shared in common. If the unremitting companionship of an English household had to be practised among the members of a French family comprising various *ménages* the hope of harmony would be no greater than for a like miscellany of near relations in England; for human nature is but slightly modified by languages and delights to bark and bite in all countries. But the *appartement* of a French house is really a place apart, a home within the home, and the sisters-in-law on the first floor and the second can receive their respective friends and carry on their individual pursuits each without reference to the other. Even the custom which makes a bedroom wear, so far as it can, the disguise of a sitting-room and do duty as its occupant's legitimate private parlour is an important adjunct and goes further to preserving peace within the walls than any amount of affection. Where solitude can be had at will sociability retains its attractions.

Nothing short of pulling down most of the houses in

England, however—most of the houses, that is, which are not palaces—could make the joint residence of different branches of a family possible among us generally. We should need on every floor suites of rooms habitable by day as well as by night, instead of having our top floors built for sleeping in only and our lower floors exclusively for what the house agents call reception-rooms, with the basement for the leg of mutton. Our houses would have to be individual buildings instead of narrow partitions sub-partitioned into the regulation one room, two rooms, three, four, six rooms a floor, smaller and more numerous in fixed progression upwards, with no more design than goes to the divisions of a measuring tape. And, if we had the houses to put the federated families in, we should in these days have more than a little difficulty in finding the families. Wherever railway communication spreads family localisation ceases. Colonies of relations and connections no longer cluster together on their native half-mile; the railway makes anywhere near enough for continued intimacy, and they perceive that as they multiply they are in each other's way—likely, perhaps, to overstock the neighbourhood with a population of doctors, or lawyers, or bankers, or linendrapers, or whatever the favourite family calling may be, and with a general risk of treading on each other's toes in most of their aims and achievements. Migration has come to be considered a matter of course part of a son's establishment in life; the daughters are wooed by the help of express trains, and would scarcely feel themselves married at all if they were not transplanted. Thus the cases in which there would be any possibility of groups of near relations combining their outlay so as to avoid the waste and needless trouble of separate housekeeping are really so exceptional that any arguments in favour of this sort of family federation, however irrefutable from the point of view of patriarchalism and cheapness, can only be assented to with the irresistible *If*. *If* it were possible, it could be done.

Of the ways of applying something of co-operation to our domestic requirements the most rudimentary and the

least apparently co-operative is that which goes no further than giving us for our dwellings, under the name of flats, isolated level sections of one large house in the place of the little house to ourselves. A man with a few children, or even with no children, requires on the whole as many sitting-rooms as the man with a quiverfull; both alike have their friends to entertain, both alike are accustomed to those rules of civilised comfort which preclude us from dining in the kitchen and conducting our correspondence on the staircase. But London houses all go by the measuring tape, so many rooms to so many floors, so many bedrooms to so many sitting-rooms, and the childless man who wants his three or four sitting-rooms is inevitably hampered with a number of superfluous bedrooms and, owing to the exacting and to him useless size of his house, of superfluous servants, while the man with many children may very likely find himself forced, in order to get them sleeping room, to submit to the expenses of a house the number and style of whose reception-rooms is quite beyond his modest desires. But when the architect is dealing with the levels of his huge "mansion" neither custom nor external construction compels him to sort off a given number of rooms to each tenement, and he so arranges the internal distribution that there are premises with few rooms and premises with many rooms, and that the small premises are by no means necessarily, like small houses, afflicted with straitness and squalor, but offer whatever architectural advantages belong to the larger premises, the difference being in the number not the goodness or size of the rooms. The scale on which these congeries of homes are built evidently allows the money spent on their erection to go much further, with better results, than where a terrace of small houses is built by several separate enterprisers; the construction is altogether more solid, the great public staircases fulfil a work of ventilation in no way proportionately represented by the narrow carpeted flights of single houses, the system of drainage can be simpler and more complete, and every householder within the mansion has, with the privacy of his completely separate abode, the brick and

mortar and plumber's-work advantages of such an edifice as he could by no means have procured for his sole habitation.

Yet there are in this sort of residence inconveniences which cannot be overlooked—inconveniences which need not exist, for they are entirely separable from the system, but which, since for the present they do exist, must be taken into account. Tradesmen, or rather, tradesmen's carriers and messengers, look on them, except the ground floors, with an evil eye; they resent the stairs, and can ill bring themselves to recognise people whose front doors are not on the street as having separate addresses and requiring their goods to be delivered to themselves. Evidently the predicaments which may come of errandsmen choosing to regard the several premises of twenty or thirty families as indifferently occupied by all are unlimited in possibilities. It is not soothing, for instance, to the inhabitants of the remote and airy heights of a Westminster fourth or fifth floor flat, after having had to breakfast without milk, to learn, in answer to their resentful inquiries, that the milkman's conscience is clear, and the milk a quarter of a mile off in the fathomless deeps of an area of whose existence they are scarcely aware and whence it is about as likely to get to them as if it were in the opposite house's coal-cellar. Nor is it conducive to feelings of neighbourly benevolence when the tenants of a downstairs and easily accessible flat find their abode treated as a good place for getting rid of parcels addressed to any other number within the same block of buildings, and their footman or their parlourmaid kept in a wrathful simmer by the persecution of irrelevant door-bell ringing. Then, enormous in proportion to ordinary house-rent as are the rents, and therefore inclusively the rates and housetax, paid by the householders of flats, these householders find their separate existence denied by the Post Office, which, lumping them together like the casual guests of an hotel, will do no more for them than leave their letters in the street-hall for fate and the porter to deal with—which is much as if, where some select square rejoices in the dignity of gates, the postal delivery to

each house should be accomplished by the postman's leaving the letters at the gates for the gatekeeper to distribute at his leisure. The tenant of perhaps only a room or so in a block of chambers or offices is allowed his citizen's share of the conveniences of the public postal service, albeit he have not sole and undivided use of the main door on the street; but the tenant of a whole distinct residence in a block of household residences learns that, so far as the Post Office is concerned, he had better, like Peter Schlemihl, have parted with his shadow than have foregone his Briton's birthright of a street-door.

Then—to come to the disadvantages really inherent in the flats themselves as generally constructed at present—there is too frequently a deficiency of needful offices and appliances for carrying on the work of a household. The same confusion of ideas which leads to the builder's fallacy that a small family must necessarily require small rooms, not merely few rooms, appears to have presided over the planning of the domestic offices in flats. It seems to have been assumed that, because families living in flats have respectively fewer rooms than would have gone to a house containing accommodation to their requirements *plus* the supernumerary and uninhabitable back-rooms and cells which seem inevitable to London single-house architecture, their scale of living will be of an untoilsome simplicity requiring neither larder, scullery, nor butler's pantry, and that everything they can possibly want to have cooked or cleaned or stored is provided for by the small kitchen with its sink, and its dresser, and its little kitchener-grate barely affording space for a family dinner on the simplest scale to be cooked at it. Peabody's trustees appear to have larger views of the scullery-work and stowage needs of household life in their workmen's homes than do most of the builders of these high-rented flats, where well-to-do people are meant to live in well-to-do style and to give dinners and crushes to well-to-do friends. The sorrows of the housekeeping matron and her discomfitures in the daily war against dirt and disorder, though of another kind than in her former layers

of house from basement to attics, with dirt-cupboards on every landing and unlimited capacities for mess-holes everywhere, are only a little less amid the inconveniences and impossibilities of the overcrowded kitchen serving for every sort of domestic purpose at once and badly off in appurtenances for any. And there is another great fault in the arrangements connected with housekeeping in these flats, one which inspires us with small respect for the perspicacity of the landlords as to their primary interests in the long run—the question of their humanity may be left to the anti-vivisection societies. It is the very general absence of lifts; not merely of lifts to save unladen legs an upward journey—which may be looked on as a luxury—but of lifts for the ascent of heavy goods, sacks of coal and so forth—which ought to be looked on as a necessary. Since it is with questions of the comfort of those living in flats and not of those serving them from without that this paper has to do, not much need be said of the severe labour inflicted and its possible injuriousness, although indeed it can by no means be thought that such considerations do not very appreciably lessen the comfort of the dwellers in flats, perpetually causing them unsatisfactory sensations as if they were oppressors of their kind: but the resentful illtempers, the complaints, the demands for fees out of all permissible proportion to the value of the goods delivered, the growlings, and the gibes, of the unwilling Atlases who, groaning and grumbling, stagger up the stairs with their burdens, must be counted as a materially manifest discomfort which it needs neither imagination nor sympathy to feel.

But not one of these drawbacks is inevitable to flats—tradesmen will come to understand that in England, as in France or Italy, customers may be distant from them by the height of their homes as well as by any other form of distance for errandsmen to tread; the householders of flats, being a by no means unimportant body of citizens and electors, will, when they have had time clearly to perceive, themselves, that their houses *are* their houses, find means to impress an intelligent

public department like the Post Office with the fact; newer mansions will avoid the defects of internal arrangement which dishearten intending tenants; and already lifts, not only for goods but for persons, are getting recognised by shrewd landlords as a needful appendage to their staircases if their flats are to continue popular. What remains against them from a co-operative point of view is that they continue the system of separate cooking, separate cooks. The leg of mutton is still the real master of the house.

There is, however, a way of escape from its tyranny, although it is one which has not yet been sufficiently tested for its success to be declared certain. Attempts have been made to provide the home privacy of the flat combined with the freedom from household cares of the hotel. You have your own dwelling, your own furniture, but not your own servants: your concern with your meals is to order them, to eat them, and to pay for them, and you have the privilege of finding fault with them without setting your Lucilla's cap awry. Free from the pangs of responsibility, she agrees with you that the cook really cannot serve cutlets properly, and enjoys them with the placidity of a clear conscience. You are hypercritical, but what is that to her? And—as the theory goes—you are to be supplied at moderate prices, prices rendered possible by the great economy of catering on a large and wholesale scale and making one large fire do the work of many small ones, as opposed to the high prices and inevitable waste of isolated purveying for each family and a grate at work for a single meal. In some of the mansions which thus offer us in our homes the "world's best welcome" of an inn, if not in all, public rooms to be used at will complete the arrangements and afford something like the combined independence of a club.

The drawback to be apprehended is evident. With excellent servants, the inhabitant of one of these mansions may live at ease among his household gods, waited on, in some respects by unseen hands, but waited on. But supposing the servants are not excellent? He has his flat on a lease, he has decorated it, furnished it—and he

is not waited on. He shaves, and he can get no hot water, unless he provides it on Edward the Second's plan; his wife, as she offers an afternoon caller a cup of tea, shudders with the presentiment of despair, foreseeing that her friend will have gone home to dinner long before the operation of getting it brought will have been concluded; the housemaids are neglectful, the waiters supercilious, the cook impossible. Supposing this, or some of this—and the suppositions suggested have not all of them been drawn entirely from the writer's imagination—supposing this, what is the disappointed seeker after domestic amelioration to do? Only a house-agent can tell him.

If the attendance can be kept well-regulated and ample there seems no reason why this sort of home-hotel, or, as it is more generally, if less truly, named, co-operative home, should not be altogether successful. And such success would indeed succeed. The enterprising proprietors, as they counted their profits and knew themselves millionaires, might feel the conscientious joys of benefactors to their race and call themselves the liberators and saviours of the human householder. The appalling erection which, scowling over Westminster, grows and grows till it threatens to shut London out from the sun, with its tier upon tier of square flat windows, and its unpretending hideousness—hideousness so unpretending that it fills us with the sort of faith in its internal merits inspired by an uncompromisingly ugly woman—with its squareness, and hugeness, and obtrusiveness, looks like an exaggerated factory; perhaps it is a factory of domestic bliss.

If only the factories could supply domestic bliss at lower rents!

THE DEPRAVITY OF ENGLISH LADIES.

THERE used to be among the English a complacent idea of their own domestic virtues as superior to those of all other nationalities. Conjugal fidelity, decorum, ingenuousness, modesty, innocence, were regarded as having embraced the opinion of Daddy Neptune and Freedom, and hit on Britain as their own island. The secret of family bliss was ours, and ours only ; other peoples might be courteous and affectionate, but we were respectable. A consoling sense of our national respectability went with us on our travels—Italian skies were blue, but then look at our English domestic life—French cookery was appetising and judicious, but consider our English morality. In our own country we took our accustomed mild excitement of self-reviling, after the manner of sleepy folk who pinch themselves to keep awake ; we wrote ourselves down dull, tasteless, clumsy, prudish, Pharisaic, but it never occurred to us to impugn our respectability. That was as manifest as the fog in the heavens, as indisputable as Magna Charta. And, whatever else an Englishman might doubt, he believed in the virtue and self-respect of his countrywomen. Our wives were after Cæsar's pattern, and our daughters at worst ministering angels undeveloped.

But for some years back we have been diligently taught to discern our social world with other eyes. Moralists have arisen who, with gleeful severity, have set themselves to chasing away, one after the other, our

flattering illusions, and who have shown us to be living in an atmosphere of subtle corruption and refined lasciviousness calculated to make any right-minded person, who happens to be aware of it, yearn for a return to the frank and simple libertinism of the Merry Monarch's days. Week by week they have explained to us how impurity is lurking in all sorts of unsuspected places, is facing us at every step—in our homes, in our ball-rooms, in our churches—everywhere except perhaps among those who make no claim to purity—and how what we might purblindly mistake for virtue is vice's sickly and unsatisfied twin. Week after week they have expounded the peculiar provocations of fashionable millinery, till it is our own fault if we do not appreciate them, and have made the foulnesses of the fashionable heart so plain that the most unintelligent reader can form an adequate conception of them. They have enlightened us all, old and young.

In the beginning it might have been anticipated that English society would take umbrage at the new method of interpreting it. But English society, tired, doubtless, of hearing itself called the respectable, and always glad of a scolding to break monotony, stomached it with complacency. The short essays which revealed the mysteries of our iniquities were jaunty and clever, and decidedly amusing, and society was ready for more. The moralists were still more ready; civilisation is too rich in vices and the possibilities of vices not to offer inexhaustible suggestions to the nice inquirer. They had not created a demand without being well prepared with a supply; and the supply was such as to keep up the demand. Their writings conciliated both the moral and the immoral; the former would chuckle over the detection of vice, the latter over the exposure of virtue. The style was admirable for zest and point, the themes, imbued with the life-giving animation of a vivid and practised imagination, were treated with an attractive mingling of candour and piquancy tempered by bashfulness, while there ran through the minutest details depicted, as through the widest generalisings, a subtle flavour of reticence which

was infinitely expressive. It is with intention that the past tense is used here, for there are later productions which show signs of the carelessness or the weariness of too long wont—the master-hand seems to have lost its touch; it is as if it somehow worked by force of fist instead of by the old flexibility of fingers. The descriptions are more strenuous and more explicit, the inferences more destructive, but a racy, delicate something is lost, which, to connoisseurs, is ill replaced by crude force.

It was inevitable that, in the process of destroying our respectability, women—women of good repute—should be the chief objects of attack; and this apart from inducements of any supposed personal rancour in the moralists towards them, and simply because in their fair fame lay the strength and boast of respectability. Moreover, there would have been nothing novel and surprising in making lamentation about the long familiar sins of men—about the sowing of wild oats and the wasting of substance; any preacher in the pulpit could do that, and send his audience to sleep over it. The moralists must keep their audience awake. They have turned their lanterns on our homes, and showed us mothers, wives, and daughters, all wanton and mercenary at heart, saved from absolute dishonour only by their selfishness and the preventive etiquettes of society; their follies and their prudences, their mirth and their earnest, all alike prompted by sensual instincts and forbidden wishes, and regulated by considerations of material interests; their dress deliberately meretricious; their amusements intentionally dangerous. That was novel and striking, and successful. People who were not already subscribers to the periodicals in which these revelations were made hastened to become subscribers, the moralists had readers in plenty, and the readers had something to discuss—or rather to talk about—at dinner parties. There was little discussion in the shape of debate, for it is a note of stupidity to be unable to discern the wickedness around one, and we could not afford to be guilty of stupidity. So we settled down to the new view with our usual English resignation to a *fait accompli*, consented to the

depravity of everybody's female relatives except our own, and, with our usual English want of logic, went about practically extending the exception to every lady we met. And in this contentment a good many people got tired of the moralists, who seemed to them to be harping too long on the same chords—the strain had become commonplace by repetition, and bade fair to be voted a nuisance. The moralists have risen to the occasion. They have made their women worse, and they have turned their lantern on the children.

But here patience breaks down. One cannot speak without loathing of the monstrous prurience which has conceived the foulness of precocity and perversion ascribed to the minds of children. Spoiled children may be cross, vain, selfish, pert, greedy, presumptuous; they may ape the ways of their elders; they may imitate the flirtations and the courtships, and repeat the fast and frivolous talk of which they have been suffered to be the spies and eavesdroppers; they may be so far from the unconsciousness and unsuspectingness of genuine childhood as almost to deserve the malignance of the hatred they seem to have excited, or so inconvenient and forward as to account for it—but they are human and they are children. In the names of common sense and common decency let it be forborne to make them too the subjects of an obscene psychology, and to credit them with impulses and calculations impossible to their years and their kind.

There is something more to be said as to the protracted onslaughts on the reputation of pretty well all classes of reputable women. The reputable women, if they have not previously brought it on themselves, offered too many tempting weaknesses in their armour. Fashions took a bad turn among them—and have taken a worse since the moralists began. Good women ought to resist bad fashions, but, save some rare exceptions, who are generally condemned as strongminded or anxious to be conspicuous, they do not. For one thing the men of their families, who as a rule dread nothing more for their female relatives than eccentricity of appearance, would

discourage them from rebellion against a reigning mode ; for another they get speedily accustomed to what everybody else wears and, perhaps not unreasonably, see no immodesty in any garb which does not force attention by its singularity. Then there were doubtless—for there always are many matrons who forget that they were not girls—many girls who forgot to exact the respect due to their maidenly dignity. There were, for unhappily there always are, careless mothers and disloyal wives to be found. Some of the types presented existed—whether enough to justify the generalising from them is another matter. On the whole the pictures of English life presented might seem to the uninitiated reader to be evolved partly from the depths of the writer's inner consciousness, partly from reminiscences of French novels for the matrons' figures and of sensation novels for the girls', but it was noised abroad that certain of the portraits, whether fair likenesses or not, had their living originals and that the moralists might plead the famous "*Pensez donc, c'est mon amie intime ; est-ce que je voudrais la calomnier ?*"

But, if we admit so much, must we needs infer that every silly girl who flaunts in the indiscreet fashions of the day, and giggles for admiration, is rejoicing in conscious impropriety and cherishing immodest aspirations ; that every wife who is foolishly pleased with flatteries she ought to resent is given up to vicious propensities ? Must we believe the moralists, or may we trust our own experience of average men and women, and reject these imaginations of wholesale depravity, of assignations and intrigues, of guilt in the afternoon cup of tea, and danger in the morning call ?

PIANIST AND MARTYR.

WHEN Music, heavenly maid, was young, did she practise many hours a day? Did she train her fingers gymnastically with scales and shakes and exercises on five notes; and did she plod through the bars of toilsome fantasias, repeating them through weeks, a dozen times together, until at last the patient process had achieved the crown of success, and she could take the allegros, and for the matter of that the andantes too, at a fast prestissimo? And did she have next-door neighbours?

In our days there are many maidens, young and doubtless heavenly, who are perseveringly flattening their finger-tips with a view to becoming musical. They pursue their art of measured sounds ascetically, not to gratify a taste but to perform a duty. Left to their own instinctive aspirations, they would have been as likely to wish to learn bricklaying as instrumental music, but they, or their parents for them, know the moral proprieties, and therefore they set themselves to fulfil one of the chief purposes to which Nature has destined them and acquire the womanly virtue of playing the piano. The better the girl the longer she practises. Miss Goodenough just passes muster with an hour a day. Miss Well-Bred takes rank as a pattern young lady with three, but Miss Nonesuch with five establishes her reputation as a glory and hope of her sex. The present writer has known two Miss Nonesuches whose merit was quoted in each case as immeasurably enhanced by the fact that the persevering

votary of this "forceful art" was deficient in ear for music, and had no taste for it. One of them succeeded and became, for an amateur, quite a dexterous pianist, particularly neat in her fingering; the other, perverted by inclinations for drawing and for croquet, fell away after only two years' diligence, and by that instability lost more than all the ground she had gained during her period of melodious Juggernautism. It was absurd of her to plead that her two years' hard work had not enabled her to play any one of her "pieces" correctly and in time; if she played so badly there was all the more need for practising.

Putting aside any recollection of personal sufferings of our own, of chromatic ascensions next door of which each note seemed hammered into our aching heads, of *bluettes*, and *pensées*, and rains of pearls and roses and stars and all things droppable and drippable on the piano, setting our brains in a watery whirl as we painfully try to write or read and not to hear, of glib perpetual waltzes and too familiar "short tunes and long tunes" forcing themselves, like old acquaintances defiant of "not-at-homes," through our unwilling ears and churning on inside our heads when we want to write our epic or our recondite treatise on political economy—putting aside all subjective considerations, we must needs revere these martyrs to duty who are to be found in every English home and swarm next door. What they do they do because it is right. They do not know why they ought to give a large part of their young lives to a protracted attempt at mastering a craft which requires a rare and special talent not belonging to them, they only know that it is their vocation. Like Tennyson's linnet they do but sing because they must; but theirs is not the linnet's unreasoning self-indulgent *must*, it is the *must* of the civilised being, obedient to conscience and with a conscience obedient to public opinion. The taunt sometimes levelled at them that they seek and value musical acquirements as a means of winning a husband, is one which, in nineteen cases out of twenty at the least, is undeserved. Girls who consciously go to work to get married know very well that a well-placed sigh is worth fifty sonatas and that no

amount of major or minor prestidigitation can win a triumph over the rival who, though a dunce at the music-book is an expert in smiles and dropped eyelids; and the other girls, who, taking their lives as they find them, shut their eyes and see what chance will send them, simply accept their music, like their lace-embroidery, as a part of woman's mission to anybody or nobody. The patent fact that so many women "leave off music" after their marriage is no proof of their skill or no-skill having been attained with ulterior motives: other duties arise and multiply, life has become too hurried and too full of much small business for piano-playing as a duty, and the achievement has never been, like the craft of the true musician, a necessity of nature—very likely not even a recreation.

Then, in spite of the theory that the reason the use of the piano ought to be a principal part of a girl's education is that she may be qualified to make a husband's home happy, most men rather dislike *tête-à-tête* musical entertainments where the wife is the solitary performer. They are sleepy, or they are studious, or they want to go away and smoke, or they are critical connoisseurs and do not like the domestic average, or they like the barrel-organ's cheerful and compendious tunes and are worried at the effort of conscious listening required to follow the melody as their divine Cecilia goes on "adding length to solemn sounds." If the husband can sing at all it is another matter, he wants his wife to accompany him, he votes himself musical, the pair practise together. But the majority of husbands do not sing.

The proper and charitable feeling when one hears of a woman who before marriage gave up her time largely to practising "leaving off music" after marriage is that of pity for her that she ever was constrained to begin it: or—for perhaps, on the principle that you cannot tell if you can play the flute till you have tried, and in order to train the ear to some intelligent and pleasurable appreciation of harmony, a rudimentary musical education should be given to all children—the pity for her might only extend to her having been constrained to labour on at an uncongenial

and utterly useless occupation. No person in whom any particle of the divine faculty of music had life could, after having attained a mastery over the mechanical difficulties of instrumentation and after having made its exercise a daily habit for years, renounce the habit and forego the mastery. If music had not been alien to the nature, it must have become a second nature. Of course this does not mean that there was a dislike to hearing music, any more than the absence of the painter's temperament involves a dislike to seeing pictures, but simply that the gifts and predisposition which go to make the musician were wanting, as the soil and climate for azaleas are wanting on Norway hills. In fact, the enjoyment of rhythmic sounds is so universal to mankind that, as a general rule, the last thing an unmusical man suspects about himself is that he is unmusical. Once one of the most excruciating and disunited of itinerant bands conceivable out of Hades was jerking through a popular set of quadrilles in a variety of keys and times, when a benevolent and cheerful auditor said to a silent sufferer pacing his garden with him "Do you like music?" "Yes," was the answer of course—who would own to being the man that has not music in his soul?—but the "yes" was languid and slow, for the noise the itinerants were making bore the generic name of music, and the thought had arisen, as it must have often arisen to most people, that the tuneful art gives too much pain for too rare a pleasure. "So do I; I delight in it," was the hearty reply, "I do enjoy this now. In fact I am so fond of music that there is no sort I don't enjoy. It gives me the greatest pleasure to hear even a common barrel-organ." Many respectable persons wholly without ear think they are fond of music, on much the same grounds. Some of them regret that they never learned music; some of them have learned it. Only the latter are objectionable in society.

It is a decided alleviation to party-goers in general, and probably to most of the martyrs to music themselves, that the barbarous custom of making oppressed young ladies bestow their vocal or instrumental tediousness on the oppressed company has gone far towards disappearing.

The poor girls, called on to air their abilities before a roomful of strangers and indifferent or even hostile acquaintances, and aware from the comments themselves and their intimates pass on the performances of other girls and the manner in which they listen to them that they will have more critics than hearers and that criticism will chiefly mean censure, fall far short of their best where their best would not qualify them to take the places of fourth-rate professionals at public concerts. They have spent weary hours in practising up the song or the nocturne that was to earn the enthusiasm of the enchanted assemblage, and only mortification is the result; the compliments are forced and cold, and the thank-yous that echo the concluding chords are at least as likely to represent gratitude that the process is over as delight in its having taken place. Of the audience, those who understand music have wished they were hearing better, and those who wanted to talk have wished they were hearing none.

If a girl plays fairly well, or sings even but a little, her accomplishments may give real pleasure in the home circle, especially if her brothers and sisters are musical too. The young people get up duets and trios and choruses together, fearless of difficulties, and each too self-intent to be unkindly critical of the others; the elders listen in their easy-chairs, and, if they do not exactly think their geese all swans, feel that such cheery melodious geese as theirs are pleasanter to hear than any swans in the world.

And yet are even these family evenings made wiser and merrier with well-timed music always worth the cost? Think of the hours of practising. Think of the next-door neighbours.

AN OBSOLETE VIRTUE.

THERE was once a virtue that everybody said was the most useful, and wholesome, and sensible, and self-rewarding, virtue that ever was. Everybody loved and respected it—even those who never thought of practising it. But so much was written and talked in its honour that there were few people who at some time or other did not make up their minds to practise it, and, just as the good books told them they would do, they always felt a glow of satisfaction whenever they had carried out their intention; though some of them only carried it out once or twice and then gave it up again till the next time for making good resolutions arrived. That virtue, now so long forgotten that many of the present generation have never heard of it, was Early Rising. Its history is simple and sad: it was for a few centuries a habit; then, becoming rarer, it was promoted to a virtue, in which honourable dignity it was suffered to remain long after it had lost all influence; finally it was declared guilty of arrogance and keeping unseasonable hours, and, falling into disrepute, vanished, ashamed, into obscurity. Several persons of archaic disposition, especially schoolmistresses with a turn for inditing advice to the youthful female mind and getting it published, have, within the memory of man, tried to resuscitate the legendary honours of the fallen virtue, but such attempts were about as practical and as successful as if they had aimed at the revival of knight-errantry, and their main result was to arouse damaging

attention and to suggest to vivacious but lie-a-bed writers of small-talk essays a palpable theme for sarcasms.

The change in the literature of early rising is indeed a noticeable phenomenon. During the epoch of mediæval superstition and barbarity when everybody got up early, it seems to have almost completely escaped the attention of poets and moralists, and such tributes to it as have been handed down to us are contained almost, if not altogether, exclusively in those pithy summaries of practical ethics called proverbs—terse axioms of experience which condense a whole code of policy into half-a-dozen words, but which do not concern themselves with the virtues from an unremunerative point of view. When the proverb tells us that—

He that would thrive,
Must rise at five ;
He that has thriven,
May rise at seven—

it ascribes no moral superiority to the five o'clock over the seven o'clock riser ; it simply recommends a line of conduct serviceable towards getting on in the world. And so with the other matutinal proverbs, we cannot in any way draw from them the inference that early rising was, in the times which gave birth to these proverbs, classed among the abstract virtues ; neither can we draw from them the inference that it was not. They are economical recipes of the character of our own pet cut-and-dried phrases about small profits and quick returns, buying in a cheap market and selling in a dear, and so forth—phrases which would long since have been crystallised by rhyme or alliteration or homely metaphor into such familiar views as those which made the prudence of our ancestors' gospel to Hob and Wat and their babies, but for the disappearance of the gift of proverb-making from among a spelling-book-ridden and grammar-haunted generation. But the time came when early rising met with higher recognition than that of a few utilitarian proverbs. It is an invariable consequence of civilisation that mankind comes to prefer being awake chiefly in the

hours of artificial light and asleep chiefly by daylight, and thus, as civilisation progressed, early rising became less and less customary, until at last it attained that degree of rarity which is essential to a virtue. The days of its triumph had arrived. The poet racked his imagination for many-hued pictures of the dawn, and sang of the healthfulness of getting damp with the pearly morning dews; the social philosopher expatiated on the righteous joys of being up before everybody else, the strengthening of the moral tone, the improvement of the complexion, the increase of acquaintance with Nature and of appetite for breakfast; the arithmetician did inspiring sums about the decades that would be added to life by rising every morning only a few hours sooner than fires are lit and sitting-rooms swept and dusted. From round-text copy-slips to epics early rising was the theme of every pen. And then, without transition and without premonitory signs, the reaction came.

The causes of the revulsion of style by which this disused and venerated practice became all at once a theme for reprobation and derision seem to have been several and dissimilar. One, and perhaps the most important, was doubtless the spirit of earnestness which, though already on the wane, was predominantly manifest among us a few years back. Persons who had decided on earnestness could not be content with lip-service; it could never be to their mind to recognise a duty, to praise a virtue, without strenuously putting it into action; they said early rising was wrong. Another cause was the spirit of levity of these latter days—that mocking spirit which rejoices in exhibiting time-honoured respectabilities in a comic light and making, as it were, Aunt Sallies of the venerable idols of a didactic past. Yet another was what, for want of a name in classic English, must be called the spirit of topsyturvy-ness—that which moves us to eulogise the modest merits of a Nebuchadnezzar, the first vegetarian, and the votary of a proud simplicity in days of effeminacy and luxurious apparel, and to despise the selfish cowardice of a Boadicea, taking with her in her chariot her two young daughters to face the missiles

of the enemy, while she, safely ensconced behind them, displayed her skill in rhetoric—that which makes us intelligently deaf to any side but the other side, and vivaciously blind to whatever is not concealed by a millstone. Much also was due to the fact that there was nothing left to say in honour of early rising—no similes, no sums, no eloquence—all had been used up by that obtrusive class of persons which, in spite of malediction, has persevered through centuries in saying our good things before us. Obviously, when a subject has got to the stage in which nothing new can be said in its favour, the next thing for authors to do with it is to write against it.

Early rising, then, has become known among us as an act of arbitrary and un-Protestant asceticism—a vain-glorious piece of Pharisaism, to be abhorred of modest souls who sleep late and make no boast over their neighbours—a disorderly caprice, and an infringement of the uniformity of domestic routine. It is impertinent, it is ridiculous. Frequently—alas! too frequently, for “sweet is sweet,” and a joke is a joke, “but while a little strange”—frequently is it observed that the early worm would not have been got by the early bird if he had stayed in his hole. It is asked why we should be set to imitate the lark and the lamb rather than the owl, the very bird of wisdom, and the victorious lion; how we can rise with the dawn when the dawn varies from four A.M. in summer to noon or not at all in winter; why we should lengthen our lives by getting up early more than by sitting up late; and, if it has not been added it might be, what is the use of getting an appetite for breakfast when you cannot get the breakfast? And, whatever amount of argument there may be in the questions with which it is now customary to answer the ancient parables and precepts, who shall deny the relevancy of that last? In it he who runs may read the monumental *vale* of early rising: it is an anachronism. In 1878 servants like a long night’s rest, and they like it to begin late. And they do not like masters and mistresses getting up before they do: they discourage it.

But, whatever other guilt there may be in early rising, the reproach that it is Pharisaic is now in itself an anachronism. There is no pomp of conscious virtue about early rising now: if we commit it we are abashed and secret. Should some ill chance require avowal we admit the practice timidly, we are humbled by our malfeasance, we make haste to forestall the coming ridicule by laughing at ourselves; we say the things about the early worm; we put forward our excuses deprecatingly, as who would lie as late as the latest if we could have our will; we hug ourselves when we hear of a fellow-culprit and endeavour anxiously to make out that he is a quarter of an hour the sooner. The pickpocket may be proud—in fitting company—but not the early riser.

And yet something might be said in favour of lengthening our forenoons—or, rather, of having forenoons at all, for that part of the day, more and more curtailed, is fast disappearing from our practical existence. Much of the hurry that wears the lives of business and professional men is due to that crowding the appointments of the day into three or four hours, to which, if they do not condemn themselves, others condemn them; they are perpetually straining their energies to get in 360 minutes between midday and four o'clock. Seamstresses lie in bed late because they sit up late; but would it not be better for them to use the early daylight than to work on wearily through the night and blind themselves over their needles by candlelight? And so with other callings, both men's and women's, might not the work, with advantage both to the work and the workers, be begun sooner in the day, to end the sooner? It will come to that again in the end. Meals, occupations, amusements, grow later to hour after hour, till at last custom will have gone round the clock, and passed on from rising at sunset to beauty-sleep and eight o'clock breakfast. But that will take a generation or two. Meanwhile, a large number of persons, the majority even in London perhaps, and certainly the majority in the United Kingdom, follow the fashion of lateness after Charles Lamb's method of measuring his office time—they get up late, "but then

they go to bed so early." To have legislated all night, or to have danced all night, is full reason for sleeping away the next morning, and after all it is only keeping good hours for the Antipodes; but there are households by the million which, having neither duty nor amusement to keep them up, get into bed at a punctual or even a premature ten, and barely manage to be up in time for breakfast at a lagging nine. In ancient times these would have been exposed to unpleasant references to the ways of the ant, but there are no sluggards now, only people too wise to waste the precious hours by being out of bed earlier than they can help.

MRS. GRUNDY.

IF ever virtuous and valuable female was ungratefully rewarded by this ungrateful world it is she. Somewhere or other, whether as a sweet little cherub aloft or a viewless messenger of air among us we know not—"perhaps no man ever *shall* know"—she takes care of us, all and individually, she watches over our cradles, she instigates our funerals, she assists us in choosing our spouses, our hats, our houses, our friends, our religion, our dinners, she inspires many and controls all of our Acts of Parliament, she breathes her afflatus into our art, she prompts our literature, our pulpit eloquence, our evening-party ballads of the affections. What should we do without her? Fancy having to settle all the details of our lives for ourselves—which quarter of the town to live in, what sort of house to have, what furniture, how many servants, what o'clock to dine at, at which part of the dinner to have the fish. Fancy having to find out our own wishes, to create our own tastes, to propound our own code of social morals. Nine-tenths of us would have our minds like the old fresco of the man clad with a pair of shears, meditating into what fashion he should cut the provision of cloths and silks spread around him for his covering, and would wait in hesitating bewilderment unprovided with ideas at all; and the remaining tenth would live in a state of perpetual variation and experiment, and would be like independent hermits in a too crowded desert, each an offence to all the others, and all the others in the way

of each. There would be no certainty about anything ; one lady would be found at family prayers at what we thought was her hour for morning calls and scandal, one would summon us to attend her "at home" at 10 A.M. ; our friends would scatter themselves round all the points of the compass wherever their whims and their house-rents drew them ; we should not know when it was right and when it was wrong to be in town ; we should have no idea whither to betake ourselves to meet, or if need were to avoid, our acquaintances ; the butler would demand our dining at one time of the day, or of night, the cook would strike for another time. Nothing would be beyond discussion ; and there would be no final argument. "Everybody does it ;" "Nobody does it ;" "People would think it strange ;" "People will think we ought"—the safe decisive phrases, to the point and unanswerable, how we should miss them in our interminable Sisypheian debates on everything to be, to do and to suffer under the sun !

We are saved from chaos by Mrs. Grundy. But her benefits do not end here : she rewards our virtues, she palliates our vices ; she is the wisdom of fools, the courage of the fainthearted, the conscience of us all—Mr. Greatheart was no surer guide along the road from the City of Destruction than she through the ways of the world. And she does not lead us into bogs and brakes and uncomfortable valleys and hills—no Apollyons and Giant Despairs for her—she takes us along clean nicely rolled level highways where respectable people go and the police move on inconvenient vagabonds.

Again, she is the guardian of our domestic happiness. Fear of her censure keeps ill-assorted couples from a separation and at the same time restrains them from "heaving bricks" (metaphorically of course) at each other outside the privacy of home "to any great extent ;" it checks the incipient declaration of rights of revolutionary sons and daughters chafing under the parental discipline ; it prevents uncongenial relations from telling of each other except to presumably safe confidants. We inspire our little ones with meritorious conduct by

impressing their dawning intelligence with a sense of her ubiquitous supervision; she is the providence of nursemaids and governesses. We look to her to store the mind of adolescence with manners and morality, and well does she repay our trust; good-humouredly lenient to young men, the fault is not hers if at times some fool-hardy or dunderheaded fellow abuses his privileges and, turning against his benefactress, breaks her rule of decorum—and then how capitally she manages our girls! It is said that two or three hundred years ago English parents were noted for their severe and even cruel rule; surely the need they found for restraints and chastisements came from the absence of that gentler though stronger control by Mrs. Grundy which lightens the hands of the parents of to-day. She existed and flourished then, as she has done under her thousand names and phases since the world began, but not till railroads and conversation by newspapers made one locality of everywhere—the whole of the country suburb to the metropolis—and abolished geographical limits to neighbourly criticism, could she exercise the all-pervading and all-permeating influence to which we are accustomed. And the English nature is submissive to precedent, but is not obedient; our first impulse when we are told we must do a thing is to prove the *must* a mistake. We will do as others do, and that with the martyr's zeal, but not upon compulsion, and not upon argument. Mrs. Grundy's whisper in our children's ears is wiser than Solomon's rod.

There are, however, many persons who regard the presiding genius of our race and of the British Constitution as a mere useless and oppressive despot, a tyrant whom they serve because they cannot choose, or whom they desperately defy for freedom's sake and fame's. There are more persons who, being her faithful votaries at heart and in deed, disparage her by word, under the strangely-mistaken conception that they thus display originality, who act concerning her as some hen-pecked husbands are found to act concerning their wives in order to conceal subservience. And the oddest result of Mrs. Grundy's influence is the fashion for abusing her:

accustomed to do what is customary, each of us fires off his regulation volley of heresies and epigrams without any real intention of damaging her, and simply in that unreflecting obedience to her golden rule, "Do as others do," which she has made become our strongest instinct. Our very reviling is a homage. Those only have really passed from her allegiance who forget her; and they are few indeed. Her loudest assailants are but heated debaters who would fain have her on their side, defendants who are their own counsel. They are not willing to slip obscurely out of her ken; they writhe under her condemnation and kick against the pricks. They are not regardless of appearances, any more than was the fox who had parted with his tail; they wish to go tailless admired and in company. Nothing would vex them more than the indifference towards their proceedings which they demand, often in good faith, of Mrs. Grundy. "I do love nothing in the world so well as you; is it not strange?" said Benedick to the lady whom he had described as the infernal Ate in good apparel. And it must be admitted that Mrs. Grundy, on her side, is no irreconcilable Beatrice.

The fact of the matter is that in nine cases out of ten—or is it ninety-nine out of a hundred?—Mrs. Grundy's golden rule is the best for us. To refuse to do as others do is to put ourselves in the position of the bumpkin who, for want of keeping to the right-hand side and following the stream, jostles and is jostled at every step on the pavement. It is to insist on treading down for ourselves a way by the guide of our pocket compass to where we need to go, instead of accepting the evidence of sign-posts and using the ready-made highway. No doubt it would be dull never to be allowed to strike into a by-path on our holiday walks; but for use the highway is the thing. We cannot create each of us his life; our days are not enough; death would overtake us while we were each botching at our earliest abortions. We cannot wait for our habits, our tastes, our opinions, until we have originated them; before we begin to think about them they are already there. For most of them we have no

better reason than that they are the habits, tastes, and opinions of other people. And for most of them that reason is sufficient. Probably we could find, if we cared to find, good matter-of-fact grounds enough for the common practice or sentiment; for instance, we could urge a score of admirable arguments for using forks rather than fingers, or for preferring monogamy to polygamy, but the true motive principle of our own individual conduct in these matters is that, being English, we follow English customs. The experience of others was our inheritance and we entered upon it unconsciously. In other words, Mrs. Grundy led us by the hand and we went whither she would with the child's wisdom, obedience. Grown older we may, if we choose, discover why she led us in one direction rather than the other, and approve her guidance.

And if we do not approve? If, not from waywardness, and not from a zeal for being noted down eccentric, but in dull earnest we disbelieve the precept, suffer in the practice? Why, then, perturbed soul, "let thee and me go our own way, and we'll let she go shis'n." The danger is really not so terrific as it is represented. Mrs. Grundy, as known to us in her serene maturity, has little of the bloodhound in her, she does not care to pursue and to maul unattacked. Do your will and let her be; it will be strange if she does not let you be. But if you cannot take leave to do as you please without shouting it into her ears, like a teasing schoolboy defying his school-dame before all the other pupils, what can the good lady do?

KEYS.

EVERYBODY must have remarked the extraordinary multiplying powers belonging to keys. There is a glamour about them: in vain do you from time to time make inquisitorial inspections and expurgate your key-rings and key-boxes; ere long you are wondering to what lock to ascribe this unexplained Bramah—how in the world you came into possession of this would-be-ornamental implement with a four-cornered head, which can certainly open nothing you are aware of possessing—what you can possibly want with this clumsy kitchen-door affair, looking as if its wards had been made by a process of gnawing and biting. There they are, mysterious, unsuggestive; you can find no key-holes for them and you dare not throw them away, since surely their key-holes must be awaiting them somewhere in your keeping. For awhile you go on letting them dangle on your key-ring in hopes of some sudden flash of memory or stroke of chance revealing those key-holes to you; but the revelation never comes, and at last you take them off and consign them—if you are of a prudent and packing-away turn of mind—to the company of their unavailing brethren in a limbo of the lockless. They will never come out, and more will be added to them.

But the despair of it is that keys do not content themselves with this supernatural multiplying; they also disappear like merely mortal things, like wineglasses, and teacups, and pins, and buttons. If it were only having

so many keys with no locks we might accept the phenomenon with meek wonder, as we wonder at there being so many more stars in the sky than we require for navigating purposes and so many flowers wasting their sweetness on the desert air: but then we have so many locks without keys. From our wardrobes, our drawers, our doors, from our cabinets, our secretares, and all the various receptacles to which upholsterers refuse handles, the keys drop away like autumn leaves and, apparently, like autumn leaves wither and pass into dust. But the unexpected keys never fit the deserted locks; and that seems a mystery of evil. It is peculiarly disturbing when, on your return from your holiday rambles, you have found in your key-box half-a-dozen keys whose *raison d'être* is an insoluble problem, to have to send for the locksmith to replace half-a-dozen other keys which have melted out of their locks no one knows when or how. As a rule, unexpected keys are small, deserted locks are large. Unless vexatious fairies make changelings of keys as they used to do of babies, there is no theory which can connect those keys with those locks.

The troubles of life assume different aspects to different sufferers. To some the disease, to others the doctor, is the greater trial: to some the dinner of herbs, to others the stalled ox, is the mortification: to some the frying-pan, to others the fire, is the less objectionable martyrdom. So it is with locks and keys. There are persons—perhaps a majority, for such persons must be unthinking, and the unthinking are a majority—there are persons who hold it a lighter affliction to possess keys without locks than locks without keys. Looking only to the moment, they note the inconvenience of finding their properties secured from their access, perhaps just when they most need them for immediate purposes, and, since no like obstruction can ever arise from the possession of aimless keys, which, if they can unfasten nothing, at least fasten up nothing, they take it that the momentary, the removeable, difficulty—that of the lock whose key has gone into the past—represents the immeasurably greater loss. But this is an evident mistake. The locksmith arrives, forces the lock, mends it, puts it back with

another key, and all is as before. The loss is definite : a key, some time, more temper, and your expenses. In the other case the loss is indefinite, never at an end. You have forgotten or you have failed to learn what that key could have unlocked for you ; it remains a monument of vanished possibilities, those chief though unknown disappointments of life ; it is the visible but unintelligible record of something you ought to have and have not. You can never tell now, you can only guess, what it might have done if you had discovered its use. And it has become worse than useless, it is aggravating. What endowment can be more annoying than a possession which the owner is hopelessly precluded from enjoying ?

Maybe we are richer in such keys than we know. Maybe we possess some of them allegorically as well as tangibly. Fortune, education, may have put keys into our hands for which we have, by oversight or forgetfulness, or sheer stupidity, failed to find the locks. It does seem as if especially in the matter of education this were a frequent case. The office of education is not and cannot be to provide us with all the provender, all the working materials, our intellects require ; its office is to forge for us the keys with which we can unlock the storehouses for ourselves. And, man and boy, people spend ten or twelve years in obtaining such keys, then put them away, then some day wonder why they ever had them. Nothing, for instance, is commoner than to hear a man of mature years, who, having nothing special to do, has spent all the time since his college days in acquiring a boundless ignorance, wondering what was the good of his learning Latin and Greek and talking of waste of time in unprofitable studies. He designs this for a proof of latent capacities for greater things than grammar, and it is often accepted as such a proof : it simply means that he could not put the keys into the locks. Two noble storehouses of human thought, to which access was allowed him, remained closed to him : that was not owing to his classical education. Another, whose early floggings had chiefly a mathematical tendency, and who the moment he became intellectually his own master said a long farewell to all his triangles and conic sections,

demands aloud for what purpose his mind should ever have been oppressed by them, and talks, he also, of waste of time in unprofitable studies. The unused key again. He did not unlock the gate and pass into the far-reaching realm of science and discovery: that was not owing to his mathematical education.

There are men too who complain of having had the wrong keys given them; but they are of another stamp. They are Apollo set to tend sheep, Hercules compelled to spin, the hen's ducklings, the useful camel forced to dance. In most cases it may seem to the observer a question whether they are not in fact the gainers by the cross-grained schooling—as the tree is the stronger and straighter for having, when a sapling, been propped towards the contrary side from that to which it swayed. But at all events they have other grounds for their complaints than those of the illiterate moralizers who ascribe their knowing nothing to their having been taught something; and, if they have let the keys consigned to them by their alma maters of whatever kind become rusty, they have acquired others and opened doors into regions where their foot treads firmly and at home.

Perhaps the mental waste of keys is most to be seen in the case of modern languages. Everybody who pays income-tax has, in these days, a smattering of two or three. We learn them for the purpose of conversing with the waiters at continental hotels, only, as the waiters insist on speaking English, we are not often able to make that use of them, and no other occurs to us. But these are keys to open us worlds. In spite of the evident risk of harm to the mind—let alone the morals—of a half-educated or less than half-educated young man under the spell of a stranger literature in which, because it is stranger and not of the country and people he knows, he has no data wherewith to check the possibly crude sayings or glowing unreason of his author, Mr. John Morley spoke a manifest wisdom when he advised the artisans of the Midland Institute to learn to read French—to unlock for themselves the thought and the life of another great people. But there is only a moderate advantage in having learned to read French and not reading it, or,

what comes to about the same, reading it only in a stray novel or so. Yet this is what many people who speak the language very conveniently and rarely confuse the genders do with the power they have obtained.

Ladies, of all other sinners, commit most waste in this direction. To be sure, one reason for it is that they generally are taught more modern languages to waste than are their male relatives. A more productive cause, however, is the mistaken theory in their education which accounts the art of speech in foreign tongues as a chief and ultimate object, ignoring altogether the art of having anything worth saying in them. It is difficult to persuade women that the knowing, more or less, several languages is not in itself either a consequence or a cause of superior capacity, except in the linguistic faculty, and that it is more to think soundly in one language than to talk sillily in a dozen. But it would be hard to blame them for an exaggerated estimate of the relative value of linguistic accomplishments in their education when it is one held by so many of those to whom they are taught to look for guidance—*i.e.* their partners at balls, and their husbands. Once a lady was being discussed; one gentleman was enthusiastic—and rightly, for the lady was pretty and pleasant—“And she is so clever,” he wound up. “Is she clever?” dubiously replied a hearer who knew the lady, and who knew also that in the society she frequented little anecdotes concerning her, founded on a somewhat excessive naïveté scarcely compatible with any form of cleverness, were apt to circulate. “Clever!” exclaimed the other in amazement at the doubt. “Clever! Why, she can speak four languages!” And this carried the question; everybody agreed that a woman who could speak four languages was clever. The lady could do this, for she had lived all her life in foreign countries—she had the keys, nobody asked what she did with them. It so happened that there was no language she could think in.

But when we have all learned, men and women, to keep and to use our real and our metaphorical keys, the Golden Age will have returned, considerably improved, and we shall be a world of sages.

CLOTHES.

WHENCE do we get our clothing? Not the actual garments, the Ulster coat or the *fourreau à l'impossible*, but the inspiration and device; not the detailed parts, but the system, the stupendous whole. Who make the laws which appoint whether or no we are to have lung disease, or sore throat, or indigestion, or headache, or corns, whether or no we are to shiver succinct in winter, whether or no to melt within air-tight envelopes in the dog-days, whether or no our women are to take out-of-door exercise on muddy days, whether or no our children are to run and romp at their sports? Our tailors and dressmakers recite and enforce the laws of the hour, but they are not responsible for them; sometimes even, when those laws are bad for trade as well as for comfort and beauty, they bemoan them with us. Our heroes and heroines of the Park teach them by the practice that is better than precept, and, with the security of the unmistakeably orthodox, they will venture upon small eccentricities and innovations, on an extra button, a braid the less, an unprecedented flounce, a retrogressive sleeve, which forthwith become authoritative, like judges' rulings; but they are without real control, and indeed without real independence—they would be powerless to abolish the chimney-pot hat for male heads or to institute "garmenture of dual form" for female legs; they could not even, without falling hopelessly from their high estate of fashionable empire, without incurring all the

pains and penalties that would visit mere Smith, resist the customs that impose the one and forbid the other. The common public, by whose resolute and careless adhesion the whole code, like many a better and many a worse, is maintained and rendered compulsory, has and asks to have no originating influence in the matter; it wonders and obeys—with an obedience whose unanimity is command. Have the types of the various monstrosities in which man (especially woman) is made awkward and uncomfortable pre-existed for ever in the world of ideas? Are they necessary developements which, through whatever strangeness and whatever perturbations, must come of what has been and must go on to what will be, and whose course we weak human things can only follow while we dream we guide? Or does a fashion sprout up like a plant whose seed a chance bird has dropped irrelevantly into a careless corner where the soil happens to fit, and which grows to an ineradicable constancy or to a day's ephemeral freshness according, not to its use or desirableness in anybody's eyes, but to the pertinacity with which nature has endowed it?

But if there are, hidden behind a veil of mystery, secret rulers, mute inglorious Alexanders and Bismarcks who conquer and rule the world of clothes, not simply following its events and administering its government constitutionally, what a power those beings hold! The influence upon us of our clothes is incalculable. Let anyone imagine himself normally clad in the garb of another civilisation or another period, in the flowing splendours of Eastern luxury, in a courtly Watteau costume of rose-coloured satin and damask, or in a toga, or in a buff jerkin, and ask himself whether he could then be in his habits of life, his manners, his gait, even his language and his thoughts, the same as the hurried, practical, unceremonious, every-day man of an every-day world he finds himself now. You might change a man's whole nature by changing the nature of his dress. Perhaps that is how women have acquired their traditional reputation for instability; the variations in their fashions are too radical, as well as too frequent, for them to retain

a settled disposition. What unity of purpose is to be expected from a creature who has no sooner become accustomed to the brisk step and to the disembarrassed motion of the upper part of the body which belong to a fashion of short frocks than she has to adopt the dragging gliding gait and compressed steadiness of arms and hands busy in holding up the drapery which attend a long-train epoch, then is back again to the short frocks, then doubtless to the train anew? How can she make permanently hers either the decision and vivacity which arise from the habit of unimpeded motion or the dignity and languor which would grow of stately and difficult walking amid drooping yards of magnificence? What steadiness can there be in her politics or her ethics or her æsthetics when Marie Antoinette and Charlotte Corday, the Marquise de Pompadour and Queen Anne, the Roman matrons of the Appian road tombstones and the Parisian matrons of the First Empire, the demonstrative court beauties of Lely and Pre-Raphaelite damsels in long straight folds, Gainsboroughs, Reynoldses, Winterhalters, Friths, Vandykes, Watteaus, and Phidiases, the swathed mummies of one historic period and the petticoated hogs-heads of another, Graces, nuns, Japanese princesses, and Swiss peasants, are in turn assigned to her as her models? Comparatively speaking, men's fashions do not vary: a long while ago destiny produced the present combination; it is hideous, but is fairly serviceable, and successive generations are content to grumble and to wear it—with ups and downs of waists and widenings and skimpings in of sleeves and trouser-legs but no serious alteration for good or bad. The natural results have followed; men have become duller and samer and steadier like their clothes. Doubtless vanity and dandyism are not wholly extinct, but who could be a "fop" in such rough-and-ready garments? Men are decently civil to their lady friends and cheery to each other, but courtesies and compliments are obsolete; the costume of to-day refuses grace to the bows which should punctuate them, they are incongruous with its ostentatious unadornment. There are no loungers now; every man, whatever his station,

goes about possessed with the idea that he is meant to be useful—his clothes tell him so; what can they be for but to work in? There are men of thought, of scientific research, of invention, but who could carry a “sprightly wit” under our matter-of-fact broadcloths and tweeds? There are no dreamers, no builders of castles in the air; poets can exist, for it is their business to deal with the common facts of life however they find them, but those bubble-blowers are of the past—could any man write the *Arcadia* in our business-like and commercial raiment? To be sure “Let who will make laws for the people, let me make their ballads” was a pregnant phrase, but how much more would it have involved to say “Let me make their clothes.”

Of late there have been many signs that women at least are becoming alive to the strong control of clothes upon their fate. From time to time we hear of revolutionary associations instituted to free them from the weight of ruchings and burst for them the fetters of Valenciennes and ribbons. Now it is a band of sedate Englishwomen who are pledging themselves to a convenient, if doleful, livery of perpetual black; now it is the patriotic and contrite ladies of Prussia who, under Imperial patronage, swear resistance to their too fondly obeyed tyrants and natural foes, the milliners of Paris; now it is a fiery squadron of American Amazons who are enrolling themselves to do battle with the hostile world for health and happiness and trousers. We all find food for mirth in such associations, for we are agreed that dress is a trifle, and the idea of an association at all about such an indifferent matter reminds us of the famous tempest in a teacup: and when trousers get into the discussions we laugh still more, because it is understood that the mere name of trousers is a capital joke. Yet, after all, there is something to be said for the women who “agitate” about their clothes. There is no doubt that the dress of Western women is cumbrous and, by its weight and the impediment it puts in the way of active exercise, a bondage; there is no doubt that it is unduly expensive; and there is no doubt that it sins nearly as

often and as much against artistic as against hygienic fitness. Raiment better adapted to the need, lighter to bear, more complete as a protection against vicissitudes of weather, allowing the whole body more play and, if one may dare to say it, less display, more lasting, and more graceful, is an improvement no sane observer can pronounce unneeded. But a woman of the smallest self-respect, whatever might be her courage, would decline to adopt singly no matter how rational and modest a costume which could be a surprise to beholders; and no scattered missionaries, though looking never so comfortable and never so picturesque, could entice the female multitude to imitate their venture. If ever a material alteration is effected it must be by the union of many. Here is a difficulty at the threshold, for such union could ill be achieved except by the efforts of an association, and in such a cause the very name of association is a hindrance, suggesting suicidal parade and publicity over a reform in which of all others an unobtrusive modesty would be essential. Supposing that difficulty disposed of the fatal difficulty is reached: What should the dress be? There is an old round which runs "Let us be merry in our old clothes for we shall never get new." For want of the perfect dress to which a fairly representative women's parliament could be got to agree, the sufferers under too much skirt will have a good many years yet in which to sing that chorus.

DOMESTIC SERVICE.

THERE are very many positions and predicaments of customary life in which the wearing moral blinkers is decidedly helpful to our getting along. It is not advisable to see all around us at all times, and our necessary road may be pleasanter to us if we do not know more about it than what lies immediately before us. If we do but get smooth room for our feet, we may pass on in comfortable indifference, under the shelter of our ignorance, where the knowledge of what is at our right hand and our left might startle us aside into a hundred perils and perplexities, or enfeeble us with a nullifying despondency. We cannot have contentment and composure in our daily doings if we keep ourselves conscious of the misdoings of others with whom we are, will we nill we, in contact; and the chief secret of being comfortable is not to find out that things are uncomfortable. In the great business of making life easy, to detect is talent, not to detect is genius. Even in diplomacy, to see only what you are meant to see may often prove more profitable than the most lynx-eyed astuteness; and, as a system in social and domestic tactics, it is usually found to be as much the most prudent as it is the least troublesome. Let us wear our blinkers wherever we can, and let no hand be thanked that rashly tears them off us.

There is no matter in which the policy of not seeing more than you must is of more general and time-honoured

acceptance than in that of our dealings with our servants—or rather of their dealings with us. It was recognised, even in the days of absolute authority of master over servant, that abiding obedience in sight and out of sight is more than one human being ever yet got from another, such obedience being only conceivable as from Divinity to Divinity, and that frankness and fidelity, the virtues of an exalted education, cannot in either justice or common sense be expected as the habit of an uneducated class. The merits demanded of a servant, the zeal, the energy, the integrity, the courtesy, the unselfish loyalty, amounted to the perfection of a noble character; but the demand was a make-believe, nobody hoped for such perfection: the standard of servitorial virtue was kept high, on the principle that “aim at the moon and you may hit the clouds,” but masters and mistresses could never afford to know all the faults of the faulty servants and not to take the good servants for better than they were. If we insisted on it that all our soldiers should be six feet four high, we should be forced to allow six feet four to go by a very variable mensuration, or we should have no army: and for generations this was the sort of compromise about servants. The demand for too much was counted fulfilled by enough or a little less; and prudent people did not always note too closely how great the little less might be. And, so long as on their side servants accepted the idea of having something to “put up with” even in a good place and wore their own blinkers as to the more distasteful but indispensable duties of their employments, domestic service went on like other home affairs, more or less smoothly according to times and persons, with a good deal of imperfection in its working both by employers and employed, but with no signs of anything vitally amiss in the system. The relation between master and servant—more especially, because of the more frequent contact, between mistress and servant—must have many moments of difficulty, many opportunities for mistakes in conduct, not to speak of faults, on either side; but so have many other relations which are not found incompatible with mutual

trust and goodwill. But in this relation the mutual trust and goodwill is gone, or at the least fast going. And it is too late now for blinkers: if they had not been already torn off our eyes we must have laid them aside, for the road we were on is becoming impracticable and it is time to look about us and see where we have got to, and if there is any getting back, or finding a better road.

There is a saying—once not meaningless—“Good mistresses make good servants,” which, in munificence of cheap wisdom, is, with comments to the ready text, bestowed on inquirers into the reason for this uncomfortable state of things and on the troubled housewife weary of her life for kitchen catastrophes and changes of servants from worse to worse—bestowed chiefly by persons of lively judgment whose experience of servants is to have had none. In days when the mistress was overseer of the maids, the saying was a wise lesson; for the personal influence of the mistress could not but tell, and, if she was sensible and firm, and, above all, considerate, a servant with any head and heart to speak of would get good training and profit by it in a kindly spirit. But this overseership by the mistress is worse than obsolete; the mildest approach to its revival is resented as tyranny and espionage. Servants do not understand it. The mistress, having read with contrition that all the troublesomeness of the household comes from the neglect of her and such as she, from their ignorance of the details of housework, from their want of active interest in its execution, their keeping their hands from the cooking, their limited personal intercourse with the servants, resolves to become an expert in the duties of each and all of her staff, to win—according to her author—their respect by her practical knowledge and their affection by her friendly interest in the way they do their work, and in their conversation and affairs in general. But the servants think her an unwarrantable intruder; they consider themselves watched, and complain of her for prying and meanness: in all probability one of them

at least breaks out on her in wrath and "never was in any place where any *lady* (emphatic) thought of coming after the servants at their work, nor of walking into the kitchen." And the mistress who perseveres in practical knowledge and friendly interest will never have order in her house again; she will always be in a revolution, or on the brink of one; for one change of servants in her neglectful days she will have a dozen, and her personal influence will resolve itself into her being treated as an enemy by all in her service and all their guests. The very last model for the virtuous woman who wishes her servants as well as her children and husband to call her blessed and to praise her is the virtuous woman of the Book of Proverbs.

But, supposing we take, not the moralists', but the servants' own parlance, and, by a good mistress, mean merely a kindly and careless one in whose house they have ample provision of creature comforts and no restriction in followers, we have to ask how it is that these mistresses find that, as old servants marry away from them or die, they too share the common fate of mistresses and the friendly union between upstairs and downstairs is at an end. If the present incompatibility (to use the only word not too strong which seems to define the feeling) between servants and their employers were all, or mainly, or even to any appreciable extent, the fault of the employers, we should find that employers who for years had had their servants their friends would still be able to be on like terms with the successors of those servants. And again, all evidence, actual and inferential, goes to prove that inconsiderate and unjust treatment of servants is not a common fault in our day among those classes where the servant difficulty is making itself felt. It is indeed scarcely a possible fault among them, for the servants are in a position to assert themselves and they would not tolerate it; and, if it were possible, we know that our own opinions and habits, our neighbours', our acquaintances', everybody's who writes or talks on the subject, everybody's we ever hear

about, are wholly in favour of the rights of servants to be well paid, well fed, well housed, to have not only their comfort but their pleasure considered, and to be treated with kindness and courtesy and the respect due as much from the social superior as from the social inferior towards a person brought in contact with us by honest service given and received. That such a view of the case, and such conduct, is the rule, no one can well dispute, and the exceptions to it prove less than nothing unless their result were that the exceptional people got worse servants than the others: which we all know that it is not. Employers of servants, as a class, are better, not worse, than they were in the days when the pre-disposition of servants was to like rather than to dislike their employers. What then is happening to us? Are we a generation of Louis XVI.s suffering for the despotisms of our ancestors? Or is there some change of circumstances, or of ideas, or of both—beyond the mere fact of the power given them by their greater scarcity in proportion to the places open to them—which is acting on the class of servants and making them resentful of a chosen but despised position which a former generation could accept without loss of self-respect?

If any calling, or if any particular kind of work, is commonly looked on as ignoble, it will, whether it deserves to be so looked on or not, have a deteriorating effect on the character, except where it is undertaken from those motives which make derogation honourable—motives of duty or of self-sacrifice—and, of course, except where the common opinion is set aside and the individual sentiment is free from all abasement. To say this is to state a truism; but, unfortunately, arguments have a way of requiring truisms for their major premisses. It is less a truism, not less a truth, to say that the ignoble calling or work is more deteriorating to the character if undertaken from the lowly but useful and, within right limits, respectable considerations of gain and comfort than if undertaken through influence of less respected but less sordid temptations. To do or to be that which

you think less than worthy of you may be less, not more, excusable if you are prompted to do it by vanity or ambition or love of pleasure than if the object is to earn a livelihood, yet, from feelings too common to us all to be disputed but which it would take a whole essay to expound, that motive which is the unblameable one is felt to add a peculiar degradation, and the damage to moral dignity is far the greatest when the descent, real or supposed, has been for hire. In this way professions which in themselves are blameless—nay, some which are worthy of the highest honour—have been, or still are, made dangerous to those who adopt them: to be able to honour oneself in a contemned position needs a clear and unswerving conviction of that position's being honourable which it can only be given to a few rare intellects to be able to hold at all times untouched by familiar prejudices, together with a conscious nobility and a loftiness of aim quite unnecessary in the avocations popularly warranted remunerative in respectability as well as in cash. Where a popularly banned profession is a righteous one irrationally banned, it is sure to attract to itself, and even to produce, characters of this exceptional strength and nobility; but in no profession can the majority be made up of persons beyond the common, and there can be no profession so worthy and so elevating that, if the majority of those who followed it believed it base, the moral standard of that profession would not be a low one. And if this has been, as all social history shows it to have been, the effect of disparagement upon professions which in their very nature demand intellectual capability and education, what are we to look for from the disparagement of a calling exercised with nearly the minimum of mental effort, and not necessarily exacting even rudimentary literary instruction?

Service is honourable: but the servants and their kin do not think so. And it may be—and if so here is a fault which is one of the roots of the mischief known as “the servant difficulty”—it may be that some of the masters and mistresses do not think so either. Slavery is not so obsolete, and we have some of us not so fully

learned the whole lesson of liberty, that we are free altogether of the depraved associations of slavery. We keep among us a sort of idea that, the slave's condition being degrading, his duties were so, and that, because certain human beings with the status of marketable cattle had to be helpful in the household to other human beings who owned them, something of the disgrace of their status clings to the helpfulness of one human being in the household of another. Any of us who, keeping our own servants or using other people's, in the least believe that the contract by which domestic servants engage to submit to our government as rulers of the households into which they voluntarily come, and to pay us by their labour for the wages, board, and food, we pay them, has in it anything of the stigma of servility, are practising no higher morality than mere slave-owners. We should in fact, if our belief were true, be committing a more harmful offence against mankind than if we had been able to own slaves, for we should be hiring free men and women to degrade themselves into a condition more humiliating, because voluntary, than any compulsory slavery. Unless we are clear in our own minds that the calling of domestic servants is one worthy of every respect due to honest labour, we have no right to employ them. But this is a digression, for it is very little the fault of the employers if domestic service is not held in the honour to which it is entitled, and, on the contrary, the calling was in higher esteem among the working-classes when it stood lower than now in the esteem of the employer classes. It is the classes from which the servants come who put contempt on service. And they do so mainly from that confusion just spoken of between slavery and the tasks performed by slaves—a confusion which, in some periods and countries, has made musical skill and dancing ignominious, and of which at this day, even among the most educated communities, the traces have barely disappeared from the social standing of the schoolmaster. Our working classes are somewhat like M. Jourdain when he came to know that it was his custom to talk prose—they have been free and using

their freedom for a long while, but the fact had not much come before them in a definite statement; at present the fact in verbal form is impressed upon their minds, and they think a great deal of it. They are right to do so, and this stage of political and social education is a very necessary and valuable one; but it has its own risks of exaggerations and misapprehensions. And these risks are exemplified in the frequent failure to distinguish between the dignity of disciplinary obedience and the frank performance of voluntarily accepted tasks under a contract which can be cancelled at will, and the degradation of filling no matter what functions, though they were vice-regal, as another man's personal chattel. The term "slavey," once appropriated, more in pity than in scorn, to the fagged and grimy maid-of-all-work of cheap lodgings, now bestowed by their own society not in service on even the loftiest of the household ministers before whom we tremble, is not used merely as a jest, and is almost more a downright than a metaphorical expression of the popular idea.

The wide acceptance of such an idea works, of course, in a twofold way against the efficiency and trustworthiness of servants as a class. It leads such persons as have an uncompromising self-respect, and such persons as, with self-respect more or less uncompromising, have capabilities at all to turn to account, to choose any work rather than domestic service; and it places under the ill influences of their own contempt for their calling such persons as, enticed by the sure and easy earnings, the comfort, and the freedom from care, or because they have no other chance of getting a livelihood, enter into that misprized condition. Thus, while the number of beginners of any promise steadily diminishes nearer and nearer to zero, the possibility of improving such servants as can be got remains stationarily hopeless.

In the case of women-servants, especially, still another cause has tended to lower the standard. The greatly increasing prevalence, during the last thirty years or so, of the system of having girls taught at home under governesses instead of sending them to schools, and

the spread downwards of that superficial tincturing of accomplishments and foreign phraseologies accepted as feminine education, combined with the pushing-upwards tendency which is at once the strength and the folly of our age, have had the result of entirely removing from the servant class the large number of those who, with something of the traditions of a borderland gentility and some of the liberal sentiments developed by a higher instruction than the housemaid's, became capable servants, instead of, as now, incapable governesses. These, both by their higher social antecedents and connexions and by their higher personal level, did much to raise the standing of the whole class of women servants, and their influence could not but tend to keep the moral tone of servanthood higher than when, as now, it is wholly set by untaught persons from the lowest classes, whose main idea of honour is assumption. If "lady-helps" were what the name betokens, and that in both its parts, their appearance in the servant world would be of high value for its redemption—as it would have been still higher if, being ladies and thinking it no shame to perform servants' tasks, they had thought it also no shame to take the honest name of servant: but the last thing to be wished by those who, for the sake of servants and employers alike, would have domestic service justly valued as honourable, is the disguising the servant under any pretentious non-servant name. It is because servants are ashamed of service that they are making the name of servant discreditable, and so long as they are ashamed of service they will make any name under which they accept it discreditable; while any show of thinking it charitable and complimentary to shirk the word servant as if it were opprobrious and to euphonise it into gentleman-help or lady-help or ministering angel or delicate Ariel or any other pretty way of calling a servant not a servant, is to avow that to be a servant is to commit a baseness which asks for concealment. If we cannot call men and women servants with no other feelings than as we call them blacksmiths or dressmakers or greengrocers, there must be something wrong either in the condition of

servant or in our appreciation of it. And clearly, unless we hit upon some expedient for abolishing domestic service, what we have to aim at is that not only the condition of servant, but our appreciation of it, and still more the servants' own appreciation of it, should have in it nothing that can abase an honourable man or woman in that condition.

The abolition of domestic service, if it were possible, is by no means to be wished for in the interest of the classes from whom the servants come. The arts of housewifery are notoriously not intuitive among the English, and, if the wives and daughters of working men had no other example of culinary care and cleanliness and the refinements of orderly domestic habits than they would create for themselves, there would inevitably be a falling back in these matters. As it is, there is usually, from their want of skill, and want of management, and want of zeal as cooks, caterers, and cleaners, far too little comfort in their homes for the expenditure; but, so long as an appreciable percentage among them receive something of a practical education in domestic duties, and have opportunities of forming a higher ideal of cleanliness and fitness and prettiness in domestic surroundings than that suggested by the arrangements of slatternly neighbours, there is something to leaven the general incapacity, and good traditions must exist. Even where the mother is herself competent there are very few working-class homes in which the daughters can be effectually trained in the household skills of which they ought to be past mistresses when they come to the management of homes of their own. The notable mother has no time to spare, and finds it quicker work to do things herself than to entrust them to bungling and very likely unwilling beginners; she cannot afford the damage of their breakages and blunders, and she has not patience to see the things she would have done well herself disgrace her housekeeping ill done by others. It is not uncommon even to find the daughters of particularly active and efficient housewives more indolent and inefficient in housewifery than those of the gossips and the slatterns and the helpless creatures who are daily in a feeble and promiscuous way "cleaning up"

after yesterday and making dirt for to-morrow; the incapable women, for their own sakes, make their girls do something, though they may not be wholesomely exacting as to how it is done; the capable women are apt to think only of how the work will prosper best, and to do it all themselves. There is scarcely any form of self-control more difficult to practise than that of seeing another incompetently performing, in obedience to your own command, a task which you could achieve better yourself; to leave to your pupil or your servant what it is his part to do and yours only to direct, but what you can do and he cannot, is one of the most difficult offices of teaching and ruling, one to some natures well-nigh impossible. It is, at all events, a power not as a matter of course possessed by all educated persons, nor even by all educated persons who recognise its importance, and it seems to be one of more difficult acquirement by women than by men. It is certainly not a power likely to be common among hard-worked women barely able to read and write, and with no leisure for considering moral problems and striking the balance between the immediate and final uses of their accustomed ways. And, under any circumstances, a small and plainly furnished home cannot in the care of it offer so much employment to several women as to give a useful apprenticeship to the business of housewifery; nor can several daughters be maintained at home without remunerative occupation in order to give them opportunity of practising house-work. But domestic service offers the best imaginable training school for young women who are some day to have the handiwork of their own homes to perform. And, all the while they are getting their apprenticeship in it, they are earning a comfortable maintenance and wages sufficient, not only for dress according to their needs—allowing the indulgence of a little pardonable feminine vanity to be also a need,—but for, when they are wise enough, the putting something into the savings' bank against rainy days, or towards stocking the house when they marry.

The value of domestic service as a training school is, it will be noticed, only spoken of here in connection with women-servants. Under the present order of hierarchy

and division of labour among servants—which, having been evolved by the servants for themselves, are practically unalterable by the employers—it cannot be said that domestic service has any like advantages for developing usefulness in English in-door men-servants. In foreign households in-door men-servants may readily acquire activity and industry, and the knack of a dozen home handicrafts that need a strong hand and a little ingenuity, the knack best described as “being able to turn one’s hand to anything;” for their service demands such qualities. They take a prominent share in the laborious part of the house-work, using their superior strength to the rubbings and burnishings which tax weak arms so severely; and the natural rule of households is felt to be that work too hard for women-servants is for men-servants. In our system, the men-servants accept only a light and lady-like share of anything that can be called house-work, and have no functions for which strength is desirable, or even for which it is of the slightest use, except waiting at table and cleaning plate—tasks which, though strength is a great help to their easy and successful performance, call for no effort from the strong and are scarcely a fatigue to the weak. The natural rule of households with us is that work too hard for the men-servants is for the women-servants. In-door service so constituted can only be valuable so far as its inducements of little labour, luxury, and high wages are valuable in the eyes of the men who prefer it. But the number of men employed in in-door domestic service is so small as compared to that of the women, that it is scarcely necessary to take them into consideration at all in estimating questions connected with the “servant difficulty.”

There is the other side of the question: Whether the abolition of domestic service would not be a gain to the employers. We might let our wives and daughters do the work. So we might; and shame on any lady who would think herself the less a lady for performing the humblest or the foulest of household tasks. But a revolution in our social life would be necessary. It is as easy to make the heroines of a tale become in a moment perfect cooks and housemaids, deft enough, and what is more, strong

enough in the arms for every sort of necessity of their work as it is to make Cinderella in her sudden splendour the most accomplished of princesses, perfect in polite conversation and the minuet; and no doubt, in plain fact, any heartily robust girls could quickly, though it must be gradually, get their muscles into training, and any girls short of idiots could, with brains strengthened by their schoolwork at French exercises and German declensions and so forth, still more quickly arrive at such an intelligent comprehension of ends and means as, with a little practice to help it, would stand them in better stead than the unreasoning routine experience of ordinary servants. But not even the fairy godmother's wand could enable Cinderella to play her two parts at once; and that double career is what bachelor's essays and the romances of the besom and the meat-jack put as a possibility for model young ladies. The lady who is black-leading a grate, or scrubbing the stairs, or dishing up the dinner, cannot, in real life, be in spotless and dainty attire ready on the instant to receive a caller or to take her place, fresh and unflustered, at the dinner-table. Mortal women cannot do cooking and house-work like the Brownies unperceived and in the secret hours of night; they must, unless their ministry is to be mere sham and huggermugger, take to it with absolute simplicity as their recognised and serious business. They must put aside all refinements and etiquettes which are incompatible with it; and they must make other demands on their time give way to it, just as they would have to do if they were engaged in a higher profession, just as servants have to do. Unless they were to have no recreation at all, they would have next to no time for study or the cultivation of accomplishments. And much of the routine and ceremony which guard social intercourse in the upper classes would have to be done away with in consideration of want of leisure for such nice formalities. There might be as much good as harm in some of these consequences, but it is manifest that they would result in a complete change of the social position of women of the employer classes, while in their homes the manner of their employment would put them much more than now away from the society of the men of

their families, whose place would continue to be in the drawing-rooms, while the women's work would keep them in the kitchens, and the female relatives of educated men would be like a separate class, wholly apart from them in thought and pursuits.

It would, moreover, be necessary, in order to make the employment of ladies as the regular servants in their homes compatible with their joining in the drawing-room life at all, and with their taking still a share in the outside visiting, to alter our habits of life very considerably. It is not merely that homelier ways would have to be adopted, and a certain rough-and-readiness in the arrangements, more especially in the table service which is now made one of the great points of refined housekeeping, to be admitted for the saving time and lessening toil, but that the principal meal of the day must be an early one, or how could there be possibility of drawing-room toilet and two or three hours' absence from the kitchen in the evening for the cook? and that the times of the customary entertainments must be advanced so as to allow of their breaking up soon enough to let the ladies who have fires to light betimes next morning be in bed at least by midnight. These consequences would, doubtless, have in them more good than harm, and there is no objection to them but that they are out of the question. Without such changes, to make our wives and daughters household servants would be to separate them completely from the lives of the men of their families, excepting as their servants. While admitting, and more than admitting that it would be well that every lady should have a practical knowledge of domestic details, and should be able at need to put her hand to the work herself, it may be said that the method of reforming domestic service by doing away with domestic service is one of which the adoption could not be for the interests of society, of the employers separately considered, or of the servants and the classes they come from separately considered. How far we are likely to be carried without our seeking towards that undesirable but frequently advocated reform is a question not without imminence; and if we are brought near it—but *alors comme alors*.

THE TRANSLATION OF POETRY.

It is customary to talk of translation as a process to be conducted according to one of two opposing theories: the translator aiming at the loyal transfer of some masterpiece into another language than that in which its maker conceived and executed it is understood to begin by resolving whether he will reproduce by the letter or by the spirit. Will he take meanings by the rules of the dictionary, or evolve them from his own inner consciousness? will he measure word by word to the original, or will he reconceive the thoughts from the original and give them a later but, so far as later conditions allow, continuous individuality like that of transmigrated souls? will he fix his mind most on rendering the very thing said trusting to something in it which even under the losses of strict translation shall produce something of its true effect, or on rendering the effect as he feels it and knows that others ought to feel?

Between the alternative treatments as here put the translator certainly has a choice—nay must deliberately choose. But has he really a choice between letter and spirit? If he has, if it be possible to have either indifferently without the other, and impossible to have both, by all means let him translate the spirit in preference. But can you have the spirit of a poet's work without the letter? No one advises a painter to paint the beauty of his sitter and never stickle for the features, or the instrumentalist to render the expression of a composer's music by altering the air at will. In poetry the form of the

thought is part of the thought, not merely its containing body. One poet will have a more euphonious method than another, or a more etymological precision; one takes minute pains over jewels five words long, another dashes off unregarded cadences to the first tune that sings itself in his head; one is a very dandy in his dainty phrasing, another an untamed and hasty sloven making his crude carelessness a law; but, however all these things may be, the poet—the man who writes that which he thinks poetry—takes the form of his work as of its essence and will have no fatherhood of ideas disembodied of his shapes for them. His implement is the letter, and he knows it. His result is the letter, and he knows it. He will be judged, careless or careful of manner, by what he has said, not by what you think he should or would have said. Say he is careless, his very carelessness is of his individuality as an artist; he will thank no neater stranger for representing him with the charms of neatness.

No poet, minor or major, will ever be got, whatever his theory of how to translate other men's poems, to accept a free rendering of his own as conveying their spirit. Give the merest twaddler his raw attempts interpreted by a Tennyson or a Swinburne out of his own dislocated English and halting measures into a stronger and sweeter form, or give them to him liberally translated into splendour in a foreign tongue by some Victor Hugo, he would feel that he had had, if more than generosity, yet less than justice, given him. He would refuse to recognise *his* thoughts, *his* descriptions, *his* similes, transmuted in the crucible of another man's mind. He would be like a man who wanted his own portrait—painted, of course in good looks—and who got instead the limning of a handsome man unrecognisable. Even corrections must be made by the author hand; the touch of the better poet may spoil the worsen's work and, for the purpose, be inferior; because of the want of full apprehension of what the author had it in him to say if he could, what he perhaps thought he did say; because of the want of the sympathy of union which cannot be between two persons of different mental force; because,

in fact, two men are two men, not one man. A mature poet's emendations of his own younger work many a time have the effect of interpretations by another hand, and jar; because the mature poet is no longer one with him who wrote the younger poems. And what then will it be if, not the Tennyson or the Swinburne or the Victor Hugo, not the expert and ripened poet, assumes to interpret the spirit, apart from the literary form, of the poetaster or the beginner, but the scholar who has learned to scan, the linguist who knows his own tongue no better than the stranger one he has mastered by perseverance and etymological acuteness, busies himself in adding spirit of his own making to the letter he has to translate.

The letter, though it becomes part of the spirit, is not the spirit. The poet, no matter how inspired, is after all but a craftsman. His words are the thing he means, but often sound, or even a technical necessity of metre, may have suggested the words. And yet other words will not afterwards do. For what has been said influences what is to follow, sets the key for melody and harmony alike. True the poet himself alters what he has said; but he does it under his own laws; if he changes even a word it is because another word is more keenly accurate as the language of his thought, or because another word more fitly leads to the next thought; or, making the change for purposes of melody only, he has, and he uses, the power also to make in the passage he has touched whatever other changes will keep the sense he has in view complete to his own mind. Admit intellectual superiority of the translator, admit, what is certainly improbable, the translator's superiority as poet to poet over his original, and may we say that the translator can, under any human conditions, supplement the poet with the fitness of similarity, and amplify and embellish him into the fashion of thought of centuries later or worlds apart, without loss of whatever individuality of genius gave the poet his claim to be translated at all? And when we remember, as needs we must, that except by most rare and, we might say, unreasonable exceptions, the translator is, as a matter of course, in no point of originating

force the equal of the author translated, we must feel that the translator's true work is to give us, so nearly as the respective grammars and idiomatic constructions of his divers tongues may allow, the translated author's thoughts as he himself gave them and to trust to accuracy to the letter for accuracy to the spirit.

If only the master poets of the classical world could be rendered for us as have been the magnificent Hebrews! If translation of them could be done by a company—a company seeking no personal glory and impressed with such a reverence as would prevent their altering or elaborating one jot or one tittle! Such a translation would have to be in prose—for poets have their vanity, and still more have their taste in harmonies—in prose by faithful men who knew their tongue and aspired to be its perfect servants, not its harmonious masters as versifiers claim to be. What then? If we could but have the sweeping rhythms of our Biblical translators, need we long for others? What poet's ghost could desire more glorifying translation of his music of words than such as the unforgettable cadence of "How art thou fallen from heaven, Lucifer, son of the morning?" It is a cadence which, more than perfect in its isolation, would become but a monotonous doggerel in the echoed repetition of verse; it is a glory and a sweetness that only prose must dare to possess. And yet that same book of Isaiah, and yet the Psalms, the love-song of Solomon, the pithy poetry of Proverbs, the low long wails of Ecclesiastes, can give us rivals by the dozen to this, for versifiers, inimitable rhythm. But we could be thankful for less than our Biblical swell and fall of solemn and pathetic measureless measures. Will any prose translators give us Isaac Walton's "natural rising and falling, doubling and redoubling" like his own mellifluous description of the nightingale's sweet descants? Only the perfection of English prose could reasonably convey to us the perfection of Greek verse; for in our lost melodious prose the absolute poetry of sound would be compatible with blind fidelity of verbal rendering. And no sole human being can translate with the entire disinterestedness necessary

for such translation as that of our masterpiece of the English language, the version of the Hebrew Testament. The men who made that version looked above all, before all, to the letter; the spirit, they thought, was there of itself, if they were but faithful to the dictionary. If there were but men to translate Homer so by the letter!

As to translating by the spirit—there is a well-known University story of a good lady who could by no means be satisfied with a usually much approved artist's portrait of her husband, a man of considerable academical and some scientific achievement: "it was like him," she said, "but where was the intellect? the artist had not painted his intellect." It was suggested that the intellect should be painted in a separate picture and hung up beside the portrait. As it happened, nobody was found to paint the intellect thus apart from the bodily man, the spirit away from the letter. Had the question been of producing his intellect apart from its outward embodiment, had the University notability been a world's great writer with his works liable to translation, he might not have escaped so easily. A very nice intellect would have been portrayed for him: but would he have accepted it for his?

A TRANSCRIPT AND A TRANSCRIPTION.

THERE have just appeared, almost simultaneously, two renderings of a most unrenderable masterpiece. One calls itself a transcript, and the other ought to call itself a transcription, according to Webster's definition of the word, as applied by composers to "a more or less fanciful and ornate reproduction on their own instrument of a song or other piece not originally intended for it." One is by a chief of poets now, the other perhaps by a poet to be pleasantly revealed to us in a not remote futurity; and, as might be expected, it is the great poet, the hail-fellow of Æschylus, who spends his vigour in unflinching self-restraint and will not be lured from his dogged fidelity as a translator by any temptation to achieve a beautiful passage or a well-rounded stanza, it is the aspirant who turns aside to follow the flights of his own fancy, who, in the enthusiasm of versification, finds surprises of happy touches and new turns, and adds himself to Æschylus. It is noticeable, too, that it is the word-by-word translation, the mere imitation as one might say, which bears the strong impression of originative power—a power which must have been recognised if Robert Browning had never been heard of before—and the loose translation, giving play to interpolated originality, which leaves the reader suspicious of the want of such a power in the translator and certain only of his elegant scholarship. If we judge the fulfilment by the intention as expressed in their respective prefaces, both translators are to be congratulated. Mr. Morshead's "object has been through-

out to be, if possible, readable," and he has succeeded. Mr. Browning considered that if he carried out his wishes in his work the result would "prove very hard reading indeed," and he has succeeded. The consequence is that, if any person wholly unacquainted with Æschylus either in the original or by translations should make acquaintance with him under the auspices of Mr. Morshead, he would conceive of him as a melodious and easily intelligible writer a little too much given to prolong an idea into several lines for the sake of perspicuity or of sound; and, if he made acquaintance with him under the auspices of Mr. Browning, he would conceive of him as bewilderingly, sometimes hopelessly, obscure, and as rugged to an intolerable harshness. That is, Mr. Browning's disciple would have acquired a true idea exaggerated, and Mr. Morshead's disciple would have learned to think of a pear and call it a pine-apple.

Nothing could be more un-Æschylean than Mr. Morshead's paraphrase of the *Agamemnon*. Much of it is beautiful, all is musical, it rarely deserts the original completely—rather it hovers round it in its desertions like a butterfly round a favourite flower—it rarely, perhaps never, misses or perverts a meaning; altogether, as a non-literal and expanded translation, it is essentially correct. But it is not Æschylus. The spirit is gone—this very merit aimed at by free and expanding translations, that of preserving the higher thing, the spirit, at the expense of the lower thing, the letter, is just what oftenest does go, much as you would lose the expression of a sitting face if you tried to paint the expression disregarding the features. With Mr. Morshead one might quote half the book in instances of poetical, if sometimes rather weak, versions, but not one passage of which it can be said, "Here you have the true strength and flavour." Take, for instance, the opening of the drama, the watchman's speech. The watchman, grumbling at his long and, as he seems half inclined to think, useless watch for the beacon light which is to announce the fall of Troy and Agamemnon's return, suddenly sees the light and breaks into shouts of joy and into dancing.

The speech is a fine one, as its subject warrants, but it is not a subjective and thoughtful one, which the character of the speaker does not warrant. He complains that when he lies on his dew-drenched couch he gets no rest, "for fear" (doubtless of being caught napping and missing the signal of the beacon) "stands by keeping off sleep" (*ἀνθ' ὑπνου*) "so that I cannot steadily close my eyelids together in sleep; and when I think to sing or hum throwing in" (literally shredding in or cutting in) "the opposing (*ἀντίμολπον*) cure of sleep, I bewail, groaning, the calamity of this house not managed, as formerly, in the best way." There is nothing in this dramatically unfit for the character. But Mr. Morshead's watchman is a superior person and has a soul, and this is what he says:—

For in the place of sleep
Stands Fear as my Familiar, and repels
The soft repose that would assuage mine eyes.
And if at whiles, for the lost balm of sleep
I medicine my soul with melody
Of trill or song—anon to tears I turn
Wailing the woe that broods upon this home,
Unguided now, by honour, as of old.

Presently he sees the beacon aflame. "Hail, light of night showing the radiance of day, and ordaining many dances in Argos," he gleefully exclaims—according to Æschylus—but according to Mr. Morshead:—

Fire of the night, that brings my spirit day,
Shedding on Argos light, and dance, and song.

The lines are good lines, but as a mere question of artistic propriety who would not prefer Mr. Browning's uncouth veracity?

We have taken this speech not as an especially remarkable instance of Mr. Morshead's method, but because it begins the book. The fatal falseness of the method has perhaps its strongest exemplification in the oracular chorus which, with its intentionally mystic obscurity and veiled meanings, must have been meant to be but semi-intelligible to the audience, attuning their minds to the coming tragedy by mysterious forebodings, but not

revealing too much of the story beforehand. Even the lucid Miss Swanwick, when she deals with this chorus, announces in a footnote her intention of being obscure—although she is unable wholly to adhere to her resolution. Mr. Browning, we need scarcely say, does the most ample justice to the bewildering effect of the original. Mr. Morshead sails off smoothly with four-lined stanzas and, in a neat poem, without jar or puzzle, makes the oracle of Calchas clear to the meanest capacity and rather agreeable reading. Cassandra herself may not rave too roughly, and must do her metaphors prettily. “Behold! behold! keep the bull from the cow!” she screams in her Pythonic frenzy, as she seems to see the murder which is presently to be. “In the robes having caught him, the black-horned, by a trick,” (or, differently read, “having caught him with her cunning black horn,”) “she strikes, and he falls in the water-filled bath!” Then, the vision passing, she says, as if by way of explanation to the chorus, no longer in the fantastic language Greek religion ascribed to prophecy, though still unintelligibly, “I am telling you the event of a treacherously murderous bath.” This is Mr. Morshead’s suave translation:—

Away, away—keep him away—
The monarch of the herd, the pasture’s pride,
Far from his mate! In treach’rous wrath,
Muffling his swarthy horns, with secret scathe,
She gores his fenceless side!
Hark! in the brimming bath,
The heavy plash—the dying cry—
Hark—in the laver—hark, he falls by treachery!

Compare with this, and with the tritely literal prose rendering given above, Mr. Browning’s spirited and exact “transcript”—not very coherent, but rather more so than the original, not very graceful, but again rather more so than the original:—

How! How!
See—see quick!
Keep the bull from the cow!
In the vesture she, catching him, strikes him now
With the black-horned trick,
And he falls in the watery vase!
Of the craft-killing cauldron I tell thee the case!

Which best fulfils dramatic fitness? Which is Æschylus? It must be owned that, according to customary pronunciation, *vase* and *case* are not comfortable rhymes, but after all what is rhyme compared to reason? And is Mr. Morshead's speech for Cassandra at such a mad moment in the least reasonable? We have seen the interpolation, "The monarch of the herd, the pasture's pride," the omission of the bull and the cow, praised as a felicitous version putting Mr. Browning's ruder accuracy to shame. Apparently it had not struck the critic that it would have been strangely inappropriate for the possessed woman looking on in the spirit at the slaughter of Agamemnon to go out of her way to describe in metaphor his stateliness or his greatness. Cassandra says bull and cow, instead of man and woman, because she speaks the prophetic language, which avoids calling things by their right names, but she is too much absorbed in the agony of her vision to expatiate and pay compliments. To the Greek mind, of course, not accustomed to look on bulls and cows only from the point of view of beef and milk, but regarding them as the useful equals of the horse, and above all as the highest sort of sacrificial offering, the use of these names to symbolise Agamemnon and Clytemnestra would present nothing coarse or ludicrous, but, if a similar use in English seem inexpedient, the substitution of some animal we regard as poetical—the lion or the lioness for instance—would have better represented the original, and with less dramatic irrelevancy, than the circumlocutory phraseology Mr. Morshead's timidity has selected. And, as to Mr. Browning's rendering, it can only be urged that if he says "keep the bull from the cow" instead of something more polished, his reason, apparently, is that precisely that and not anything more polished is what Æschylus said. It may be a question whether Æschylus had better have said "the monarch of the herd" and the other things; it can scarcely be a question whether a translator should say them for him. We cannot express any gratitude to Mr. Morshead for his adaptation of the *Agamemnon*. Gin with water and sugar may be a pleasanter and for the matter of that a

wholesomer beverage than gin alone, but the magistrates^s seem to be of opinion that when a man proposes to sell you gin it is to be gin, and not a compound of his own. If Mr. Morshead really wished in translating the *Agamemnon* to help "one or two of those to whom the original is a closed book, to share its treasures" he should have translated, not amplified and altered.

Of the translation which we have been chiefly criticising it may be said that since—not to speak of other translators who have achieved, like Mr. Morshead, readable English, and who have, better or worse than he, combined with readable English fidelity to the original—we have Miss Swanwick's excellently poetical as well as careful version, there seems to be no particular reason for its existence. Of Mr. Browning's translation we cannot ask why it should exist. Good or bad it stands alone. No one has done what he has done, no one has even tried to do it. With a determination and a minute accuracy which approach the miraculous he has trodden step by step in the footprints of his elected leader. He has added nothing, altered nothing, omitted nothing. He has done by *Æschylus* as he would have had *Æschylus* do by him if each had been the other. And no poet will dispute his theory of translation. A poet would no more wish to be changed and embellished to the taste and after the likeness of his translator than a woman aware of beauty would wish to have her portrait painted up to the type of another, even if a fairer woman. Like the pretty woman he wants his own characteristics, his own charms, even the gracious irregularities that mar details but make the whole, accurately but lovingly reproduced. And the self-sacrificing labour of such a reproduction of one poet by another is rare and very great. We have it here, and with a Browning to devote this labour upon an *Æschylus* the result ought to have been one of the most magnificent poems in the English language. But alas! we have only the most magnificent of "cribs." Considered as a help and teacher to a student no such version of any author in any language has ever been produced in prose or in verse. Line by line, word by word, the pupil may trace the text in Mr. Browning's words.

The reader learned in Greek but no poet may find the subtle inner sense a lexicon could not give him nor he himself supply, and the reader helped by poetic instinct but little versed in Greek will find the verbal key he needed, and be moved by the intensesness of meaning shown him in each word to a perception which he would not have had alone. But the reader who knows no Greek at all will be left bewildered and incredulous. For Mr. Browning's translation—in that much like a literal prose crib—needs the Greek text to explain it. And it needs it in consequence, not merely of the word-to-word severity which at times must make any absolutely literal translation seem disjointed and confused, but in consequence of obscurity for which Mr. Browning's idiosyncrasies rather than his theory of translation are responsible.

Mr. Browning felt himself required "to be literal at every cost save that of absolute violence to our language"—a theory of his duty as a translator in which we readily acquiesce. But what we question is whether the inversions by which he so conscientiously endeavours to follow the Greek even in the sequence of words are not an absolute violence to our language, and whether to use them really is to be literal. If you translate a sentence which is not upside down Greek into one which is upside down English, you are not literal, although you may have rendered the words exactly and in their very order, for you have introduced an element—that of confusion or of eccentricity—which was not in the original phrase. Any poet who is worth translating at all will have used his words with such definite intention that no exactitude in giving their equivalents can be too scrupulous; but he will have arranged them according to the wont and grammar of his language—excepting of course where there is some artistic motive for irregularity—and the way to make his translated words produce on foreigners a like effect with that which his original words produced on his own countrymen must surely be to arrange them according to the wont and grammar of the foreigners' language. Difficult poet as *Æschylus* may have been, he

could never have puzzled Greeks as Englishmen must be puzzled by this :—

And they send, lighting up with ungrudged vigour,
Of flame a huge beard, ay, the very foreland
So as to strike above, in burning onward,
The look-out which commands the Strait Saronic.

Or this :—

And Fortune, saviour, willing on our ship sat,
So as it neither had in harbour wave-surge
Nor ran aground against a shore all rocky.
And then, the water-Hades having fled from
In the white day, not trusting to our fortune,
We chewed the cud in thoughts.

Such passages as these—and there are scores of them—convey at first sight, or worse still at first hearing, no meaning whatever. One must take the Greek text to elucidate them, and then, re-reading them several times, accustom oneself to them; they will thus, like passages which have been difficult in a language with which one is not thoroughly familiar, become intelligible and expressive, and their really great force may be appreciated. It is difficult to suggest any process by which those who cannot use the Greek text may arrive at a like appreciation; the resource of tracing out the meaning and reducing the sentences to uninverted prose is scarcely open to them, for, without Æschylus to translate Browning, how can they track out the meaning?

Many of the inversions by which Mr. Browning puts the dutiful among his readers into a position of mind, if not of body, like that of the Irishman who had to stand on his head to read a signboard which had somehow been fixed upside down, are owing to the supplementary half-foot with which he has elected to terminate his blank verse—why, there is no telling, for nothing could be less like the iambus which terminates the iambic line of Greek tragedy. The “Saxon” English to which he mainly adheres, as an Englishman should, is habitually monosyllabic, and the majority of its monosyllables are strong; hence, to get a dissyllable, or, as a substitute, a

strong monosyllable followed by a weak one, at the end of every line, is a difficult operation, and a phrase may have to be distorted to effect it. For instance, "Thee, in this tenth year's light, am I returned to"—which, however, is quite intelligible—is not by any means the nearest approach to the sequence of the Greek δεκάτῳ σε φέγγει τῷδ' ἀφικόμην ἔτους, and must have been arranged merely to get the half-foot ending; for if it were desired to give any special prominence to the pronoun, a place at the end of the line would equally have achieved that, not very necessary, object. But generally the un-English sequence is conscientiously chosen in order to follow the Greek, and not to have adopted it would have been the far easier task. We think Mr. Browning wrong, but the literary skill which has enabled him to be wrong in this manner is marvellous.

The ruggedness of sound which adds to the bewildering effect of some of the more crabbed passages is in a great measure caused by the jerks of the inversions, and somewhat by the dissyllabic termination, of which, in unrhymed verse, English ears do not promptly catch the rhythm. We must protest against this excessive ruggedness of sound as in itself a fault in translation. No doubt Æschylus was not of the mellifluous order of poets, any more than Mr. Browning himself, and should not be rendered in glib soft cadences, but he was a Greek, master of a harmonious and nicely quantitative language, and could never be cacophonous. And, since it is not possible in translating from any language into another to give the suitability of cadence and rhythmical emphasis with which even a rugged poet ever and anon enhances tender or touching meanings, it is the more unjust to create a supererogatory harshness throughout.

We may here point out too, as a minor but not entirely indifferent matter, that the system of punctuation by dashes with which Mr. Browning tries to guide his readers among perplexing clauses increases confusion, since it leads to frequent doubts as to whether any given dash means an actual break of interruption or only an extra vigorous comma. For one instance among many,

when the chorus is made to ask Ægisthus, in answer to his boasting over the death of Agamemnon:—

Dost thou say—willing, thou didst kill the man here,
 And, alone, plot this lamentable slaughter?
 I say—thy head in justice will escape not
 The people's throwing—know that!—stones and curses!

the dashes are evidently misleading, and cut up the sentence, which, though involved, is quite unbroken in construction, into what until studied seem to be several abrupt separate sections. The appearance of a difficulty is thus created where no real difficulty exists, and, to the reader who feels under no obligation of duty to understand or know the reason why, an appearance of difficulty may be much the same as a reality.

In one part of the drama, where indeed the disjunctions by dashes are frequently real and not merely apparent disjunctions, their recurrence, together with the rendering of $\delta\eta$ and $\delta\epsilon$ (which Æschylus in each case uses with a *continuing* force for sense and sound) by the interrupting and interjectionally expletive “why,” becomes actually a fault of interpretation. Æschylus has marked the character of Clytemnestra so legibly that all who run may read. Throughout her welcome of her husband she is shown as a skilful and self-possessed actress, but still an actress, and perhaps inclined to overdo her part. She “doth protest too much,” she describes agonies of wifely sorrow and apprehension with careful rhetoric, and demonstrates her affection by a series of choice similes for its object. So perfectly is she mistress of her eloquence that she is even able to afford herself the subtle pleasure of giving it concealed meanings, and making it, to her own ears, announce her deadly purpose. This is not the sort of speech which would have poured out brokenly in bursts and pauses and transitional “whys.” And, by its being rendered as if spoken under excitement, we lose the contrast of the strong unflinching calm in which Clytemnestra's concentrated hate manifests itself throughout, even in her boastful gloating over the details of the murder after it has taken place, and the useless passion and laments of Cassandra.

To return to the obscurities of this transcript and their causes. Mr. Browning in his own poems is not unwont to pay his readers the compliment of relying too much on their quickness of comprehension and on their possessing that full mental sympathy with their author which should enable them to detect and share the completeness of his thought where he has epitomised it in a couple of words or smuggled it in in a hint. He does not recognise that, as a rule, even thoughtful readers of poetry require to be told what it is they are to think. And he does not recognise that, brought up, as most of us are from infancy, to expect from our teachers, masters, and spiritual pastors, a great deal of words to the meaning, we cannot readily fall into the mood of a spiritual pastor who chooses to more than reverse the proportions and give us an excessive deal of meaning to the words. This being so with Mr. Browning's natural English, it is not wonderful that when he is writing in "as Greek a fashion as English will bear" he compresses the meaning by strong thrusts into so small a space, as our English idiom runs, that the phrase is apt to go halt like a Chinese lady's foot moulded to fit a conciser shoe than normal development would have required. Concision like that which is a prominent beauty of the ancient languages cannot be copied in any language which has given up almost all signs of cases and moods and which therefore is left dependent on prepositions and pronouns and such small fry to fix the positional import of its verbs and substantives. English simply cannot be given in Greek fashion, for so given it is meaningless and therefore singularly un-Greek. Mr. Browning makes Clytemnestra, who, after describing the blazing up of beacon after beacon, has mentioned yet another, say of it that it

lacked no recognition

Of the guard—as burning more than burnings told you.

Would any reader, trusting to this English rendering only, guess that "burning more than burnings told you" meant that the last-named beacon burned more strongly

than the others which had been mentioned? Or is it at all clear when he speaks of Zeus as

For that wife, the many husbanded,
Appointing many a tug that tries the limb,

that he means *on account of* that wife—*i.e.* Helen? Or, when a “slave soul” is spoken of, would it not rather be understood as if in contempt than as applying to the soul of a person fallen into slavery in whom nevertheless “the divine gift” (of prophecy) “remains?” These examples are taken by chance; such and often stronger are to be found on every page throughout the translation. They seem to be an exaggeration of the admirable reticence of all amplification of his own to which Mr. Browning adheres. It is not amplification to allow the Greek words a sufficient number of English correspondents to state the literal meaning plainly, even if the English words should be twice as many as the Greek, any more than it is overpayment to give two sixpences to discharge a debt of a shilling when you have not a shilling in your purse.

One peculiarity of Mr. Browning’s method of translation is a sort of literalness which we cannot but consider as arriving, on the principle that if you go very far east you get west, at mistranslation. In all languages there are many words which have come by processes of connotation and transition to have secondary meanings more or less, sometimes entirely, superseding the old primary meaning, which acquire a sense having no reference to their root-derivation—or which having once been metaphors have come down to being mere speech-tokens used without the slightest regard to the simile they once epitomised. Wear and tear has rubbed that down as it rubs down effigies on coins in daily use, which serve the purposes they are put to just as readily with the face blurred out. The results of our insisting on treating all such words as strictly faithful to their first analogies in our ordinary employment of them would be embarrassing in any language, and in translating from any language. We are informed, for instance, that our “wife” can be traced

back to mean weaver and our "lady" to mean loaf-giver, but we should scarcely think it an accurate rendering of "my wife! my lady-love!" if we found it, "Ma fileuse! mon amante donneuse de pain!" Nor could we admit the appositeness of translating "fly" by some phrase which should explain it as a carriage speeding as with wings; and even if it were "fly," the insect, it would scarcely seem essential to hunt for or to coin some name for it which should imply the creature's method of locomotion, instead of being content with whatever might be its designation in the tongue to be used. But Mr. Browning will by no means let us have a word without its pedigree. He will, by some sleight of brain, get the Greek word back into the meaning it or its root once wore, and then, by his vast and unfettered vocabulary power, constrain his English word to give the older meaning *plus* all compatible infusion of the later which it had come to convey in the parlance of Æschylus's times. It was said by the Greeks that the noun *αἴλιος*, a dirge, and its adjective, meaning plaintive or mournful, were derived from the burden *Αἶ λίνος*, "Alas Linos," in a lament for the death of Linus the son of Apollo: therefore when the Chorus chaunts for refrain *αἴλιον, αἴλιον, εἰπέ*, "say a dirge, a dirge," Mr. Browning, resolved not to part with a derivation, and forced, if he sets the chorus singing "Ah Linus!" to give some explanation to the English reader, translates both ways at once and makes it "Ah Linos, say, ah Linos, song of wail!" which still does not convey the intended explanation to the reader unaware of *αἴλιος* and its origin, but leaves him to wonder what Linus and his song have to do with the matter. When Clytemnestra bids Cassandra if she cannot converse in Greek, speak *καρβάνω χερὶ*, with barbarous or foreign hand—*i.e.* make signs like a foreigner, Mr. Browning's "speech with hand as Kars (Carians) do" seems quite irrelevant although *κάρβανος* might be traced to a derivation from the foreign tribe of Carians. The primary meaning of *παλαιστής* is, of course, wrestler, but by obvious gradations, it came to mean rival, and merely suitor; when therefore Mr. Browning makes Cassandra say of

her cheated lover, Apollo, "But he was athlete to me— huge grace breathing" we can see, by the turn he gives the second half of the line, in what manner he contrives to reconcile his interpretation of *παλαιστής* to something approaching common sense, but it takes some time to follow him in it, and we are left unconvinced. There is no need of multiplying instances; we have noted down a long list of them, but our object is merely to illustrate a general criticism, not to pursue the ungracious task of hunting out imperfections for a catalogue.

Of downright mistranslations there is little to be said. Some there do seem to be; but they are few indeed. We say *seem* to be, because from the peculiarities to which we have referred, it often happens that, not only at first blush but for some time, Mr. Browning's phrases wear a meaning other than he meant, and that the careful critic, after much pondering over some surprising passage, is about reluctantly to believe in a mistranslation, when all at once, there beams on him a new sense, not in the Greek but in the English, and everything becomes clear.

We should like to say more of this translation—a work of genius, if of genius not wholly wisely spent. We should like to point out admirable felicities of word-rendering; but our list of such—it could be a long one—would mean nothing to those who have no Greek, and would be superfluous to those who have. We should like to quote splendid passages; but, alas! there is not one unbroken by the ruggedness of sense and sound of which we have spoken, and to give such by way of the chosen completenesses which readers look to have presented them in critics' complimentary quotations would be an extreme injustice. There is no translation of the Agamemnon from which, truth to words and truth to dramatic fitness apart, we could not select, page by page, more attractive extracts; there is none so noteworthy as a whole. We could wish nothing better for literature than that Mr. Browning, having translated the Agamemnon of Æschylus, should go on to translate the Agamemnon of Robert Browning.

HOUSEHOLD ART.

MR. POYNTER has been talking, if not "rhyme and reason," art and reason, on a subject concerning which artistically-disposed persons are apt to talk and to act so much unreason that well-intending Philistines too often get scared past all hope of salvation, and exclaim defiantly, "Let who will be artistic, let me be comfortable." He has treated with much practical sense the question of getting more beauty into the necessary surroundings of common life. It was not essential for this purpose that he should discuss the valuable or deleterious effects of art, that is art for art's sake, on the welfare of a nation; nor did he, in refusing the ethical and economical controversy which he left aside as out of his province as an artist, omit anything which his address might be felt to need. There are indeed moralists who more than disbelieve in art as a moral means, who hold it a sensuous and enervating influence, sure to sap the rude and healthy strength of a people who could love it as Greece and once Italy loved it; and there are upholders of utility who look on it as sheer waste, no gain to anybody but those who get money by it which they do not deserve; but these iconoclasts aim their blows at Art, the great goddess of lives—Art, the soul-devourer—Art (from their point of view) useless, and careless of the common world. None of them see any harm in having things neat and pretty around you indoors and even out, on the contrary they think such a state of affairs desirable for body and mind; and

this form of art is in fact, though Mr. Poynter would righteously disdain the phraseology, what he is urging upon us. It is art, the trim business-like handmaid of Vulcan and of Cloacina, whose cause he is advocating, and nobody is afraid of her, provided only that she will be a little accommodating, and consult our creature convenience as well as our æsthetic developement.

But the result of seeing genuine principles of art steadily employed on everyday objects, so that our eyes should unconsciously acquire a need for harmony and symmetry and an intolerance of hideousness, would, in a society like ours, spread further and lower than art proper, or what we may call unapplied art, can reach. We stare at paintings at the Academy exhibitions, or on signboards, or in shop windows, or on our friends' dining-room walls, according to our respective duties and opportunities, and some of us think we find a certain mild pleasure in the operation, but we are in too great a hurry, or too ignorant, or too prosaic, to feel the artist's impulse in his work, or to receive from it any impression worth retaining. We have stared, we have admired, or said we admired, and we remain the same men as if the picture we praised had never been. Our fenders and our souptureens have a subtler and more lasting effect upon us. It is true that, unless we have taken some special dislike to them, we oftenest see them without thinking of them, without consciously receiving any sensation whatever; but it is just that property of habitualness in an object, making us aware of it without being attentive to it, which affects our permanent taste. We grow used to its curves or its angles, any change in them would disturb us; we should detect the want or the intrusion in a moment with that unpleasant sense of being perpetually forced to look at it which is a consequence of any interference with a familiar thing. Meanwhile our eye is learning its lesson, as a baby learns speech, and the combinations of lines and of colours which it has found acceptable from custom become the guide of a taste which seems, but is not, instinctive. Thus if art, taking possession of the tools and adjuncts of our daily existence, surrounds us with

true proportions and suavely blended tints, the educational influence on the eye and the taste must be much greater on society at large than could be that of any number of those masterpieces of painting and sculpture for the enjoyment of which the immense majority of our countrymen are at present almost as much without the faculty as if they were purblind.

But, admitting unreservedly that the influence which should train us, as a people, to prefer good taste to bad, would be a salutary one, we may yet claim that, if art is to interfere in our domestic arrangements, it shall take common-sense and expediency for counsellors. Household art cannot exist for itself alone. No matter how complete and cultured the oaken chimney-piece with its tiled stove, if it is not adapted for warming the particular room it is in, if comfort, or if just economy in fuel, has been sacrificed to its artistic correctness, it is morally ugly, and, being unfit for its purposes, has no true right to call itself artistic at all. No matter how orthodoxly Gothic a sideboard may be, it is, as a sideboard, not beautiful if it will not admit a modern decanter into its recesses. Or in out-of-door work, if a railway station or an iron bridge cannot be made both thoroughly fit for its purpose and beautiful, it must be made fit, and beauty must be a secondary consideration. Happily fitness is always so large an element of beauty that in time genius and skill, learning to master new conditions and new materials by yielding to them, may bring even such structures to a perfection which can rejoice the sight.

And again, while thanking the artists, and even their imitators, who are willing to save us from ourselves and plan the furnishing of our dwelling-rooms for us, instead of leaving us to make our own confusion of styles and hues, we may urge upon them that we should be left some little erratic license, some little power of varying our respective homes according to our individualities, even in disobedience to the artistic unities. The weaknesses of our Philistine nature, old associations, our idiosyncrasies of comfort, require this much concession. And indeed it is a question whether the risk of infringing the complete-

ness of the artist's plan if he indulges his clients a little in personal interpolations would not be balanced by the occasional foil of characteristic irregularities. Gothic architecture has owed much of its charm and human interest to its way of humouring necessities; a turret, an oriel, a balcony would get put in some unexpected and, on paper, unsuitable place, because the people who were to use the premises had a need for it there; and nine times out of ten the intruded feature adds the charm of life-like quaintness to the building. An unauthorised arm-chair expressive of an old prejudice of the master of the house, an incongruous flower-stand due to the whim of its mistress, might in the same way give an attraction to a dining-room which correctness and unity of style would fail to produce alone. At present it must be owned that art decorators are, from all accounts, somewhat tyrannous; and many people, who would otherwise gratefully put themselves under their guidance when the terrible task of "doing up" a house overtakes them, elect to abide by their own ignorance and the advice of an ordinary upholsterer rather than, as their friends have done, abnegate every wish and will at the command of a benevolent despot. Certainly it is pathetic to hear of an unfortunate lady gazing shudderingly on what is to be her drawing-room carpet, and exclaiming with tears in her eyes "Of course, of course, I must have it, Mr.—, since you say so—but, oh, I do think it hideous!"

But the movement which, as Mr. Poynter showed, grew from the experiment of Mr. William Morris (better known still to most of us as the poet) and certain distinguished artists, in establishing a firm whose aim was the regeneration of household art, would stop far short of exercising a permanent influence on even the wealthier classes and would have no influence on the multitude if it remained in the hands of artists only. To the classes who can afford to avail themselves of the privilege it must be a boon of immense value that artists of genius and technical knowledge combined should relieve them from the difficulties caused by their own inability to appreciate genuine artistic work and their tradesmen's inability to supply

it. But it is because the movement has done more than this, because it has spread as it were beyond itself, that there is a chance of its being more than a passing fashion for the rich; it is the number of the imitators of Mr. Morris to whom Mr. Poynter referred which gives the promise. Doubtless some of these are, as Mr. Poynter says, passing off furniture and fabrics as bad in design and construction as before, and even infinitely worse in taste, but this is far from being the case with all. Already in homes where art is undreamed of, and where perhaps Mr. Morris's name is unknown, his influence is seen. Cheap carpets are soberer, cheap chairs are of a simpler make, cheap wall-papers have less aggressive tints and are of well-intentioned, if not always well-executed, designs.

Mr. Poynter forcibly said "The Greek idea of art was not merely in adornment; it was above everything in completeness and consistency." Our modern idea of household art has been almost only adornment; and, taking it in that sense, we have had not too little but a great deal too much art applied to our furniture. The legs of tables and chairs writhed and twisted in all sorts of meaningless convolutions; couches curved in and out in forms the least possibly adapted to the mould of the human body—as if boa-constrictors or other zigzag animals were expected to be their occupants; everything that could not be gilded was French-polished, and everything that could not be French-polished was gilded. There being nothing so difficult and so expensive as to procure what is not in fashion, only millionaires could afford simplicity. And, as millionaires usually prefer being in the fashion, simple, straight, square-backed, comfortable furniture was nowhere to be seen. The Morris movement has chiefly been to simplicity. Hence we have a gain in comfort as well as in beauty.

There has however of late been apparent among those who, rightly or wrongly, are called of the "Morris School," a tendency to desert comfort, and to plan by purely technical art laws. Such hard and fixed technical rules are at all times apt to lose their meaning, and

work executed under such a system, whether done by hand or by machine, is mechanical. A wearisome repetition is the result, the monotonous reproduction of the same types everywhere and for everything—and there is perhaps a danger here for household art at the present moment. And, as in the history of art it would appear that an adherence to fixed laws after the life has passed out of them, and they have become merely conventional, tends from simplicity to adornment, we may by-and-by find Mr. Morris's now most diligent imitators wriggling their way back again to the scrolls and curves. Which Heaven and Mr. William Morris forefend!

A NEW SIN.

MOST of us will accept the interpretation given by Mr. Walter, as Chairman, at the Newbury Conference, according to which intemperance means excess. Besides being sane, commonplace, and pertinent, it has this advantage—it can be extended or contracted to fit the views of all sides. For, since the minutest minim of that which is essentially deleterious is too much, the energetic total abstainer may declare that there is excess in the swallowing were it but a teaspoonful of alcohol to a gallon of water; and who can impugn his reasoning? To indulge an animal craving at the expense of a risk to health, however trifling the indulgence may be by weight and measure, and, whatever its nature, must be an excess and an intemperance.

But, on this trite and palpable moral axiom, follows a mournful consequence. There is a new sin in England. It is the sin whose non-existence Sophie Arnould or some other lady more witty than staid is said to have regretted with pathos long ago. “Ah!” sighed she, as she drank a bumper of cool crystal water, “what a pity this is not a sin!” She might recognise the missing relish in the innocent-looking fluid now. *Nous avons changé tout cela.* In the very number of *The Times* which records the Newbury Conference on intemperance, there was a letter from a householder at Lancaster Gate, communicating the results of an analysis of the water supplied him—that water which denizens of Paddington and Bayswater fondly

toast pre-eminent in purity over the brews of all other London water companies. This water contains, it seems, "considerable portions of ammonia, nitrates, and nitrites, all of which point to possibly injurious contamination; organic matters and chlorides and sulphates also being in notable amount present, point clearly to the fact that this is a highly impure water." The analyst "is of opinion that injury to health must be the consequence of the use of the water for domestic purposes." Oh, ye gods and little fishes! is this a beverage for the temperate? Had we not better, fishes and all, confine ourselves to brandy as more suited to our natural constitutions! Is it cleanly, is it sober, is it morally excusable, to imbibe fever, debility, parasites, and who knows what mysterious ailments?—not to speak of the chance of paralysis from lead-poisoning, if the dangerous liquid has come, as it probably has, through leaden pipes, and has lain in a leaden cistern. If this is true of the best water of London, what must the middling water be! horror of horrors, what must the worst!

Plainly it cannot be long before the temperance apostles forbid us water with still more zeal than they now direct against fermented liquors. One can imagine the first conference, Sir Wilfrid Lawson in the chair. One can imagine the impassioned mover of the first resolution electrifying the audience with his portrayal of the consequences of indulgence in water. "And yet," he will say, "and yet there are men, rational beings, Christians, Britons, and yet there are—I can scarcely bring myself to speak it—there are even women, wives and mothers, who, knowing as they must know, all the dangers, all the horrors, of their deadly draughts, will, rather than bear the inconvenience of thirst, pour the demon of disease down their throats and sacrifice health, happiness, self-respect, for a gulp of water!" There will be useful anecdotes too; we shall read how John Jackson lived industrious and happy, mending kettles in the bosom of a devoted wife and six rosy children, with a nice nest-egg in the savings bank and a rapidly-increasing income, till one fatal summer day he

was persuaded by a profligate neighbour to slake his thirst with a sip of water. From that hour his fate was sealed; he drank water every day. In vain his wife remonstrated, in vain she pointed to their children and implored him for their sakes to abstain; he had no longer the energy to abandon his vice. Swiftly and surely, as usual, its attendant evils made him their victim, and, a prey to indigestion and diphtheria, he was unable to work and saw his family reduced to beggary. At last his wife, disheartened and weary, felt the temptation to which he had succumbed, and ere long became as abandoned a water-drinker as himself. The children saw their parents' pernicious habit and, ignorant of its dangers, took occasional glasses of water by stealth. Within a year from John Jackson's first wine-glass of water, his wife was a palsied cripple, and all his children, except one who became an idiot, were dead—victims one and all of water-drinking. The miserable man, stung with remorse, disgusted with his vile habit, yet unable to forego it, drowned himself in the reservoir of the water company whose guilty traffic had caused his ruin.

It seems, indeed, to be a question whether the temperance societies ought not to put down water first and attend to the alcoholic mixtures afterwards. For in one shape or other everybody, man, woman, or child, swallows water, and some men, many women, and all children are guiltless of resorting to strong drinks. Besides, those who injure themselves by intoxication deserve the retribution, but the water-drinkers are mostly sinning in ignorance. At all events the crusade against water cannot long be delayed, and, if existing temperance societies do not forthwith add water to the list of the liquors they assail, other temperance societies will arise with the suppression of water-drinking for their special destiny.

But what are we to drink? The true temperance apostle will be he who discovers that for us. Why does not the United Kingdom Alliance offer a prize for the invention of a harmless, acceptable, and if possible digestive beverage?

UNIVERSITY DEGREES FOR WOMEN.

THE friends of education for women may congratulate themselves that the thin end of the wedge and something more has been got in, when so many of those from whom they least looked for even accidental help, the prompt opponents of the admission of women to the medical degree and its attendant right to practise which recent legislation has made immediately possible, stand forward as advocates of the more catholic, as also more future, scheme of the admission of women to all degrees. It is ominous, however, that this alternative proposal should have been so nearly synchronous with the debate in the House of Commons the result of which was an overwhelming refusal to permit the University of Cambridge to admit women to its recognised examinations if it should desire to do so. Still, in the case of the University of London, there can be no such confusion as there was in the minds of honourable members between the enabling the University of Cambridge to recognise female students in open examinations and to assert authority according to its judgment over the conditions of their residence and discipline, and the instituting in it education in common for both sexes with the colleges for men thrown open to women also; and, if the University of London really should resolve to try the faculty's new and somewhat unexpected prescription for conciliating the doctors and the ladies at the same time, and should apply for a charter enabling it to confer on women other degrees

than the medical alone, it remains possible that the request should be granted.

With regard to Cambridge it may be remarked that the present position there as to female students is peculiar. The University has female students, but it has no control over them. It has, as it were, espoused the women's colleges morganatically; there is a tie and a close one, but it is not of legal force, and if ever there were an emergency in which the restraint of the tie became especially needful it would be then that it would snap. Considering what the management of Girton and Newnham is and is likely to continue, there is a sense of absurdity in imagining any future in which they could become open to objection on the score of their teaching or their discipline. Still it is humanly possible that such an establishment should be under unwise government. Carelessness or mistakes, the zeal which is not according to knowledge, views too narrow or views too wide, might destroy its efficiency as a place of sound education, and even make it mischievous to the young women entrusted to it, and a thorn in the side of the University authorities. We must trust it all to the good sense of founders, managers, pupils, and parents. And it might be said that this is ample enough to trust to, were it not that the history of many a well-planned institution, scholastic, conventual, and other, shows how easily and imperceptibly original principles are forgotten and abuses allowed to creep in, where the conduct of affairs is left to a few irresponsible wills, and the criticism to a fortuitous concourse of irresponsible opinions. Looking from a parent's point of view, one might well desire the college to which one should send a daughter to be under the control of such a body as the University of Cambridge, *plus* that of the committee of a private society, rather than under that of the committee alone.

The Girton and Newnham students are, however, already allowed to present themselves for the examinations which confer the University degree, and that not only for the poll pass but for honours. The examiners of the year, with the sanction of the University, extend

their functions to them and inform them whereabouts they would have been classed in the degree lists, if they had been classed. Thus as, of course, no special papers are set for them, but they are given those which decide the fate of undergraduates, their attainments are tested, not in comparison with each other's, which would be useless to them, but in comparison with those of competitors numerous and various enough to show the quality of their relative success or failure. But the boon, valuable though it be, has its value much lessened by its semi-contraband and secret bestowal. It has two great drawbacks—and perhaps the more important is the one which is little noticed, that is its deficiency in the humbling qualities of an authoritative test. The other drawback, that the private recognition by the examiners that Miss So-and-So has the attainments which could have earned a degree does not confer on her the convenient University mint-mark, is at once evident both to Miss So-and-So and to her friends; they see that the young man who has got the degree goes forth to the world stamped and warranted, while the young woman who has only been politely assured that she would have had the degree if she might is to the exoteric public no more than she was before, and if she is to earn an income they cannot forget how immeasurably she would have benefited by the degree's plain voucher for her competence among the incompetent host of untrained women struggling for wages. But Miss So-and-So and her parents and friends cannot be expected always to see quite so plainly that what they glory in as her success in the examination is also failure—failure relatively to all those who have taken a higher place on the class-lists than that which she is told would have been hers if she had been in the competition, and very possibly failure relatively to herself. To the University man the examination is a matter of course, not to pass it is to be proved a dunce, but there is no special credit in the fact of having passed it: if he be a candidate for honours that fact also is in itself but an everyday affair. And pretty well every man but the first on the Tripos List is

left with a twinge of disappointment—every man but the first with a wholesome sense of not being a miraculous unit. It is not so with the young women following the University curriculum. The examination, instead of presenting itself to them as a routine obligation, comes as a polite attention on the part of the examiners and on their part a voluntary heroism : to undergo it is in itself a distinction. We have all of us often heard men put forward as a redeeming merit, in the case of some friend who has done less than they looked for in an examination, that he need not have gone in for it at all if he had not chosen ; and this feeling seems to be carried still further among women and as to women. It is, however, not as yet displayed as to cases of positive failure, for there are none such ; the Girton and Newnham students do not get plucked. But where it shows itself is in the unconscionable crowing over the surely not unexpected circumstance that they pass, and pass meritoriously, and above all in the outbursts of inapplicable triumph when one of them has achieved but second or third class honours. One may readily admit that the winning (*de jure*) of the wooden spoon by a young woman who might, instead, have been killing time Lady Clara Vere de Vere fashion, or writing sensation novels, is creditable to her head and her heart ; one may also readily admit that, considering her inferior opportunities and probably deficient or faulty early training, her abilities are in all likelihood some shades more respectable than those of the male student who carried off that prize ; but that is not enough. What one is in fact required to admit is that the wooden article when won by a woman is equal to gold, or indeed a trifle superior. If you should venture to remark to certain of the Women's Educationalists who make London drawing-rooms ring with the names of young women who have after all only reached to those lower honours which have been described as "the reward of industrious mediocrity," and which are sometimes the reward of a clever man's idleness, that such an amount of success should not yet be hailed as all we are to hope for from the women's colleges, you are at once hushed

with a reminder that the woman students are not undergraduates, and that they deserve the highest praise for entering into the Tripos contest at all. Nor is this all; the position assigned by the examiners is not accepted—you hear that, though such and such a young lady was told by them that she was equal to the second class, she is really to be counted in the first because one of the examiners is known to have said in conversation that she did one particular paper better than the senior himself, and that such another young lady must be promoted one class, if not two, higher than that assigned to her, as another examiner is understood to believe that she would have done a paper she failed in to perfection if something had not happened—your informant, not being scientific, cannot explain what, but knows it was something for which the young lady was not responsible.

This sort of might-could-would-and-should-have-been re-classification falls stillborn among men in face of the official decisions, absolute as the laws of the Medes and Persians, recorded in the University class-lists. There stand the proofs of the examiners' considered opinions; and if anyone has in some fortunate paper done better than the best, why he has had his marks counted to him for it and has gained accordingly, and since he is not higher than he is it must be that his other work was inferior. He has to accept his place as the one due to his performance; and it is undoubtedly a good thing that the scholar who is second-class should know he is not first-class, even although it may be in him to be some day more than first-class whether in scholarship or in something else. He is the more likely to become his best for recognising his present insufficiency.

Such an uncompromising competitive trial as that which our Universities inflict on male students is what those who wish for women all possible opportunity and encouragement towards the developement of whatever capacity they may possess are still left vainly seeking for them. Female students are but human still; they are not less liable—let us not say they are *more* liable—than male students to human temptations to sciolism

and Admirable Crichtonism. If it were only for the sake of a corrective to these temptations, those of us who desire that women should be soberly and steadily educated ought to desire for them the sifting and testing of a University degree examination. The London University seems at the present juncture to have the power of conferring this vital benefit on female students; will it lead the way and be the recognised helper and restrainer of feminine genius and feminine enthusiasm?

NOTE.—This, of course, was written before the London University did lead the way and, by so doing, earn the hearty gratitude of all who are anxious for the improvement of women's education.

*UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS FOR
WOMEN.*

THE London University has now declared its willingness to give women, so far as it is concerned, that great boon of life a fair field and no favour. Its voters have decided by a majority that, if a woman can do as well as a man, she may—at least in a London University Examination. Thus, if there be no unlooked-for slip between the cup and the lip, and the charter comes out right, students of the sex of Minerva and the Muses will be allowed the valuable guidance and stimulus to their studies given by the knowledge of the authentic tests which await aspirants for University degrees, and the assistance to them, in such careers as they may need or be able to follow, of the certificate of capacity given by those degrees. This is much—very much—but the extent of the favour does not stop here. This high recognition of women's education as of moment to themselves and to the public, this acceptance of minds as minds, whether within male bodies or female, coming from such a quarter, is a sort of public proclamation of a repeal of the women's mental disabilities acts, a Magna Charta authorising them to possess abilities and to train them. However great may be the direct consequences on the education of women of such an exaltation in educational status, they cannot be so great as the indirect consequences. We shall not have all the young ladies in England M.A.s, but, with the possibility of their being M.A.s like their brothers, will

creep in a feeling that their faculties, like those of their brothers, need to be trained and ought to be trained, and that that requirement is not met by even the best opportunities for acquiring "fluent French and German" and a facility upon the piano. That large class of parents who might at present be disinclined to listen to arguments in favour of a more real education for their girls, because they see that their girls can be just as successful in society without it, will by-and-by unconsciously accept the stronger argument of example, and come, as though they had never felt otherwise, to feel it their natural duty to give daughters, as well as sons, a solid preparation for the work of life. But this change will bring another, even greater: a girl's time will be considered to have some value. What there lies in such a change as this it would carry us too far on from the starting-point of examinations and education to trace out, but those who have noted the aimlessness and drifting and fussy futility of the days of most women in the classes where women have their maintenance provided for them and are understood never to be too busy over one thing to do another, as most of us must have noted, can easily see that this higher appreciation by others and by herself of the value of her time would in itself be an education to a girl.

The expense of instruction must long continue to tell more restrictively against girls than boys. This is hard on the girls, and one might say that in abstract justice parents are bound to distribute what mental provision they can afford to buy for the creatures they have brought into the world among them all, with the same fairness as bodily food, and that they have no right to stint one sex in order to fatten the other. But in this world justice refuses to be abstract; it persists in getting muddled up in concrete circumstances in an inextricable manner which pulls it all out of shape. When it has to deal with social matters it too often reduces itself to such a resemblance with the baser goddess, expediency, that there is no telling the one from the other. It is thus transformed in this case. For the parents are sure that their sons cannot take their places in the world without

education for those places, that the instruction they purchase for them is their indispensable stock-in-trade, and that without it they must sink in worldly position, and do only minor, or even menial, work; and they are not sure that a similar investment for their daughters will bring in any return whatever—it might even, they perhaps think, be a counter influence to the young women's natural charms in the eyes of some possible husbands and so hinder instead of helping them to take their places in the world. It is at all events not indispensable, for a girl can marry without it; and they remember that, if their daughters marry, the husbands thenceforth answer for their maintenance, while their sons when they marry must maintain wife and children. Thus that practical family system which may be summed up in an axiom as "Do for your sons as you must and for your daughters as you can" has some show of righteousness in its favour. The fact that the matrimonial means of livelihood is, in these days, only open to two women out of three, though now pretty generally known, is still only known like such an outside-our-sphere matter as the distance of the sun from the earth, no calculation or miscalculation about which affects our ideas on the household window-blinds. We have the broad generality that marriage is the lot of most women, and we naturally apply it to our own six daughters. And even where parents of less faith in their daughters, or more faith in statistics, forecast the probability of "the girls having to do something for themselves some day," as they are likely vaguely to put it, there cannot be before their eyes any such evident balancing of results against preparation and profits against outlay as with their sons. There is an indefiniteness about educating a young person to do something some day if she does not do something else beforehand which makes the necessity for spending money appreciably on the process too problematic to be kept in mind if her brothers have to be prepared for good professions and the family income is small. It is hard on the girls, but it is not fair to blame the parents: they *must* look to the material prospects of their children,

and can but do so under the conditions of life as they find it.

It has undoubtedly been a great lessening of the commercial value of education for women that its results could not be tested and approved by competent and publicly-recognised authority, so that patrons and employers should have warranty of their existence and give preference by reason of them. Not long ago the patrons and employers could have no such warranty whatever; they must trust to chance and the private, perhaps not entirely sincere, opinion of some recommending lady perhaps not in the least qualified to have an opinion. The silver *might* be genuine silver, but there could be no hall-mark to show it. And, for want of this protection, assuming qualifications might easily serve a candidate as much as possessing them. Cambridge, and then Oxford, did much to mend this matter by admitting girls to their examinations for schoolboys, and the having passed the examination for senior students does frequent duty as a certificate of competence for, at all events, a more thorough style of teaching than governesses had usually thought necessary. But these senior students are after all but children of the age for leaving school who prove themselves fitly prepared to go on with their studies. Clearly that examination would have little weight as a final one. This being so, Cambridge (the women's *alma mater*, so far as she can be) created an examination for women—women of about the age at which men get their degrees—and made it sufficiently difficult, as was desirable, to ensure that no one should pass it without equalling the average poll-man in intelligence and industry. But this examination is for women as a class apart, and is in fact designed for women who mean to be governesses. Its certificate loses value from the commercial point of view because it is taken not to certify absolute capacity up to a certain standard with regard to such and such subjects, but capacity relatively to that of other weak vessels. That this view of the Cambridge special examination for women is not entirely adequate may be ascertained by a study of the examination questions; but the public is not accus-

tomed to judge of the merit there may be in passing a given examination by getting the questions and trying if it can answer them—and there are obvious reasons why such a test might not always be conclusive. And by the time a woman is ripe for this examination she should, if she is not preparing to be a governess, have chosen some special branch of study, and should be able to pursue it without being compelled into other directions by the final examination.

What was wanted was not a special and inferior examination restricted to the supposed range of women's studies, but admission to an established examination in which their acquirements should be tested by an established standard—so that a record of success in grammars and sciences not supposed to be affected by considerations of sex should have a definite meaning without reference to sex, and represent for Mary what they represent for John. An examination for women apart is as valueless in assigning the candidates their scholastic positions as is a criticism which busies itself with the fact of the author of a book being a woman, instead of with the contents of the book whatever sort of creature wrote it, in assigning her her literary position; it is of no great use to them or to anybody else to know whether they have equalled, or have excelled, other women; the question is whether they have known what should be known or have done what should be done. And this is what the London University is willing now to tell women, by admitting them to its examinations. Cambridge has gone some way towards granting an equal test; it has allowed its examiners to admit the women students at Girton and Newnham to answer the degree examination papers set for members of the University, but it could not, if it would, concede to these young ladies an open admission to examination, nor the certificate of its degree, while the privilege of being thus far admitted is by its nature limited to very few. Between this half clandestine favour and the boon of a recognised and unlimited right proposed by the London University there is the same difference as between permission to walk in

your neighbour's avenue if you will keep from under his windows and right to use the highway.

The Hall-mark which was needed to make women's education commercially valuable, by rendering an accurately-trained woman's chance in the competition for employment a better one than that of the untrained or ill-trained, is now to be attainable. Thus those many parents whose limited means—and perhaps we should add whose ignorance of the larger influences of education—compel them to measure the rights of their children, respectively, to schooling and books and opportunity for study by the rough-and-ready rule of market value for the results will see a warrantable security for investments of this kind for their daughters. They will know that so many pounds besides her dress allowance spent on a marriageable girl can buy her the most advantageous starting-point for earning an income with honour and comfort in case she should not marry—perhaps, under some circumstances, even if she should. They will also have the means of knowing whether what they spend on instruction beyond the nursery and the schoolroom borders is well spent—whether their girls are taught the things they pay for them to learn. For, though the absurdity, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, of measuring the competence of the teacher by the success of the individual pupil is evident—evident to everyone, that is, except to the near relations of the said pupil, if he (or she) turn out a dunce—the fact that open examinations on a large scale are tests of the teachers no less than of the taught is too matter-of-course to require to be either proved or accounted for.

The guidance given to the course of a young woman's studies by the examination kept in view as their immediate aim will remove that indefiniteness which is another reason of the indifference of parents to the instruction of their daughters in anything but accomplishments and the fashionable languages treated as accomplishments. Granted that a girl is anxious to improve her mind by solid studies, and that her parents are in favour of her doing so, when there is no extraneous

reason for her pursuing one train of subjects more than another, and no hurry for her to pursue any, there is no sort of minor consideration which will not be allowed to come in the way, and every subject may be postponed for that better opportunity which is the misfortune of free choice and sent the heron supperless to roost. It is thus that, in homes where there is spare money to provide good help of tuition and books, and where there is no dislike to seeing a woman do the best she can for her brains—where there is perhaps even a clear belief that that is but her duty—girls who have come out of the schoolroom in love with study, and with scholarly ambitions, find on all sides hindrance instead of help to their attempts at self-improvement, and end by forgetting the very wish and drifting into the aimless content, or still more aimless discontent, of a vacuous waiting for the something to do in earnest that is to come with marriage. Something to point to a distinct course of study, and to some limit for its accomplishment, has been needed. Hitherto the educational career of young lady students has been too much like the Wonderland “caucus-race,” in which all the runners began when and where they liked, and left off where they happened to be, and everybody had won. Parents will naturally feel the race more worthy their interest when it appears to be under some rules and to lead to somewhere.

As to the girls themselves, one can scarcely say that those who will feel the privilege of the London University examinations a stimulus to their mental energies, need the stimulus as such. Side by side with the frivolous, or the stupid, or the merely patient, girls who take their ignorance pleasantly and never find it too much, there have always been others—a minority doubtless but a large minority—who have felt the restlessness of intellectual faculties unnaturally cramped, the weariness of unsatisfied hunger of mind, and who in their drawing-room life have envied their schoolboy brothers their teachers and their tasks, their books and their hours set aside for using them, as a crippled invalid on a sofa may envy the healthy their fatigues. It is because of the great number of such

girls that the average of woman's education was not far lower than the reformers found it when they took it in hand so few years ago. The highest education offered women was no measure of the highest education they contrived to get, for women of the sort spoken of *took* a higher than was offered them—some of them, in fact, *stole* it, working surreptitiously over their brothers' discarded schoolbooks and hiding away treatises on metaphysics or astronomy as novelists make naughty heroines hide away French novels. It is not stimulus but possibilities that such as these require. And even with the many less wilful souls who longed but thought longing vain and resigned themselves to leave the sweets of learning for their betters, the case is the same; not the wish but the power was deficient. Therefore it is natural, in fore-scanning the effects upon women's educational prospects of a large measure like that of the opening of the London University, to give prominent importance to its influence upon those with whom it rests to supply or withhold the cost of instruction. There is no lack of girls eager to learn if they may; there are probably fewer girls than youths not willing to learn if they must.

Yet that there must be a lack of women candidates for the London degree seems sure. It will not be surprising if there should be actually none for the first examinations open to them, except from among the medical students who have been preparing to pass some examination at all events, and perhaps two or three Girton or Newnham pupils who, having passed, or being ready to pass, the Cambridge degree examination privately, feel able to secure the further advantages of an open examination with a degree to get by it. Those who have advocated the opening to women of such examinations must be prepared to be told that their victory has become a defeat, that all their arguments as to the need and value of the step have been disproved by the fact that barely a handful of women go up for examination, and that the London University might as well close a door through which so few care to pass. The answer to all this will belong not to now but to the future.

Passing such an examination as that of the London University cannot be achieved by the first clever girl who has in her own fashion made the best she knew how of her abilities; it is a test of training. And the training has been wanting—*is* wanting, in spite of so much that has been done of late for the advancement of women's education. The best part of the boon the London University has given is in truth that it creates a reason and a visible necessity for such training, and, with that reason and that necessity for stimulus, we may look confidently for eventual supply of the necessary teachers, lectures, class-rooms or schools or colleges, and, above all, home co-operation and encouragement. But all this must be a work of time; and till this is attained few indeed must be the women students who can render themselves equal to a searching test, not of brilliancy and facility and fitful scholarship, much here little there, such as comes of self-teaching and undirected zeal, but of even and thorough work.

Concerning one class of candidates who might swell the list, one may venture to express a hope that its number may not be large. There are many women who have struggled on as they best might, remedying for themselves the inaccuracy and deficiencies of the education given them and never ceasing to be conscious of their loss of preparation for the later work of life, but who have reached the later work and received that second and still more important training that comes of it, and who are busied in literary, artistic, philanthropic, even educational occupations. Some of these, and still more their friends for them, will feel a temptation to their seeking now the academical distinction which it was not open to them to earn in a seasonable day. They will be urged perhaps to do so for the sake of other women—to show at the earliest moment possible that women can and will enter into these competitions. But nothing could be more unwise. It would be *Atalanta* stopping and groping for a golden apple instead of spending her strength on the race she is running. Life must give, or has given, women their examinations and their degrees. It is only

too certain that they will always be the weaker for the want of due training in due time ; but it would be worse than futile to track back for it too late. As well set mature ladies to make up by vehement skipping-rope and vaulting practice for the active exercises they did not have in their growing time, as set them to that sort of schooling which should have been the preliminary to the studies and undertakings of elder years. It is never too late to learn ; but it is soon too late to learn after the fashion of youth. Let us hope that women who are doing their work well will not be persuaded to stop in it in order to undergo a now unserviceable preparation for it, or with the idea of proving, for other women's sakes, what those other women may as well prove for themselves, that women can pass an unbefeminized examination in non-medical subjects, as they have already shown they can do in medical subjects.

WHATEVER IS WORTH DOING IS WORTH
DOING WELL.

It had been hard for him that spake it to have put more truth and untruth together in few words than in that speech, *Whatever is worth doing is worth doing well*. If it had not pleased Francis, Lord Verulam, in one of his Essays or Counsels Civil and Moral, to use this exordium about something else, the present writer would have wished to invent it here. For the speech quoted is full of truth and of untruth, hard to gainsay and very deceptive. It sums up in strong epitome the whole laws of industry, and it is directly responsible for more waste of time than all the *dolce far niente* fascinations and philosophies put together. The fallacy of it lies in the word *well*. Translate *well* by *fitly* and the moral is irrefutable; but in the customary reading of the proverb *well* means *thoroughly*—to do what is worth doing, well, means to do it with pains and strenuousness. And it is absolutely untrue that everything we may wisely spend a while upon deserves such a doing. There are moments in which to blow away the down from the dandelion's "clock" may be more worth doing than any work, but it would be another matter to make a duty of perfection in the achievement. And many necessary and serviceable tasks which are efficiently performed with a rough-and-ready easiness would be no whit the better, and very likely the worse, for a dogged taking trouble.

In days when scamping and vamping take the place of honest effort, with such detriment to so many crafts and arts, such weakening to vanishing-point of the will and purpose without which craftsman or artist is of less value than a good bit of machinery, it seems almost dangerous to say a word against any sort of laboriousness. But the mischief of futile laboriousness is not slight; and it is frequent among us. The gift of taking pains is too good to be frittered away as it is upon results to last a day and the nice completion of nothings. So used it is not merely a waste of power, but to its possessor an injury, for nothing is more cramping and narrowing to the mind than prolonged industry in pettinesses. The victim of the vice is beguiled into thinking it a virtue; if you are doing nothing in a *bonâ fide* way, you are aware of it and amenable to being ashamed if necessary; but, if you are doing nothing by help of energetic pottering and a resolution to do it well, you have your conscience triumphant, and you can scorn the sluggard. The sluggard has yawned, and wondered how there came to be such a fine crop of weeds in his garden; and you have polished several score of pins almost brighter than new. But you will keep on polishing pins as the hope and use of life; and the sluggard may some day go to the ant, consider her ways, and be wise. If he never does—why then, he will have yawned, and you will have polished pins. And there is every reason to suppose that he will not go about conscious of those who do not yawn; but you, one may fear, will have your opinion of those who are incompetent in pins.

It is, of course, among people who know the commercial law of life "Time is money" only as a respectable but distant fact akin to the latitude of Timbuctoo, that the waste of work inculcated, according to the common interpretation, in the proverb which heads this paper, comes to be accepted as work. When time has a well-understood arithmetical value it is little enough likely to be spent in less than necessary performance: yet, even so, while honesty holds out against haste and weariness it may be misdirected and there may be a

causeless exertion of patience and labour which would have more wisely served a larger aim. It is a mistake that generally cures itself; but not always without exchange for a worse, for the renouncing patience and labour altogether. But, where time has no value that can be proved, where it merely means the opportunity for doing what it was not indispensable to do and what there can be no remuneration for doing, virtue, divided between the natural objection to fatigue and the desire of possessing the faculty of industry, spends its skill in ceaseless fussings, and uses ninety times nine stitches in time to save some futurely possible nine, and safely binds a thousand things which no one will ever want to safely find, till negligence itself could be no more unthrifty, and indolence no more lavish of unfruitful hours.

And not, probably, from any specially feminine indigestion of the apple Eve shared with Adam, but because their time is so habitually unremunerative to them, women more than men spend themselves in vehement uselessness. A man sits manifestly at no toil severer than smoking, with his hands limp and lax, and fears no contumely. A woman sits with unemployed fingers like his and feels no excuse in a busied mind anxious over more than Martha's cares; no matter what she thinks of she is doing nothing. Let her twiddle a thread to make a hideous and altogether objectionable clout called an antimacassar, and she is industrious; so she makes the clout, and since, being worth doing it is worth doing well, she makes it with diligent pains, and leaves off thinking. Poor soul, she thinks she is working; but her work was while her hands were still. The misapprehension is good for her. But the misapprehension is not always good. Where there chance to be brains and a use for brains, it is a pity when finger-twiddling takes the place of work and the will to be useful is lost in tasks that, with hours of manipulation added, do not repay the outlay of pence upon the materials. And even with the serviceable needlework known by the name of "plain" there is the same tendency to industrious waste of time—a tendency apparently about to be developed to hitherto

super-woman extent by the School Board authorities on sewing. Firmness and tidiness of work, as well as sensible accommodation of shape to requirements, cannot be too much esteemed by wearers of the garments generically described as underlinen, but who, save our washerwomen, will have opportunities of gazing critically and ecstatically on the varieties of stitchery which may enliven the seams and variegate the hems of those nameless coverings "born to blush unseen?" And is our experience of our washerwomen's æsthetic tenderness for the works of art we consign to their chloride of lime and scrubbing-brushes such as to call for a large expenditure of human eyesight and handiwork in elaborating infinitesimal decorations in cotton-threads for their admiration? What are we to say of adornments without use and without artistic grace, which have no beauty except to the eye of the technical seamstress, and to her represent beauty only by the pains and weariness that must have gone to their making?

But art of a higher aim than the needlewoman's is often the worse for this fine-stitch superfluity of quite imperceptible and meaningless detail, with no influence on the whole to which it belongs, and no merit in itself but that of its having taken time to do. Sometimes even that merit is but a sham; but, whether the merit be sham or not, the theory of it is the same. It is supposed that the spending of time and labour, apart from the importance of the object on which they are spent, is in itself a recommendation. It might be so if life were longer and there were less to do. But, life and labour being as they are, labour is not—or should not be—child's play to be done with toil and moil like the heaping up of sand-castles between the tidemarks, with no measure of the work to its lasting and no purpose but to work for the while. Doing well lies in doing fitly, not in doing with urgency apart from the need.

VIRTUE IS ITS OWN REWARD.

WAS there ever a more habitually mis-translated saying than this, that "Virtue is its own reward?" There it stands, short and strong, a code and a creed in itself, asseverating as plainly as five words carrying subject copula and predicate can speak that there is nothing to be got by goodness but being good, that virtue repays itself by itself and nothing else, and, so repaid, is amply guerdoned. To be acting rightly under difficulties is undoubtedly in itself a keener pleasure than to be yielding to pleasurable temptations—it is such a pleasure as is enhanced by its endurances and efforts, like difficult ascents to Alpine clubmen, and as is independent of concomitant results of usefulness or enjoyments, although, if there be such results, so much the better. And the habit of acting rightly is an agreeable unnoticed satisfaction, like the habit of being in hearty health. Accidentally, virtue may earn more demonstrable advantages than these: so may vice, and not accidentally. Vice has its profits in what comes of it, but virtue in its own existence irrespective of what comes of it. Nor does this mean, as some moralists have taught or seemed to teach, that the innate pleasure of virtue is self-approbation, a sort of patting yourself on the head and chuckling over your pretty behaviour, which is to be more exhilarating than cakes and ale and the world's applause; for then the self-approbation, not the virtue, would be virtue's reward. The reward is in the savour of the

fruit, not in any Jack-Horner-like "What a good boy am I."

This is what the saying unhesitatingly states, as it ought to do; and it may be looked on as cheering or discouraging according to the mood one is in, according to whether one is most disposed to dwell on the promise it conveys of a completing pleasure in virtue or on the warning it also conveys that there is nothing else in particular to be got by virtue. But the custom is to treat it as another version of the "Honesty is the best policy" dogma; to understand it to be but a shorter way of saying "Virtue will win the race in the long run." Story writers, after having shown the bad boy dying in a workhouse and the good boy comfortably settled in life in the enjoyment of the competence and admiration his correct deeds have gained him, wind up with a "thus you see, dear readers, that virtue is its own reward." Not at all: according to the gist of the stories virtue has been rewarded by so much a year and a lift in the world: to exemplify the moral the good boy should have come to the workhouse and the bad boy might have had the competence and the admiration. Sermons are preached to the same moral; the joys of the good, the anguish of the bad, in the times of justice hereafter are contrasted; vice, we get told, flourishes for a season and then comes punishment, but "virtue is its own reward." Not at all: virtue is going to be rewarded with innumerable rewards, rewards which might almost be described as material, but which are at all events distinctly outside itself. The saying is, in fact, a bit heathenish and does not contemplate the crowning of this life's duties by another life's recompense at all. Didactic essayists, didactic poets, have run riot sedately on the theme: they have dwelt on the risks and the fears and the remorse and the self-disgusts of thriving guilt, the humiliation and despair of fallen guilt, and against all these unpleasantnesses they set the contrast of goodness flourishing in a calm prosperity other but greater than mere wealth or honours can give, with goodness's wife to match, and all goodness's sons and daughters, in the health that belongs to inno-

cence and the beauty that comes of proper principles, treading in goodness's steps and always earning, or in some way or another possessing, just sufficient incomes to supply all their wants and unoffending pleasures; all these gratifying circumstances being the products of goodness's good conduct. "Look," they say, with all sorts of reasons and all sorts of rhymes, "look at the Damocles' swords, and the hidden pangs, and the secret serpents, and all the other penalties vice inflicts upon itself: but virtue is its own reward." Not at all: virtue, by this account of life, gets remarkably well salaried and contrives to secure, in return for its not being vice, a rare haul of the enjoyments of the world, creature and other; and vice comes off with hands so empty of gains that it, not virtue, might be taken to be its own reward.

We can all quote instances of virtue and honesty—chiefly where rare and auspicious incidents have caused some striking displays—becoming the direct causes of high fortunes. But if, as a rule, virtue tends to success in life, and if, as a rule, honesty is the best policy, it can only be because detection of self-seeking or misdeeds or fraud is, as some do believe, inevitable in the end, or is at all events so frequent as practically to make lasting success by ill means impossible. If, without being found out, you can habitually make twenty per cent. more by dishonesty than by honesty, it is difficult to admit that honesty is the best policy; and, if you can keep the reputation of untainted integrity and serve your own interests by fair means and foul as occasion offers, you cannot but be sure that you are getting wider chances for your advancement than if you use fair means only and forego the foul for virtue's sake. It is not a man's trustworthiness that is profitable to him in his career but his reputation for trustworthiness, and, if he can sacrifice the reality and keep the reputation, the profitableness is manifestly all the greater. And thus all that comes of the grovelling system of encouraging moral worth as a good help through the world is logically an argument for keeping appearances securely blameless and acting how it serves the turn.

In minor matters, even, our good qualities are serviceable—speaking from the profit point of view—little, or not at all, to ourselves: their convenience is to those with whom we are brought in contact. Take unselfishness for instance: what more proper merit to possess, and what merit so unproductive to its cultivator? You gain literally nothing by it, not even credit for possessing it. You live a life of taking no thought for yourself, and the sensible selfish people round about you accept your ideas as suitable to you and your way of enjoying yourself, and take no thought for you either. What you give up they get. What you have got, unless unselfishness is its own pleasure, is demonstrably less than nothing. Then that mental mood which is so much esteemed in youth that it is always spoken of with the complimentary adjective, the *becoming* diffidence which in later years is described as unassumingness or in other negative fashions meaning absence of conceit—you possess it, you are becomingly diffident, you are unassuming, and in consequence you are permanently snubbed in accordance with the value you ascribe to yourself, and when you try for an appointment to be given on the score of qualifications you are beaten by any competitor of not half your fitness who is not diffident and not unassuming. *You* know, say, more than all that the duties require, and *he* next to nothing; but he knows how to make more than the most of himself. Your virtue has improved his chance, not yours. So with industry; nine times out of ten your industry will give those you live with, or those you work with, more opportunity for airing their idleness. So with liberality, courtesy, punctuality, fidelity, frankness, gratitude; their profitable returns are not for their possessors, to whom indeed they may often occasion distinct loss, but for other people. As to good temper, its disadvantages are obvious.

My dear little child,
Be gentle and mild,
For what can you get
By passion and pet?

says one of the pious and persuasive moral songs which instruct British infancy. The argument is strong; but every reasonable infant must see at once that it rests on a false premise. He *can* get something by passion and pet; he can get his own way. He would make a great mistake in life if he resolved on being gentle and mild on the what-you-can-get-by-it principle, and he ought not to be so misled.

We ought to make out what we mean, and to teach definitely one system or the other; goodness for its own sake, or goodness for its extraneous rewards. Each system promotes respectability—especially the latter of the two; but in the latter the amount of goodness should be limited by practical considerations. The difference as to the minds of the respective disciples is much like that between the mind of the man who would marry the damsel because she is she and the man who would marry her because she is so good, so pretty, so well-connected, and with such a good fortune of her own to bring to a husband. Of the two lovers the second is the wiser; but suppose him mistaken as to the connexions and the good fortune?

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE.

THE number of books for children published in each year is becoming portentous. There seems to be a magic mill at work on their production—a magic mill like that salt mill which, in consequence of no one knowing the spell for stopping it, went on grinding out salt long after it had ground too much, till it had to be thrown into the sea, of whose briny condition it is, as everyone knows, the abiding cause. Book upon book, hundreds upon hundreds of books—the children's-book mill has been set off and who shall stop or slacken it? More wonderful still, it seems never to have ground too much. The market for the ware is inexhaustible. No literary speculation is so certainly remunerative as a children's book. It must be surprisingly below the mark not to find purchasers enough to give it good profits, and if really successful it sells off its thousands like sugarplums. You go into a bookshop with its walls a mosaic of glittering volumes and ask for some standard work, or for the new book for adults which has been "filling with one blast the post-horns of all" the reviews in the three kingdoms, and, if it be in London or a small country town, (the University towns and one or two large provincial cities are better provided) the bookseller says he will send to the publishers for it. Name children's books, a dozen at random, he produces them forthwith, he has any number of copies of them. The mosaic which looks so imposing is chiefly made up of them—in fact the great bookseller's

stock-in-trade seems to be all children's books. Whatever else may be found "a drug," there is no fear of these being left on his hands. Numbers of well-to-do people lavish of their money in all sorts of other directions are singularly chary of spending any of it on books; for themselves they buy none—the notion does not occur to them—unless it be a railway novel on a journey, but trust to Mudie's library for their whole supply; except that if they are particularly desirous to see some new work of which Mudie's disappoints them too perseveringly, they inquire for it among their friends, or, if they chance to be acquaintances of the author, compliment him by begging or borrowing it from himself. Many people have to count their shillings too closely to have the courage to part with them to purchase the volumes they long to have in the little home library where there are no rules for how many may be had out at one time and no sorrow of returning. And many people do not get books as they do not get harpoons, because they have no use for them. But everybody buys the children their children's book.

And in what reckless fashion do most of the purchasers pitch upon their purchases—one cannot talk of choice, unless the butterfly's action is choice when he alights upon one flower instead of another. A large majority of tales for children directly aim at instilling into them religious or moral precepts, nay, in some cases, religious dogmas. Even if the moral lessons could be taken for granted as infallibly judicious and, what is as important and still more rare, judiciously conveyed, the religious lessons must vary with the authors. Yet these tales are given to the young readers indiscriminately, without examination: a goody book is sure to be good, and woodcuts and crimson-and-gold are an undeniable certificate. And the donors go to bed at night with a benevolent conscience and never think how they have perchance been sowing in the tender mind the seeds of the heresy their soul abhors, that they have presented their infant friend with a guide to Latitudinarianism, or Puritanism, or pious sentimentalism, or Philistinism, or

whatever the ism they most disapprove may be. If their gift had been a box of bonbons they would have tried to make sure that there was no plaster of Paris among the sugar.

The present writer would like to ask, however, whether, supposing there to be plaster of Paris at all in the sugar, it is quite wise to rear children on bonbons, whether a little beefsteak ought not to go to their diet, some of the food their elders make bone and muscle upon. Children are going to grow up; they will need robust intellects, or at all events will be the better for them, and, though robustness cannot be produced by urging them to precocious effort, still less can it be produced by keeping their minds limp and effortless.

One great fault of children's books as a class is that they are about children. Heroes and heroines not yet in their teens run their important careers, they are martyrs, benefactors, geniuses, wronged and blighted beings shining forth at last in a blaze of recognised virtue—or perhaps they are villains who do their exercises with the help of a surreptitious crib, and bully their immaculate schoolfellow—but at all events they are personages. Little boys and girls ought not to regard themselves, as these stories teach them to do, as possible personages, nor should they be set analysing their own characters and, as it were, watching themselves grow. They should be left to the happy humility of unspoiled children who do not discover that they are worth thinking about, and who postpone all their visionary promotion to “when I am grown up.” Mrs. Browning's *Little Ellie*, weaving her baby's romance of by-and-by with its knight-errant on the red roan steed coming to be her lover and to be shown the delightful secret of the swan's nest among the reeds, is (although most of the children's bookmakers would think the lover an improper idea) in a wholesome and guileless state of imagination very different from that fostered in children whose fancies have been pastured within the narrow regions of a children's world as presented by the novelists of the nursery. *Little Ellie*, if she had been one of the fortunate children of the present

day with a large library of her own, would have been picturing herself as the last sweet little girl she read about in the last sweet little book, with everybody admiring her for being so good, and so forbearing to her cross mamma, and not knowing how pretty she was, and almost dying. And Little Ellie, instead of shaking off this idealisation of her small self and going about her play and her tasks in her natural insignificance, as we may be sure she did after her knight-errant story, would have carried it with her and, under an abiding sense of sweet-little-girl-ishness, would have fallen into doing her goodness and modesty self-consciously, would have tried to play forbearance to her parents, and would have indulged aspirations after an early opportunity of almost dying.

Mental histrionism is common to children. It is the first phase of imagination; so soon as a child begins to remember and to imagine it does so dramatically and acts the characters that have impressed it, whether in real life or in a story. A little later it leaves off the outward show of its impersonations and confines them to its silent musings, and on the unfettered stage of its own mind goes through all sorts of adventures, limited only by its power of conceiving them. This habit retained, as it often is, in advanced youth may be deleterious in much the same way as that indicated in Little Ellie's supposed idealisation of herself into the nursery heroine—the chief danger of mental histrionism arising when it is near enough to a possible reality to take the place of reality. And at all events it is a waste of imagination which would be better employed beyond self. But in children it is an important faculty without which they would not pass beyond the crude facts of their daily lives; it is simply, in its birth and earliest stage of development, the all-important power, imagination—by which is here meant not merely the creative gift essential to the poet and the artist, but that ability to conceive and to appreciate other circumstances and other needs than those of our own actual experience which is part of the superiority of the practical man over the unpractical and a chief

difference between the Prime Minister and Caliban. It is as inevitable an instinct in an average child as running and jumping, and we cannot crush it out; but it assimilates itself to what it feeds on, and thus we can control it. The boy who is wont to fancy himself a Julius Cæsar, or a Jack the Giant Killer, or a King Alfred, has a manifest advantage over him whose choice can only wander among the Harolds and Algernons of good young ladies' stories of schoolboys.

A child should be allowed to read for the pleasure of it, like its elders; it would no more do to prescribe its literary amusements on a carefully arranged educational system of our own than to direct its games of romps and convert them into a judicious course of gymnastics. But, just as we may, without losing it the healthy freedom of its pleasure, encourage games which shall help, not hinder, its bodily growth, so we may encourage it, when it reads for amusement, to find that amusement in books which will expand its imagination and its sympathies and widen its mental range. Or we need not even encourage, it is enough not to discourage, not to entice it from better literature by surrounding it with story books which only children can read. Give it the run of your own library, and let it alone. The selection must be small indeed if it do not find a better children's book there than those specially written as such.

The most popular, the immortal, children's books were composed for adults. Robinson Crusoe, The Pilgrim's Progress, the ancient evergreen fairy tales, Gulliver's Travels, The Arabian Nights, were not written down to the supposed standard of infants' comprehensions and limited within the sphere of infants' lives. Such books have the strength but not the twaddle of simplicity, and they live, not by the favour of the guardians of youth, but by their own vitality. Children will read them again, and again, and again, till they all but know them by heart; and grown people, taking them up for the sake of the memories of their youth, discover that they are new to their maturer apprehension. It is difficult to name any book written expressly for

children which can compete with these in children's favour, or which one could wish to do so. The author of *Alice in Wonderland*, indeed, seems to have found a secret for making a book for children and about a child which shall be as safe and as sparkling as pure water bubbling up with oxygen; but the daintiness of his excellent fooling is most appreciated by adults, it is they and not the children who have given the Mad Hatter and the Mock Turtle their place among our most popular heroes of romance—most children, left to their own judgments, prefer a more Herodotean style, they like the marvels told in a sober spirit of faith, and seem to have a sort of sense of being made game of themselves when they find out the author is laughing. But, to proceed, it is not only the grown-up story books which make good children's books; the child allowed the run of a library finds for itself plenty of others. Often its choice is a surprise and puzzle to its elders, who find it calling one book amusing and another too difficult and too dull for it when they would have reversed the description. Plutarch's *Lives* is frequently a favourite, so is Shakespeare. One child, who could never be tempted to history reading by the picturesque story-telling of more recent writers, was found to take an intent delight in a trite and prosaic old *Family History of England*, which it had found ignominiously shoved into an out-of-the-way corner; and this same child rejected all and each of the *Waverley* novels as "too difficult" while deriving constant pleasure from Shakespeare. To one little girl of ten *Josephus* was a light and agreeable author, to another of the same mature age a work instructing mothers in the management of their children's health was of never-failing interest.

If, when we found a young child absorbed in some such book as those cited, we were to catechise it word for word and fact for fact, we should get but lame and impotent conclusions—literally speaking it does not understand what it reads. But it assimilates it, one knows not how; it is learning to understand, and we can no more discover the manner and the time of its arriving at

definite comprehension of book lore than we can the manner and the time of its acquiring a definite comprehension of its mother-tongue. The child who cannot when questioned give you a meaning for any one of the long words in its favourite volume, can surprise you by some spontaneous remark which shows that its mind has somehow translated them correctly enough into thoughts.

Some little supervision may be necessary, but it should be the least possible. And, as much as possible, Bowdlerising should be avoided. It oftener does harm than good; it gives a marked importance to what might pass unnoticed, and substitutes unwholesome curiosity for indifference. And you cannot Bowdlerise life. And you put the strong-spoken Bible into children's hands, which alone could defeat all your precautions. Safety lies not in an impossible attempt to keep the very name of harm unknown, but in the child's attention never being specially fixed on unseemly or dangerous topics by mystery-making, or by jesting which is not convenient, or by the inculcation of a too suggestive modesty. An immoral book, however blameless in its wording—a book, that is, which confuses right and wrong—should be kept out of a child's hands like poison; but the old-fashioned bluntness of a really sound and high-reaching book, even the occasional coarsenesses that may do it dishonour, like unmannerly weeds thrusting themselves into the obscurer corners of a noble garden, will leave a child as carelessly unconscious of depraved meanings as they found it. To keep a child's mind inert and vacuous is to expose it to far more real risk of contamination. The running water slips over mud and sand with never a soil; it is the still and sheltered water, locked in its little pool, that gets clogged and tainted.

CHILDREN'S TOYS AND GAMES.

A TOY is a plaything: a plaything is a thing to play with. That at all events is the children's definition, and it is one whose antiquity commands our respect. It has good argument too: if all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy, Jack must sometimes be allowed to play; and if he plays he must have some playthings, and the playthings must be to play with, for, if they are to work with, Jack is at work and not at play. A toy ought not to be a teaching-trap. Under that aspect it is altogether reprehensible; it is an impostor, a creature which shrinks into credit under a fictitious guise and with crafty designs; it is misleading, it upsets Jack's honest faith in the distinction between work and play; it is baneful, it sophisticates play and dilutes work; and it is a bore. The amusements of grown-up people are unexhilarating enough, but at all events we do not undergo them with an arduous sense of having our minds improved and taking in instructive information. There may be a good deal of blank space still in our heads where the instructive information should be—we may admit that in all humility—but offer us a nice brisk game of political economy question-and-answer cards instead of our meaningless rubber of whist, or devise making our *cotillon* educationally valuable by our assuming each some historic character for the others to guess and our offering chronological remarks in keeping as we whirl and change partners, and see with what gratification we shall hail

the new recreation. Or let any admirer of scientific teaching-traps try presenting the lady he delights to please with a ball-room bouquet happily arranged to impress on the mind the difference between dimidiate and tetrathecal anthers, or sending his father in the country a barrel of oyster-shells with each pair of valves containing, instead of the customary inmate, an ingenious surprise calculated to illustrate chemical affinities.

All the teaching-traps—all the frauds upon children, whether in the shape of playthings or games—have one quality in common: they do not teach what they aim at. How should they? Let an illustration be never so happy, it illustrates nothing to those who mark only the illustration, indifferent to the thing it means. Thus it is the fate of many a careful allegory, and many a tale of warning, to please indeed, perhaps to be read and re-read a score of times, almost as if it were no more purposeful than Jack and the Beanstalk, and to have impressed no single lesson lurking within it. One might adduce many an instance to show that this wholesome capacity of assimilating the jam without the rhubarb does not belong to children only; but it would still remain sure that the gift is especially a children's gift. Children always skip the moral. They skip it even, if it is, as the moralist fondly hopes, inextricably mixed into the acceptable parts of the story. They draw out the sweet and leave the bitter unstirred as infallibly as the busy bee herself. And they exercise the same faculty on their amusements and toys. For instance, a squirt would illustrate in a nice familiar way a good deal of educational intelligence about suction, such as a teacher who believes in the now favourite doctrine that what the man may most usefully know is what the child should be learning would wish to lose no time in communicating to his infant pupils: and a bright boy of sound health and with no premature or abnormal speciality of genius will accept the intelligence as one fact and the squirt as another, and, putting aside the intelligence as for the present irrelevant, will be chiefly convinced of the extreme suitability of the squirt for watering his mother's rose-trees and his little sister.

The illustration will become interesting, as an illustration, only when, with riper faculties, he has learned an interest in the subject not depending on the illustration and which could dispense with it. It is the same with the games that should teach chronology and geography and other assortments of names and numbers hard to learn and easy to forget; the children who know the facts win the games and are merry, the children who think Borioboola Gha might as well be capital of Monaco as anything else and that there is no great difference as to a century or two here and there when you are dealing with the lives of people who lived too long ago to have been real, give the wrong answer-cards and do not think the game first-rate. There are no other permanent results.

And it is a good thing that toys and games do not answer the purposes of "cram." For of all crams they would be the most demoralising. If indeed work could ever be play, no better could be wished than that all learning could be learned in playing. But it is not so; nothing can be done without the doing. Work is work, even for a child; and the child who has learned to be ignorant of that strong truth of life will come untrained to the inevitable work of whatever may be his adult life. Let him learn rather to know, not play, but a pleasure of another kind in work. Let him learn the joy of endeavour, the triumph of difficulty overcome. You cannot teach him to do difficult things easily, for that is not to do them. But teach him to like to do difficult things. Make ruggedness a pleasure, and the pleasure is keener and truer than all sweetness of smooth things. Not ruggedness, however, but the overcoming ruggedness—even the smoothing it if you will—for to create superfluous ruggedness is an idiocy, and idiocy is not calculated to promote enjoyment except in idiots. No sound lover of difficult pleasure would make his Matterhorn harder toil than need be; but yet, if a youth were to be trained for Matterhorn ascents, we should not send him in dancing shoes to do his climbing up velvet turf at picnics. Let the children work: but, oh teachers of

young ideas, do get out of the way now and then and let them shoot without you ; let the children play.

It does not follow that every game or toy that means brains used must go. Nor even that every game or toy that tries to teach fails, or that does teach is cruel. There is at all events one venerable Mrs. Trimmer of a toy for which gratitude, both personal and parental, demands a good word from the uneducational heretic who now writes : and that is the good old-fashioned dissecting map. Children like sticking bits of puzzles together : countries and departments are very hard to remember in their proper contiguities, and children do seem to like the bits of puzzles to bear the shapes and names of countries and departments. This is an evident provision of nature, and ought to be taken advantage of. But here a modern inefficiency slips in. They cut the maps across into mere even sections of equal measure to be pieced out by some chance memory of colour or lettering—no other than as the segments of bears in the snow, or chickens in the farm-yard of Aunt Saccharissa's soon discarded dislocating pictures—instead of keeping to the queer and characteristic outlines of zigzag Middlesex or long-legged Cornwall. These monotonous divisions pall soon on the child's fancy and never touch his memory in any manner that can affect him geographically. No one who has only given his children the tame square segment dissecting maps can guess what a genuinely divided one is to a child. He will doubtless—unless injudiciously lessoned into accurate study and hatred of his toy—call one queer-shaped province a fat old lady and another a kangaroo and another a peg-top, but he will also call them by their names among men and will remember which neighbours which. The information is not unnecessary, and after all can never be known but by rote, so is well-learned thus—far better than much of the premature science which, though clothed to the teacher in a mass of explanation, is, explanation and all, as mere a matter of rote (if of anything) to the child who undergoes it as Mangnall's questions themselves. The magnet again, environ it with science as you will, remains a genuine toy. It catches needles

and pens and it clings stickily to bright pokers and is altogether highly lifelike and amusing: and it teaches nothing except indeed that a magnet is a sticky thing in connexion with iron and steel, and *that* the happy faith of a child would accept from an authorised teacher on hearsay. Its great charm is that it is a toy that does something, and that, as it were, of own free will, and it does not get out of order. The microscope is another and a glorious gift of science to the little ones. But it is scarcely a toy; and it is not work for them, unless misapplied by their foolish elders. It opens to them a new world, a world of beauty and fairy changes sobered, as children require their fairy worlds, by a sedate reality over it all. To introduce to them the revelations of the microscope is like playing them music or showing them pictures: it is but another way of addressing their imaginations. Of actual facts they may learn something from it, such as the colours of a moth's wing and the uncouth shagginess of a hair-bulb, but of the real truths of science, the inferences and analogies from the facts, nothing. They still know by rote—as infants will know science, let the explanatory philosophers do what they will; and that is, they do not know.

Children do learn much from games and toys, and ought to learn much. But it is of another kind from science or literature. It is what the lessons of life teach their elders; such things are their lessons of life. Promptness, attention, making the best of failures, putting up with an uncomfortable concussion or so, forbearance, fairness, these make part of *Hunt the Slipper* and *Post and Beggar-my-neighbour* and such aimless pastimes, although facts get into the background and information is nowhere or topsy-turvy. And, as for toys, two bits of stick which an infant carpenter has himself nailed into the shape of a four-armed windmill, or a battered and maudlin old doll which, for love's sake and long fidelity, presents to a child's imaginative eyes a beauty beyond surpassing out of fairy land or her mother's face, teach more than all our learning can, and lay a better foundation for science itself at the right time

by-and-by than the best of teaching and the most coaxing of teaching-traps can do in the early days when little minds and little hearts have still so much of their growth to make. Facts, scientific or otherwise, are fruits, and the wisest gardeners are not anxious for the sapling to bear fruits at once. So far as learning goes, a child's true business is to learn to learn, and that will not be achieved by playing at it.

A POLYNESIAN GRISELDA.

WAS there ever a Griselda? The heroine Petrarch and Boccaccio found for after poets and the world, Chaucer's "flour of wifly pacience," remains with us lifelike too to-day; but is her character, with its sublime and ludicrous submission, its dignity and abjectness of utter obedience, its sedate approval of a lord and master's crimes, its strength and its servility, a possibility in the life of any age or people? No, answer experience, instinct, observation, induction, deduction, history, psychology—every form of reasoning and research. No, say the husbands emphatically. No, still more emphatically, say the wives. But other news has come from Polynesia. Griselda really existed there. At least the Rev. William Wyatt Gill says she did, and he is a missionary, and bound to keep his anecdotes truthful. Mr. Gill knew a man whose father knew her and all her family, including her husband. Mr. Gill does not call her Griselda; her name was Rao. And she did not entirely rival the Marquis of Saluzzo's wife, for her conjugal humility was not put to the test so long and so subtly. She had no children to give up to death as, like herself, their father's "own thing," and she was not called on to prepare her successor's wedding-feast. Her husband, being but an uneducated savage, merely took his own way with her, without any view to advancing her higher moral interests and teaching her to be a good wife; thus her womanly affections, her love and her jealousy, were not experi-

mented upon, and her time of trial was short—an hour or two against Griselda's twelve years of contented endurance. But if ever the spirit of Griselda inhabited mortal body it must have been in this woman.

Rao, the idolised daughter of Rongovei, became the wife of a famous warrior, Tupa, chief fighter of his clan. They were a well-assorted and happy couple, and their pride in each other was almost as great as their love. If no Rarotongan hero could boast such a tale of vanquished and eaten foes as Tupa, who had such skill in music and song as the beautiful Rao? Their countrymen gloried in them both, and they knew it. They lived a little apart from their fellow-villagers in a shadowed spot beneath cocoa-palms and chestnuts and bread-fruit trees; the low wall that parted off their plot of home-ground from the luxuriant tropical wilderness around them was hidden with vines tangled among roses in perpetual bloom; from the distance the sound of the rushing breakers foaming against the coral rocks came softened into a lullaby. Here the married lovers lived in blissful peace, sharing together the gentle duties of home and, says Rao in her dirge, scarcely ever separated. Only the brave delight of war could draw Tupa from his darling's side; then he would hasten from the battle-field, clad with fresh renown and bearing his prey with him, and there was rejoicing and banqueting, and Rao had composed a new song, one of the sweet little love ditties or plaintive laments for which she was celebrated, and sang it tenderly when the feast was over and the savoury foeman put away. A sister of Tupa's came to live with them, but she was devoted to her sister-in-law and made no mischief. There was no cloud in the sky till the day when the enthusiasm of the too uxorious husband passed the wonted bounds and he loved not wisely but too well.

One day Rao, having little to do, bethought herself that her luxuriant raven tresses had been too much neglected of late, and set to work to restore them to their natural splendour. But they were so impenetrably matted that all her pains went for nothing, and finally she thought it best to shave them off altogether; they would grow again more abundant than ever. She called

Tupa to her aid, and he obligingly proceeded to remove her hair with a razor made of a shark's tooth fixed on a reed. Soon, to her joy, he had discovered a new beauty in his beautiful wife: as the white skin began to shine in patches through the thinned locks his eye dwelled on it in admiration, and from time to time he burst into interjections of rapture. Presently the whole scalp was bare, and Tupa gazed in silence lost in ecstatic thought. "Does it all look so white?" said Rao, coquettishly bent on more compliments. It did, and Tupa's resolution was already formed. Kindly but resolutely he announced to her his intention of forthwith eating her; a woman with so fair-skinned a head was too appetising to resist. And when she had given one quick appealing glance at him she knew he was in earnest.

Boccaccio puts into the mouth of Griselda, when Walter of Saluzzo demanded of her the sacrifice of her infant son, an exquisite little speech full of tender subservience, "Signor mio, pensa di contentar te e di sodisfare al piacer tuo, e di me non avere pensiere alcuno, per ciò che niuna cosa m'è cara se non quant'io la veggo a te piacere"—or as the English ballad tersely renders it—

Sith you, my lord, are pleased with itt,
Poore Grissel thinks the actyon fitt.

In like spirit, but more laconically, Rao accepted her master's behest. "Do as thou wilt," she said simply. And then, while Tupa busied himself in getting ready the oven outside the house, she sat still indoors and composed a poem. With a confidence in her fidelity which does honour to them both, Tupa appears to have kept no watch over her; the village was not far off, two brothers of hers lived at an easy distance, but Rao had no thought of flight. She could not but know that public opinion would be against Tupa's manner of using his marital authority, for wife-eating was far from being a recognised custom in Rarotonga, but the true-hearted wife knew her duty and would invoke no aid against her husband. She had

The laws of marriage characted in gold
Upon the blanched tablets of her heart,

and the will of the natural arbiter of her destiny sufficed her. Still it must be owned that here she seems to fall short of the ideal perfectness of Griselda. Griselda would have got ready the oven herself. Griselda, however, was not a poet; and Rao had her dirge to make. One might have been tempted to point from this a moral against literary occupations for women, since even a Rao could be drawn away by them from her housewifely duties, but that we are expressly told that she had been habitually diligent in preparing the daily food, while she herself in her last poem refers with a pardonable touch of pride to the condition of her oven. Perhaps we may assume that it was by Tupa's desire she devoted her last moments to immortalising their love and its fatal issue in her celebrated lament, instead of assisting him in the needful preparations.

Tupa's work took some time. The oven, a hole in the ground, was deep and wide, and he had to split firewood enough nearly to fill it, then to lay stones on the firewood. Next the firewood had to be all burnt to ashes, and the red-hot stones to be carefully arranged above the ashes with a long hooked stick. Then a quantity of thick juicy leaves, freshly plucked, had to be thrown on the hissing stones, and when a cloud of scented steam rose into the air, and only then, the oven would be ready for Rao to be laid in it and carefully covered with more of the rich banana and bread-fruit leaves. She had plenty of leisure for composition. And her sister-in-law sat by her, listening attentively, that she might be able to publish the poem afterwards to the tribe. This was Rao's lament:—

Alas! how have we talked, we two, till now!
 Weep, my love, weep:
 And now, farewell; we part; and I am gone:
 Weep for me, weep.
 How have we talked together, two alone!
 Ah me! my joy, wilt thou not heed my moan?
 My time is near,
 Death is already here.
 Farewell; we part for ever; farewell thou.
 Weep, dearest, weep.
 E rua ua karireia ē.

Weep for me, weep.
The sun drops down below the mountain's brow ;
Love, wilt thou not think pity of my fate ?
Lo, my trim well-used oven by our gate !
Hark ! how he lops the branches from our tree !
He spreads the fire ! Hark ! 'tis for cooking me.
Weep for me, weep.
Farewell ; we part for ever ; farewell, thou.

Weep for me, weep.
How happily have we two lived till now,
In the sweet tasks of love, and side by side,
In nothing known apart. And, if thy bride
Was Rongovei's darling, not less dear
The son-in-law who in the famine year
Hungered to spare him of thy scanty cheer.
Weep, my love, weep.
Farewell ; we part for ever ; farewell, thou.

Ay, my love, weep,
Lo, I am but the thing thy words allow,
The dusky caval-fish, food prized by thee,
The frequent fish from out the teeming sea,
Turned over, over, in yon oven's braze :
But thou, my husband, thou surpassing praise,
Art fairer than the bread-fruit cloth bleached white
And flashing in the noonday's sunny light.
Weep for me, weep.
Farewell ; we part for ever ; farewell, thou.

Weep for me, weep.
Oh pity me, my husband, dearest, best ;
I am thine own, destroy me ; 'twas my vow—
Yet keep me, darling, keep me and forgive ;
Clasp me once more unto thy constant breast ;
Oh ! for thine own sake spare me, let me live.
Nay weep, nay weep.
Farewell ; we part for ever ; farewell, thou.
Weep, my love, weep.
E rua ua karireia ē.

Mr. Gill suggests "Fal, lal, lal," as the English equivalent of the burden of mere vocal sounds occurring in the first and last stanzas, "E rua ua karireia e." But one can hardly admit that Rao, however desirous of expressing her resignation, would, as a poet, have chosen to do so by enlivening her dirge with a comic chorus. Rather it may be supposed that the sounds have a tone of sorrow in them to Polynesian ears ; something corresponding to the mournful "Waly, Waly" of one of our own most

pathetic ballads. There is a touch of craft in the praise of Tupa's conduct during the famine; Rao, who would not be guilty of argument against her husband, would yet, if she could, awake in him the remembrance of his former self-control—how he had borne to be hungry and had eventually been all the happier for it: she would, if she could, insinuate into his mind an emulation of himself. A like subtlety appears in the next stanza; it is not only for the aptness of the metaphors that she speaks of cavally-fish and bread-fruit—the reference to them might perhaps inspire her husband with an appetite for more customary food than herself. Yet one would not blame her for her harmless devices to turn her husband's mood, as if they had been a resistance to it. And if, unlike Griselda who was pleased with everything that happened to her and through all her miseries "lived contented," she breaks into grief and even entreaty, it must be remembered that she could not compose a lament without.

Parenthetically it may be remarked that this unsophisticated savage, whom Mr. Gill's friend's father knew, industrious over her last song while the oven was being made ready for her, offers an encouragement to those whose sense of congruity is jarred upon by the cavatine of sopranos and tenors in peril on the operatic stage. The child of nature did what librettists make the *prima donna* do.

Rao completed her dirge to her own and her sister-in-law's satisfaction, and sat practising it, ready for Tupa. It so moved the sister-in-law that she formed an heroic resolution—a resolution which she kept—that she would not eat a morsel of Rao. She might perhaps have called some of Rao's family to the rescue, but she was an invalid, dying of cancer, and could not leave the house. All she could do she did; she learned the song. At last Tupa had got his leaves asteam, and came. Rao sang him the dirge. Then he strangled her and hastened with her to the oven.

Tupa had his feast that day, and looked forward to the morrow. But on the morrow, while he was out hiding some of his provisions in an extemporised storehouse in

the bole of a hollow chestnut tree, Rao's two brothers strolled over to see her, and the sister-in-law, unable to forgive her brother for depriving her of Rao's companionship and kindly attendance, told the story of Tupa's dinner. The brothers hastened to their home for their spears, tracked Tupa to his chestnut tree, rushed upon him together with a mighty shout, and in one moment he lay dead at their feet. They cooked him in his own oven under the chestnut trees by his gate, the oven which, still seen near the ruined homestead, bears Rao's name. He had laid the fire ready to light that day to re-cook some of his wife. What was left of Rao was duly anointed with aromatic oil and, shrouded in bread-fruit cloth, solemnly lowered into the great chasm where the dead of her tribe were placed to rest under the guardianship of the gods.

Grisild is dead, and eke her pacience.

The missionaries have taught the Rarotongan women that it is their duty not to be eaten even by their husbands.

INFALLIBILITY.

WE all of us count among our relations and friends a number of good people who neither have nor claim any special intellectual or moral superiority over good people in general, who are not conceited, not arrogant, not even, perhaps, especially self-reliant, but who are infallible. No matter who gave them their opinions, or how their tastes came, their own opinions and tastes are to them the certainties of primary intuition, "the types of things in heaven;" they cannot conceive of them as only individual impressions like their neighbours', and they cannot conceive of their neighbours' individual impressions as in any way equally important realities to the said neighbours. Their faith is not in themselves, for they will often make no difficulty of admitting incompetence to judge some question they are ruling, and even the temperament of undue self-depreciation is not always found incompatible with infallibility; it is a faith in their faith. The feeling is truly in them, therefore it must be the truth: that is the ratiocination. Under this sort of conviction they can never quite lose the impression that there is something morally wrong in dissimilarity from them. It is not that they want to set themselves up as models, but, since their likes and dislikes, their beliefs, their desires, their ways of doing things, go by the absolute law of being right, there cannot but be some blame to any who depart from that law.

Infallible people do not usually fritter away eloquence

in arguments. Why should they, having so simple and final a logic? There are only two sides to any question, the right and the wrong; and their side is the right one. And, on the same good grounds, they rarely accept discussion of their views, even in self-defence from one they may have arraigned; and an attempt to change them is apt to be looked on with a holy and not always patient horror. It does not follow that their views never do change. Though inaccessible to direct reasoning, they are not inaccessible to the modifying influences of intercourse and surroundings, which, with ordinary minds, do far more than any conscious deliberation to shape the course of thought, and they are perhaps rather more than less likely than are people who, for want of faith like theirs, test their own opinions by questioning them, to arrive at other than their earlier phases. The opinion from which nothing can make them swerve is that the other people, those who are not of their mind, are all astray.

There are, of course, always risks of these excellent persons being compelled to make themselves disagreeable in society. There is no telling at what moment it may not be their duty to remonstrate with us. It may be in our theology or in our taste in cookery we have erred, in our conception of the Eastern Question or our sentiments as to blue china, in our respective appreciations of George Eliot's and Miss Broughton's styles of literature or of Miss Brown's and Miss Robinson's styles of dress. For the blame of the heresy is in the differing from them, and the greater or less of the subject-matter is of no moment, so regarded. Thus they are called on to break our heads with their precious balms on a miscellaneous variety of occasions of which there is no possible forewarning for us. Echo's part is the safest to play with them, but, though a good deal may be made of it with tact and attentiveness, it cannot always be carried out in society with the requisite completeness; in the exchange of conversation the turns of the talkers inevitably get shifted, and an echo that has to speak first may too easily fail to reproduce what is going to be said to it. No matter

how docile we are, sooner or later we do our echoing with a blunder; and then, of course, we have to be reprovèd. The infallible people do not always lose their tempers very badly with us—sometimes they are sorry for us; and a good many of them, even if they are resentful, know how to avoid downright rudeness, but, under the most favourable circumstances, reproof falls ungenially upon discourse. Being contradicted may be tolerable, and being argued against rather pleasantly stimulating; but being put under the discipline of having to consider oneself reprimanded is a social penance of an altogether aggravating character. And the necessity of inflicting it under which the possessors of infallibility labour makes that quality decidedly less pleasant to the companions of those who possess it than it is to themselves.

But it is about meaningless matters, and in close intimacy, that infallible persons are most depressing to the spirits—in matters, that is, of mere personal tastes and habits. The poorest creature of us all considers himself licensed to be his own authority on these points. Provided he transgresses no law, or custom, or courtesy, and harms neither himself nor anybody else, he may, he takes it, have his own judgment as to what is enjoyable and what is comfortable and what amuses him. He will be guided in the great things of thought and of practical life by duly constituted precedents, as a prudent man should; but in the minor details of existence, those which can affect no one but himself, he will allow himself to possess inclinations of his own. But, unhappily often for domestic peace, it is just in such details that infallible people can least bear dissimilarity from their ideas. If the dissimilarity is in matters of opinion and on large subjects, why, people are not stating their creeds, theological, political, or social, every day, nor acting upon them every day; and so there are intervals of abeyance, and the dissimilarity, not being an incessant fret, may be forgotten for long periods, and so forgotten may even somehow lessen into nothing of its own accord. But, if the dissimilarity is in some small point of mere taste or convenience taking visible form and of frequent repetition,

there is a recurring assertion of it, an ostentation of it, as it were, in action, which to a person of the infallible temperament is infinitely aggressive. If, for instance, your wife, taking her idiosyncrasy for a final law, has resolved that nobody can wash in unwarmed water with impunity, and you persist in taking unwarmed baths and being the better for them, you are daily outraging her sense of right and vexing her with a slur on the certainty of her knowledge of what everybody ought to do. Consequently, each added bath is an added wrong, and each day begins with what she feels to be on your part a rebellion—not a rebellion against her, for she claims no control, but against the immediate truth of things as proved by the belief in her mind. Or supposing it is you who are infallible, and your wife will not, on the plea that they swell her feet and make her head ache and spoil her boots, wear goloshes, although you think wearing goloshes would be just the thing for her health and comfort? Of course every time she went out in damp weather protected by mere double soles, and goloshless, she would be aiming a blow at your peace of mind and convincing you of her fatal unfitness to appreciate your irrefragable sense of things as they ought to be. More married discord comes, in all probability, from the infallibility of one—or, still worse, of both—of the partners than from all the real wrong that goes, or might go, to the divorce courts. “Incompatibility” means that both partners are infallible. It is best explained—though in a case not of man and wife, but of brother and sister, or perhaps of two sisters—in the simple and pregnant lines :—

Molly, my sister, and I fell out,
 And what do you think it was all about?
 She liked coffee and I liked tea,
 And that was the reason we could not agree.

It is evident that even if Molly and the other person, brother or sister, had only one meal a day at which they drank tea or coffee, as the case might be, the frequency of the occasion for reproof and recrimination between them, each infallible and bent on amending the other's

taste and practice, would be as great as to alienate affection in, say, if they were very genuinely attached to begin with, a couple of years. And once a day is a very few times for two infallible people to find each other obstinately wrong in.

The proper, but wholly uninfalible, method for ensuring harmony is equally concisely put in the domestic history of Jack Sprat and his wife. When it was found that he could eat no fat and she no lean, these two kindly and tolerant yoke-fellows arranged each to allow the other's preference free scope, and, as we all know, the happy result was that between them both they licked the platter clean, and so enjoyed at once the blessings of domestic affection and domestic economy. Their secret was a simple one—which yet some of us miss—they could sympathise with tastes they did not share. People talk of sympathy as if it could only be extended to feelings which are our own—that is, in fact, as if we could only sympathise with ourselves; but, if sympathy is worth anything as a lesson to us of what may be in other lives and a tie of kinship with all our kind, it must be able to take us outside ourselves. There can be sympathy in dissimilarity as well as in unity. And such a sympathy is likely to make those who cultivate it as much more useful as more agreeable than infallibility can do.

CONCEIT.

It would be difficult to name a vice so innocent towards others as conceit. Your impatience, your apathy, your fretfulness, your carelessness, your garrulity, your extravagance, all these, almost all faults and foibles in the catalogue of human imperfection, have it inevitable to them to inflict harms and vexations on people you have to do with ; your conceit leaves them never a whit the worse. And yet there is nothing man resents so much as conceit in his fellow-man. The display of it arouses an aggressive desire for the reformation of the offender which can only be satiated by his miserable abashment, and to that end many will take over a mere casual acquaintance an amount of trouble which few would think worth while for the cure of downright depravity in any person in whom they had not the immediate interest of near kinship or responsible connection. While there is a watchful delicacy about even alluding to any other mental or moral defect in the presence of a person known to be one of those possessing it, or rather possessed by it, not only politeness but reasonable kindness is constantly set aside without compunction for the sake of giving the conceited the giftie of seeing themselves as others see them—with their least softening spectacles on. One would think it need not matter much to anyone of us if our friend has more admiration for himself than we have for him ; yet his error is one which it is scarcely in human nature to tolerate, and for him charity bears the pedagogue's whip.

It is every man's mission to inflict wholesome discipline for his good on the conceited man.

It might be supposed that the peculiar annoyance, as if from some impertinence to ourselves personally, caused by other people's conceit, is from its bringing with it a sense of offence against our own. The sinner is, we might take it, by overrating his gifts, disavowing our superiority or claiming a vexatious equality; or, if what he thinks much of in himself is something which we do not at all possess, his merit must, in his own mind at all events, go to prove our deficiency. And probably some of the resentment against conceit does have its source in this feeling; and, where the conceit has in it, beyond its own mere unalloyed self-gratulation, the ill flavours of arrogance and assumption, the resentment against it will consciously derive much from such a source. But a homœopathic conflict of conceit against conceit does not account for all. Else why are teachers, and even parents, so apt to use against this particular fault an asperity and bitterness which might seem more fitly measured to larger faults which go overlooked?—why do they so commonly infuse a sort of spitefulness into their rebukes and their hints?—why do they feel in the culprit's mortification a pleasure akin to cruelty which would be far enough from them if the mortification had been never so well deserved by naughtiness? It is amusing to see the care with which parents who never think of keeping watch for the young upshooting of other ill weeds guard against the tiniest growth of what might come to be conceit. Generally the plan taken is to snub the clever children and to tell the pretty ones they are plain. Not much comes of it in any way; and good cannot come. When there is any result, it is usually a morbid self-depreciation—conceit gangrened and driven inward—which, though a less irritating phase of the malady to other people, is infinitely more harmful in lessening the usefulness as well as the happiness of the sufferer. But oftenest the clever and the pretty find themselves out betimes, and, seeing through the improvingly meant dispraises practised upon them, take them as compliments and are the more able to appreciate their gifts and

graces. If their minds are actively and wholesomely employed they will be none the worse for the knowledge. To be honestly aware of advantages, to feel a pleasure in their possession even, need no more be conceit than is the swallow's confidence and pleasure in its power of flight.

Real conceit seems to be partly the over-estimation of what one is, and therefore of what one does, and partly the living, as it were, before a looking-glass taking notice of oneself. Sometimes the over-estimation may be only apparent; the capacity one supposes in oneself may have really existed, may still exist, but the time which should have gone to cultivating and developing it has gone in admiring it; it has been frittered away in little exhibitions, and has dwindled for want of pains to make it more. Bystanders, seeing no signs of it, believe it never was but as an hallucination of demented vanity; but it did once have its place as a rational prompting to the exercise of a faculty, and it is possible that the faculty may have been worth exercising. The chattering sciolist, the half-skilled superfluous *dilettante*, may have had in them so much instinctive ability as, with the plodding zeal of humility, goes to make sound philosophers and competent artists. They were right, perhaps, in thinking they could get over the race-course, but they kept stopping on the way to pat their heads and give themselves sugarplums, and so they never got near the goal. Unhappily, such runners are apt to believe in their capabilities for the extremest prowess, just because they have never at any time tested their strength to the full. What they have done they have done with such ease that surely a little effort would make them a match for the best. Something in them, they know not what—a genius which cannot bear harness, a nobility of nature which forbids descent into the arena of competition, a divine indolence, an ethereal carelessness—something, in fact, whatever it be, which is unpractical but exceedingly superior, has hindered them of craftsman's excellence. These superlunary beings descend not to the menial steadiness of a Whewell, a Tennyson, a Huxley, a

Millais: they are comets, air-plants, all sorts of erratic wild flowers, uncatalogued stars, anything that cannot be calculated upon and goes its own way uselessly. Nobody is so possessed of a lyre, a soul, a genius, a star, as the occasional poet incapably ferocious against grammar and petulant at metre. A plain-sailing Shakespeare, or Milton, or so, has little enough of such extra-human inspiration to boast; but the amount of respectable gentlemen and ladies who are guided and gifted by such consummate influences is past the multiplication table. Something gets in their way to even penny-a-liner publicity: and they are scarcely likely to perceive that the something is conceit.

Yet, do we know what is conceit? Can we tell who, of the youthful, is under its blight? No little boy could be more liable to be accused of it by rational creatures than the little boy who saw a picture which, of course, he could no more have painted than he could have jumped over the moon, and cheerfully remarked "*Anch' io son pittore.*" By-and-by it turned out that he was right. But if circumstances had been adverse—if he had never got a chance of learning to mix the colours and the vehicles the right way—would he have been conceited because he never became a successful painter? Would the prompting have been less genuine because opportunity failed?

The doggerel that is written! the daubs that are painted! and all under the youthful inspiration that feels a power none looking at the execution can discern. Are we to see in such immature confidence only conceit? Or, if it be conceit that nerves young boneless creatures to enterprises of a Hercules, in which they fail, and leaves them after failure ready to begin again, and try, try, try, till they fail past their strength to rise again, as the million do, or with final gasps rise again and triumph as the dozen do—then, if this be conceit, as doubtless it is, let us thank God for conceit, and be a little lenient even to the simpletons in whom conceit is but an enervating mistake. Conceit in the young means the possibility of

immortal success, of ludicrous failure. If there were no conceit among the young, what would there be for the world but decent, self-seeking, so much per cent. respectability? For the gain of the future, for kindly pity's sake to-day, let us be a little more lenient to conceit than we are, remembering that, if without it there need be no bathos of presumption in the dust, there could be no ascension of low-born greatness to the heights.

LAY FIGURES.

THIS is not about the wooden dolls who wear clothes to oblige the artists, and who accept any sort of attitudes, heroic or vile, pathetic or frivolous, convenient to their delineators, without suffering inconvenience. Those dolls exist for their destiny, and their destiny is their salvation from a worse. But for it they might be firewood or kitchen dressers; instead of sitting sacredly on chairs which must not be moved lest they should be ever so little disturbed, they might be chairs themselves, sat upon and knocked over by any mere stout gentleman; they might bear the burden of draperies as towel-horses or clothes-pegs; they might be chipped into matches; they might be trodden on as floors. But, rescued from degradation, rescued from annihilation, they have their calm and honoured place; they fulfil their vocation avowedly and without sense of wrong; they are lay figures and they know it.

The lay figures who do not know it are the persons in question—the live lay figures who, not dreaming what is happening to them, sit for their characters to novelists and social caricaturists. They have been seized on in the bosom of their families, in the shelter of their friends' houses, at their clubs, at church, and put to use. Some of them have posed for personages of strange histories, personages fearful and wonderful to them when they come to read of them, never dreaming who has sat for them; some as their mere uneventful selves with just an altered

name; some of them for specimens of the latest faults and follies of the age to do duty under a class-labelling in the objurgations of Juvenals by the week.

It is evident that if these live lay figures never come to know the purposes they have served, and if other people do not come to know it either, if the secret of who was the model remains a fathomless mystery in the artist's breast, they are not the worse for his work upon them. Nobody will feel any uneasiness but the artist, whose conscience, one would think, may get a little pricked if he chance to receive some proof of confidence from the man whose fireside foibles he has copied for his latest villain, or some neighbourly charity from the good lady he has, to his thinking, drawn to the life as the vulgar mother. And as, because of the different light in which other people's characters present themselves to us according to our own position towards them and according to the actual position as regards themselves, and still more because of the differences of perceptions and sympathies which make each man's mental vision in some way differently tinged from every other man's, no two human beings form exactly the same conception of any third human being, it can never be an easy task to produce a likeness of an individual character which shall make itself recognised by everybody without any help from external accessories, and it need never be a difficult task to disguise its identity by such accessories. Some of us could not be easy under any sense whatever of using the intimacies, or even the mere social contacts of life, towards individual portraiture, however disguised; yet this is rather a personal idiosyncrasy than the conviction of a carefully reasoning conscience, and there can be no doubt that a skilful employment of one's neighbours as lay figures is consonant with the strictest honour in every relation of life. In this matter the one certain law of duty, but that law an immutable one, is in plain fact the popular eleventh commandment *Thou shalt not be found out*. To admit so much is not by one jot or one tittle to palliate the abominable baseness of creeping into confidences for artistic purposes. Still less can it be held to allow the cowardly

and easy cleverness of concocting an unmistakable effigy and exhibiting it in a literary pillory against which no protest can be made by or for the original, for to protest is to admit the likeness. Such crimes are heard of, and no doubt do happen, though they probably are heard of far oftener than they happen ; the common fallacy of the non-writing public that in literature a portrait must necessarily have an original cannot but cause a good many Procrustean fittings of originals to portraits, and the luckless artist who thought he had created may live to learn that he has only caricatured. But, however that may be, there ought to be, among honest people, no room for discussion whether such crimes, when they do happen are crimes ; nor are they the less so because their results may be amusing, or even edifying, to us as readers, any more than the fraudulent obtaining of a bill of exchange would be less an offence against the law because we ourselves, coming into possession of it as innocent holders, have received good money for it.

The question that does present itself for discussion is whether the conscious use of a lay figure for a literary portrait is artistically desirable. Should the novelist who wishes to depict some phase of embodied character to the life select a given man of the required character and depict *him* to the life ? Or should he, as a means of giving verisimilitude to a more or less invented personage, elaborate the details from some one in actual existence, describing real peculiarities, and perhaps real incidents ? The methods, usual enough, sound good on first statement ; and they would be good if they were not misleading. The writer believes that, because he has the evidence of actual occurrence in his world of facts for what he has set down as occurring in his world of fiction, he has been true to nature ; the reader is conscious, more or less clearly, of the interpolation of one sort of truth to nature into another sort of truth to nature, to the disturbance of both. It is like the crown one sees affixed on the canvas to the painted heads of Madonnas and saints : the beaten gold is real, and the gems are real ; without them the face would have been real, and with a higher reality than

theirs. The whole picture becomes false by the introduction of the extraneous bit of veritable material. Nor, even, is the actual personage, or the actual saying or doing, interpolated by the writer into his imaginary sequence of causes and effects, however carefully copied, absolutely true in itself apart from its relative truth as a portion in the whole: for these are not themselves except *as* themselves, they need the rest of their facts. Without them they are incomplete; you get a certain full-faced view of them, but the rest of them is not there, and you feel it; just as you miss the rounding sides and back of the crown on the pictures, although perspective would not have allowed of your seeing all round the crown at once if it had been complete.

The fact is, you can learn from each human being a great deal more about human nature than you can learn of his individual nature. Everybody does things which, as coming from him, are quite unaccountable to his most intimate friends—more unaccountable to them the more intimate they are. “I have known So-and-So intimately for years and he is the very last person I should have expected to do that;” what a familiar phrase it is. The action spoken of may be quite comprehensible, given a certain character and certain circumstance; it may even, if of a meritorious or lofty-souled nature, be what we conceive that we ourselves should do in such a case, but as So-and-So’s action it is incomprehensible to us. That simply means that, because we are not So-and-So and look on him from the outside, we do not really know his character; he has an identity which we cannot master. Superiority on one side cannot enable us to read him through and through, still less of course can inferiority, and even sympathy will not overcome that inevitable separation of self from self which makes the most closely-knit minds still in so many workings a secret to each other. We may, from what our lives have taught us of many John Smiths, create a John Smith of a probable or at the least possible character, on whom we look from the inside, and make him do according to his character within the facts we assign him in his three-volume career;

but we cannot say with certainty of any individual John Smith of our flesh and blood acquaintance what he would be and do in imaginary circumstances. Do what we will the individual John Smith will be incongruous to our theory of him, and when we have got him well copied into our book he will show there as the lay figure he is.

Supposing that a novelist wants to represent a first-class heroine rejecting a first-class hero for a second-class hero, without any such appearance of idiocy on her part as shall alienate the admiration of the reader. What would be the use of his trying to give her vitality by making her a close study of the real young lady who committed a like error of judgment and refused his real self in favour of his real, and, to his mind, manifestly ineligible rival? He never was able, he never will be able to comprehend how that young lady arrived at her selection. Consequently if he be never so successful in describing her as he knows her, in transcribing her amiabilities, her caprices, the little traits that reveal disposition, the little special mannerisms that gave originality, she will remain incomprehensible to the readers. And in literature the incomprehensible is the unnatural; the personages are allowed no lasting secrets from the reader, their very hearts are laid bare, and what they are must be reason for what they do. If the novelist from what intuition, sympathy, observation, reflection, have taught him of human hearts, generally, and what he has known or has guessed of the feelings and ways, generally, of women of the sort of the heroine he has in view, creates his creature, he will know her too thoroughly to make mistakes about what she would be likely to do in any of her predicaments, and she will even, as he goes on, teach him things he never dreamed of in his first conception of such a nature and of which all readers will feel "how true!" and some will say "what a careful study from the life—evidently a portrait."

There is of course a kind of delineation for which the use of the lay figure is, artistically speaking, not only unobjectionable but distinctly useful; and that is when the effect aimed at is that of caricature. And by cari-

cature is here meant not merely humouristic exaggeration but that kind of description which, whether for mirth or for pathos, for blackening or for beautifying, aims at giving vividness by rendering salient points of character, and still more of manner, strongly and persistently conspicuous without much, if any, attempt at general truth to nature. In this sort of work a lay figure with a peculiarity may be an invaluable model. But it is not a kind of work of which very much is desirable. To do it badly, perhaps even to do it moderately well, is too easy; to do it well is too difficult. Caricature is not, as rash folk suppose, merely a convenient simplifying of art for those who cannot succeed in reproducing the true proportions, but a special sort of art requiring a special gift. It is true, unhappily, that to copy a caricature is immeasurably easier than to copy, let alone to create, an ordinary portrait; and so far the second-hand of caricature is of better result than other imitation: but so far only. For those who have only to read the books, not to write them, the ease with which a vigorous or a deftly touched-in caricature can be imitated into a tedious monstrosity is something other than a gain. However, granted the style, it must be granted that in it the human lay figure has his use. Must it not, however, also be said that it is just in this manner that he should not be used? To use him you cannot disguise him; on the contrary you must make his peculiarities more evident, you must keep them strong, unmistakable, and you must ignore those large intervals in the lives of the most peculiar of us in which we are not being peculiar. You must, in fact, catch your lay figure in striking moments so that the likeness shall be unhesitating, and you must not, on pain of losing your points, alter away those features by which recognition of the original is possible. Your fellow-creature's right not to be made a lay figure under such circumstances is surely as inalienable as his right not to be hanged without trial by judge and jury.

POETS AND PERSONAL PRONOUNS.

THERE is no objection against the use of human lay figures by the novelist which does not equally apply to their use by the poet; and, from the solely artistic point of view, the objections in the case of the poet are yet stronger than in the case of the novelist. We ask from the novelist a definiteness and possibility for each personage, a suitability of conduct, language, and sentiment, to the epoch and theatre of events chosen, which shall make the story read as true: but we ask of the poet that his personages shall not be sharply definite, shall not even in drama be definite with the minute definiteness of the novel, while it shall seem impossible for them not to be, or to be other than they are; and we ask a suitability not so much to a given epoch and theatre as to always and everywhere, no matter under what disguise of date and story. The poet has therefore yet greater need than the novelist of that full conception of the character he is treating which can only come from creation. He need not, of course, create in the sense that the personage or the events he is interpreting shall not have pre-existed in fact or fiction; on the contrary, the highest powers of creative imagination have usually found their fittest exercise in intensified portrayal of the men and women and events of history or of legends and tales. It seems as if the resistance, so to speak, offered to the plastic despotism of the artist by characteristics accepted, not made, called forth a subtler

and a stronger skill than if he had worked with the limitlessness of free invention. The poet creates as the sculptor does ; he need not make the stone as well as the statue. His function is not, like the novelist's, to devise new stories, but to make old stories new. But the men and women he portrays must have been born again in his brain ; they must be his by creation, not by copying. It will not answer, if he wants to poetise the mood of a good man conscious of temptation, to take the clergyman of his parish and try to imagine what he would feel if he could be in such a position ; nor will it be inspiring, artistically speaking, if he needs a villain triumphant, to select his most hostile reviewer to sit for a likeness. For even supposing that he really could look into an individual heart as the oculist, by the proper arrangement of lens and light, can look into an individual eye, and that, being thus enabled to map out an *absolutely* true copy of the man, he could, by virtue of the poetic instinct of fitness, provide it with exactly and only such accessory incidents and surroundings as should keep it *relatively* true to nature, the successful result would be no poet's success. Nobody wants the poet so to draw characters that each shall seem the presentment of some special person known in the flesh ; that is an aim to be left to the novelist—the nature of whose art and materials renders him fifty-fold more competent to fulfil it. We look to the poet for feelings, thoughts, actions if need be, represented in a way which shall affect us as the manifest expression of what our very selves must have felt and thought and done if we had been those he puts before us and in their cases. He must make us feel this not only of what we ourselves, being ourselves, could come to think and feel and do in like circumstances, but of what no circumstances could possibly call out in us. One may be hopelessly incapacitated by a limp and considerate mental temperament from ever becoming a murderer even in a moment's thought, and for the matter of that so may the poet, but if the poet describes the sensations of an intending murderer he has to make one feel that he has found out just what one's sensations

would be if one could have been capable of thinking about committing murder. Or one may be impermeable to any more ecstatic love than goes to make a matrimonial choice in a comfortable way, but the poet describing the passion of love must make one feel that one knows it all for a fact, that those are just one's own sentiments—or at least what one's own sentiments would be if one were of the sort to fall in love. Not many have it in us to be Iagos, but we feel sure that, if we were to be an Iago, we should be *that* Iago.

And yet, with the very nature of the poet's delineation to show that he cannot effect it in reference to individual models, it is the poet especially whom the general public are wont to assume to have filled his canvases with direct studies from living lay figures. People will not understand that he embodies his conception, say, of modesty and girlhood, in some fair girl-shape of his imagination, without measuring to the pattern of somebody he knows who is a girl and is modest; or his conception of martial valour in a soldier whose personality grew in his own brain, instead of setting down the results of his contemplations of some distinguished officer of his acquaintance. He writes a poem about an unnatural grandmother; people guess which of his two grandmothers it was who endeavoured to poison him in his youth and left him with such an unpleasant feeling about it; and, if it is quite certain that he never had a grandmother, then the question is which of the grandmothers of his confidential friends he has had for heroine. Points of personal description are seized on in the most ludicrous way for identifying purposes: must not Lady Blanche Dove be the "fair fierce fiend" and the "passionate Upas blight" of Mr. Bayleaf's poem "The Golden-haired Witch;" for has she not golden hair and is she not fair, and, though she does not strike ordinary observers as ferocious or passionate or anything but a very meek well-behaved young lady, yet was she not believed to have, in her quiet way, let Mr. Bayleaf pay her a good deal of attention before he engaged himself to the lady with dark hair he is going to marry?

And whom can Mr. Bayleaf mean in his poem of "The False Lover's Return" by the hero with "low pale brow" and "strong and eager gait," but his friend Captain Steadyman who has got a low forehead and does usually walk fast, and who, having been to India, did return, and who, being good-looking and in the army, might very likely have flirted with Mr. Bayleaf's sister or some other lady Mr. Bayleaf knew? It would be interesting to know how many young ladies were, on the strength of the least little aquiline curve in their delicate noses and the having been more or less frequently in the same room with the laureate, or somewhere where he could if he pleased perceive their noses, declared with absoluteness "the Original of Tennyson's Maud." The present writer was favoured with the sight of one, and heard of five or six; others were understood to be plentiful. Nothing seems more likely.

But more especially still is the poet believed to be his own lay figure. He is taken as offering his readers the presentment of himself, his hopes, his loves, his sorrows, his guilts and remorse, his history and psychology generally. Some people so thoroughly believe this to be the proper view of the poet's position towards the public that they will despise a man as a hypocrite because, after having written and printed, "I am the bridegroom of Despair," or "No wine but the wine of death for me," or some such unsociable sentiment, he goes out to dinners and behaves like anybody else. One even hears it adduced as a fault in the moral character of poets generally that they do not feel all they write—meaning that they do not feel it in their own persons, part of their own experience. It is heartily to be hoped of most of them that they do not. Turn over the pages of any dozen poets now living, men and women, and take all their utterances for their own in their own persons, suppose the first personal pronoun not artistically vicarious but standing for the writer's substantive self; what an appalling dozen of persons! Not to speak of those legions of love-affairs simultaneously carried on in which they indulge—although some of them, being

married and moving in respectable society, ought long ago to have "renounced all others"—not to speak of these, what sort of existences can they be that allow of all the miscellaneous tragedies and idylls which appear to diversify the days of these multifarious beings? and how do they preserve their reason through such a conflicting variety of emotions, sonnet by sonnet and stanza by stanza? We have only to try to imagine what, if I meant I, must be the mental state of these writers of many emotions, to see, in the fact of their being able to correct their proofs and get their books through press, consoling evidence that, as a rule, I does not mean I.

There are exceptions to the rule. Every now and then even a reticent poet does distinctly express emotions which belong to him in his actual life, and not in that life of interpretership which in some ways he feels as even more real to him than the actual. Naturally he will do so chiefly, or only, as to moods which belong to all human nature, and which would find like expression whether he expressed them in his own ego or in an imagined one; they will be poems, not biography. And there have been poets who, accepting the popular theory of poetry being, as it were, confessional, have systematically put their personality forward. Yet where this is obvious it is not always real. The burst of sorrow has many a time had its ostensible subject hit upon only when it was wanted for the printers; the anger and withering scorn have found their theme in something that happened after the taunts and the rhymes were irrevocably fixed; the dirge has had to wait for a death to make it relevant; the love poem has had to be antedated to give it an appropriate motive. Byron's most Byronic heroes were certainly less a portrait of him than he of them; he made them and then imitated them. Where a poet falls into the popular fallacy and takes it that the public have a right to form a theory of his life from his writings and to expect him to be consistent to it, he is quite likely to become, with unconscious hypocrisy, a claimant to virtues which are too hard for him or "*le fanfaron des*

vices qu'il n'a pas." In his interpreter life he knows the bitter and the sweet of love, as what poet does not; but he conceives it incumbent upon him to have an "object" and, like Don Quixote, looks for his Dulcinea. So with the other passions; he knows them, he possesses them; as a part of the interpreter life he feels them with a completeness and intensity which experience of them in himself as a study of actual life can in no way increase and could lessen; but he feels that he ought to get at them somehow in his private capacity and practise them up, like a young lady with her show pieces. The hate of hate, the scorn of scorn, will not answer the purpose; he must hate Jones and scorn Robinson. He tries to do it, and he says in verse that he has done it.

Nothing is truer than that the poet sings because he must. He sings because singing is his sixth sense, and because it is so bound up with all the others that if you deprived him of it he would feel as if they too were leaving him. Yet you can reduce even the linnet's song to rule—whether the linnet is aware of a rule or no—and the rule of the poet's expression seems to be that it is not the revealing of him but of themselves to others; and to him the revealing of them and himself among them. At all events, few poets are even ostensibly autobiographical; and it is hard on them to investigate them as if they were putting themselves through a process of vivisection for the public to see how they were getting on inside.

Their difficulty comes from the personal pronoun they have to use; and it is only by some reform here that they can escape misconception from the majority of non-literary readers. If instead of I they took to the editorial We, for instance, a man might thus write:—

We loved, she was unworth our heart;
We scorned her, but loved not again

without the public thinking him disrespectful to his wife from any point of view: or he might begin, "We wept alone o'er him we slew," without fear of his readers thinking him a case for the police. But then poets are

so fond of saying "we" in an emphatic manner as short for the particular *she* and I, and confusion might arise. The use of a little i instead of a big I might have some effect as a sort of modest disclaimer of the writer's personality in the matter; but the printers would never stand that. Our vernacular "says he" and "says she" interspersed among the I's with a prudent frequentness would give considerable protection; but then if they were inserted in the matter of the poems they would put the metres out, and if they were relegated to footnotes or marginal arguments the very readers they were meant for would be just those who would never look at them. The indefinite "one" might be of some avail; but scarcely sufficient, because it is so frequently used as a more bashful but equally individual I that it does not convey the required distinction. On the whole the editorial pronoun, the "We" and the "Our" and the "Us," is what can most safely be recommended to poets for their future protection.

VOCATIONS AND AVOCATIONS.

VOCATION, in its primary meaning the call to some special career or work, is in its secondary and more frequent meaning the career or work to which there is this call ; it is, or it should be, the business to which a genuine sense of fitness has dedicated us and which we carry on steadily as our main task in life. Avocation, the call off—a word significantly rare in the singular—means any demand on us which takes us away from the main task and spends our time and attention coercively on affairs irrelevant to it. Yet so many persons use avocation as but a lightly modified synonym of vocation that the two words bid fair to become merely interchangeable ; and even educated persons not unaware of etymology will speak of a man's avocations in reference to the central duties of the profession to which he has given himself.

There is the irony of truth in the wrested meaning, sometimes. For in only too many lives the calls aside, the minor intruding occupations that hinder, and perhaps mar, the essential one, take so large an importance that the duties of the vocation may more fitly be described as avocations from them than they as avocations from those duties.

Apart from cases where it is a man's fault that he lets his time and zeal be lost from the work he has undertaken, or ought to undertake, as that of his vocation, it is the misfortune of many professions—professions which especially require concentration of the faculties and consecutive

energy—that the exoteric world has never been able clearly to comprehend that unimpeded freedom to work is needed by those who exercise them as much as it is by any handicraftsman whose time no one would think of claiming from him for unwaged labour or mere gossipry. If a man has an office or a counter, he is safe; his acquaintances perceive him to be labelled business-man, and “a business man’s time,” they will say, “is money”—as if everyone’s time were not, rightly looked on, money or some higher coin—and they will think even his leisure hours sacred to his own refreshment from labour, and not to be needlessly hampered. But occupations of study, scientific research, literary production—of brain work, in sum, of any kind that is carried on in the worker’s private home with no visible reminder of customer or client—are taken to be such as can lightly be done at one time as well as another and resumed after no matter what interruptions, like a lady’s embroidery which she can take up again at the very stitch she left her needle in, and, if the lost time matter, sew at a little the faster. Professions of this sort not only admit, but in many instances require, considerable variation in the amount of daily time directly bestowed on them—*directly*, for the true student, the true artist, is not at his work only when he is ostensibly employed, but whenever and wherever he may have his head to himself—and there is no measure of visible quantity for the more or less results of application. Often, too, the best successes of the student or the artist seem, as it were, born of a moment, flashed on without forethought and half unaware. It is but seeming; for thoughts, however suddenly they burst to light, must have had their sowing and their germinating time—if, that is, they are flowers, not fungi—but the seeming gives confirmation to the popular idea of the unexacting haphazard nature of the work whose triumphs come by what, whether it be called genius or talent or skill, is in fact but favouring chance, or, to take what with many is but the more flattering synonym for chance in such matters, inspiration. And so it comes about that persons with only the protection of these professions to keep them their time for

themselves are liable to have it used by others as open property of no value to anyone in particular, which it would be mere churlishness to grudge all comers.

The painter, to some extent, fares better than the other brainworkers—just so far as his craft is a manual one—for it is plain to his acquaintances at large that, though ideas may come by chance and between whiles amid interruptions, or may be done without, paint will not dab itself into shapes on the canvas with the painter out of the way, and thus some necessity for his sticking to his easel is appreciated. The literary man probably fares the worst of them all. He is not merely not protected by the manual part of his processes, but it is his danger. It is so easy—what everybody can do at any time. Even people who rarely write a letter think nothing of putting pen to paper at need, and what can it matter to a man who half lives pen in hand to have a few additional letters to write in the course of his “avocations?” what trouble is there worth counting in a little gratis exercise of his literary skill to oblige an acquaintance’s acquaintance. But whoever fares best and whoever fares worst, the assumption is that men belonging to such professions as are here being spoken of are able to accomplish their work in odds and scraps of broken time, and have for their primary duty to society all the docilities idle acquaintances lawfully claim of idlers.

Of course, the simple fact is that it is more difficult for this class of persons to practise their vocation under the drawback of perpetual breaks, actual and, what comes to nearly the same thing, expected, than it is for those beatified into the privilege of so many hours’ time for so many hours’ work by their title of business men. Let the attention of the solicitor, for instance, busied on the points of an intricate case, be perforce diverted to another matter, there is lost from that case just the time diverted, and a little extra to allow for the mind which returns to any interrupted course of thought never returning to it exactly at the point at which it was forced to leave it. But there are the recorded facts; the direct conclusions to be drawn remain unaltered: nothing has disappeared,

nothing has lost its identity. But suppose, let us say, a dramatist, devising his crisis after hours, perhaps days, of gradual growth to the moment when he sees it before him as a reality—his characters, as if alive apart from him, doing of their own will the very thing he feels they should do for his purpose. The action, the very speech, grows clear; he has no sense of effort, he has but to follow, and presently to put on record what he has followed: the solicitor's facts were scarcely more definite nor the conclusions from them more inevitable. Force his attention away, and he has lost, not merely the time he needed to complete a spell of work, with something over for the difficulty of resuming, but the power of resuming. All has faded into a haze; and the fruit of days may be has been thrown away at the ripening, for such moments do not come twice. The artist's mind turns jaded from the effort to reproduce, one might call it to re-live, what has passed away from him, and he has but to choose between giving a flat and forced copy of what he cannot recall with the vividness of the creative period, when it had its own life in it, or waiting to begin anew after a rest from trying to remember instead of to create.

Brain-workers are not the only persons who are "avocated" away from the proper work of their vocation, but the other cases are individual cases, not belonging to a class, and the "avocating" is in spite of the profession of the victim, not by reason of it. One might, to be sure, speaking of women as a class, put them before any possible class of men as beings whose time is reckoned needless to the owner and free to whoever takes it, like blackberries in a hedge. But a woman can scarcely be said to be called away from her vocation by any of the demands customarily made upon her time by others. Her vocation is in fact made up of avocations. She has no consecutive pursuit: trifling and serious duties are equally compulsory, and one duty calls her from another, or two or three claim her attention at one moment, without her being able to choose between them by accounting one of them more in the necessary scope of her life than

another, and with the one absolute rule that, wherever her other responsibilities clash with the practice of social ceremonial, the other responsibilities must give way and duties to acquaintances take precedence of duties to husband, children, or household. Thus a caller, even at an hour unrecognised by etiquette, has an undoubted right to her instant attendance, whoever or whatever else needs her, and no occupation however important—certainly not the education of her children—can excuse her if she neglects to pay her quota of regulation calls right and left. So that, on the whole, if she has at all that central business in life which can be called a vocation, it is to let her acquaintances make tatters of her time and to make tatters of theirs in return. In the case of women, truly, it must be admitted that the mistake is small if their distinctive occupations are termed their avocations.

It might also be said that the mistake is small when it is made with reference to the special employments of a man who has, by some one else's will, or his own mistake, or the force of circumstances, got into one profession when by taste and fitness he ought to be in another. The thought is a sad one, for it is of wasted lives. But the waste is of another kind from that which has been spoken of, and does not lie with others to make or to hinder. It has no fit place in this article, which is written in the interests of people who have found their fitting vocation and are not let alone to pursue it as other working men are to pursue theirs.

THE LIVERY OF WOE.

IT is a strange thing in the ceremonialism of life that the frankest of emotions should be of all others bound the most to be conventional, that what is held to be the most sacred of emotions should be compelled to obtrude itself on all beholders and to trick itself out for the common gaze duly intense to the regulation pattern. Sorrow for the dead must be sorrow by the yard; regrets have their measure in the width of a hatband and the depth of a tuck. Other griefs are taught to go patient and obscure, but this flaunts itself in uniform, put on, as it were, a label "Genuine Grief, Very Decorous," makes its outward garb its advertisement. And the display is avowedly and absolutely under the rules of fashion and etiquette; it has no spontaneous symbolism, no meaning of its own at all. It simply says "Look at me; this is how sorry my respectability requires me to be in the present stage:" and, by-and-by, "Look at me; my respectability requires me to be so far consoled at this period of my grief:" and society accepts the clothes as a formal certificate, and it is understood that, whether there be actual sorrow or no, there is no hypocrisy, since the respectability, not the sorrow, is what the clothes really indicate. The milliners' scales vary somewhat, but each milliner has her definite scale of lamentation in trimmings, and the widow and the orphan costume their grief by her dictation. And if any lady, having to show the world that she has suffered a bereavement and is correctly afflicted by it,

mistrusts the milliner's or the mourning salesman's authority, there are manuals on the Etiquette of Mourning to instruct her minutely, to a button or a frill, how to express the exact tribute of regret according to the degree of relationship, and, to a day, exactly how long to go on expressing it. There is no formality with so little feigning in it as the wearing mourning; for its matter-of-form nature is not merely confessed but made its chief claim to polite admiration.

There is little to be said in blame of the untruthfulness of mourning. Every courtesy, whether to the living or the dead, which society adopts as a duty, becomes of necessity, from a matter of prescription frequently a matter of pretence. But, just because it is a matter of prescription, such pretence has no guile in it and neither contemplates nor commits deception. The "very happys" and "very sorrys" of society pass the truest lips meaninglessly without tainting them, for no one understands them by the dictionary, they are merely the bows and curtsies of speech; and the "very happys" and "very sorrys" which go into acts and clothing follow the same rule. Your black hatband to the memory of the kinsman you feel unable to regret from want of knowing him or from knowing him too well, is no more deceitful than your white favour, sign of rejoicing, at a wedding which need never have taken place for anything you care. It is not often that the acceptance of a common custom can convey any meaning—although very often the refusal to accept a common custom passes as conveying much more than a neutral meaning. Not to say "very sorry" or "very happy" in the usual contingencies may be considered, not merely an honest avoidance of an expression of feeling beyond the literal fact, but as tantamount to an offensive declaration in so many words that we are glad at that for which civility required us to use a courtesy sorrow or sorry at that for which civility required us to use a courtesy pleasure: not to wear mourning under customary circumstances may be considered, not merely a refusal to parade a real or a regulation grief in a masquerade of doleful coats and trousers or

distressed falls and furbelows, but the ostentatiously parading content or indifference under the loss to which black clothes were expected to bear their regretful testimony. To refuse to pin on the bridal rosette may be considered, not a loyal abstinence from over-expressions of belief or joy in the bless of the bridal pair, but a surly manifestation of ill-will or ill-temper. And, as all language, of words and of things, is for the sake of him towards whom it is used as well as of him who uses it, whenever a custom, by common consent meaningless in the observance, but not by common consent meaningless in the breach, is completely harmless, we had much better accept it than hurt our friends' feelings.

But that the custom of wearing mourning is harmless is by no means incontrovertible. It is not one which the fashionable and the wealthy can assign to themselves and leave the humble their freedom if they choose to take it. If the duchess likes to hobble herself inside "pulled-back" skirts and impart a Chinese elegance to her impeded steps, we need not waste sympathy on the washerwoman who follows suit; nothing worthy sympathy in her impels her to the imitation. But, if fashion and respectability combine to establish the rule that not to wear some particular kind or colour of dress is to do dishonour to the memory of our dead, the poorest draggletails are coerced by all they have of tender feelings and all they have left of self-respect to wear the livery of woe—at what cost God knows, and often the devil knows too. And with the victims of that coercion we ought to sympathise. And the very tribute of decency towards the dead is, where poverty comes in, a source of hideous, though unmeant, irreverence to the dying. The new dress becomes needful past waiting for, there will too probably be mourning to wear soon, so the new dress is chosen to serve for mourning and the black for the funeral hangs in a cupboard in the invalid's room and goes out to Sunday church and pleasuring before his eyes. How else, when money for new dresses is so hard to come by and respect for him and the neighbours will require good black? If one may judge by the advertise-

ments of a well-known mourning-dealers' firm, this thoughtful provision of mourning beforehand is not unknown in families capable of paying Regent Street bills; for ladies are informed with bland iteration in pretty well every newspaper they can lay hands on how, in cases of sudden and unexpected mourning, special and prompt attendance to their dressmaking necessities can be afforded them by this energetic firm—the inevitable inference from the wording of the advertisements being that, where the need for mourning is *not* sudden and unexpected, the proper clothes will have been laid in at leisure beforehand. If this be the case, there must be an odd conflict of feelings at times in the minds of expecting and provident mourners—on the one hand the wish that the beloved relative should recover, on the other the sense that, if he really cannot recover, it will be very awkward if he survives long enough for the mourning dresses to get out of fashion before they can appropriately be taken into wear; and, if a modest black serge, or some such not too anguished stuff for double duty, should get taken into wear before the bereavement, it must require considerable extra resignation to have at once to watch it growing shabby and the sufferer sinking.

All women say that mourning is very expensive. Men, in their ignorance, aware that their female relations often wear some sort of black garment and call it economical, suppose that black under the name of mourning may easily be a cheap and serviceable costume if wilful or weak extravagance has nothing to say to its cost. If any man wants to comprehend whether and why there is a difference financially between a liberal use of black in ordinary attire and the purchase and keeping up of a head-to-heel black outfit in mourning materials, let him consult any woman capable of keeping accounts who has ever arrayed herself in orthodox garb of grief. But, supposing that women's mourning were not in itself more expensive than any ordinary dress of ordinary women, that even it were less expensive, and that all mourning in a household, the men's, the children's, the servants' too, were less expensive than the

usual coloured clothing, what is it when all at once everybody in the household must have a new outfit, regardless of the condition of the present wardrobe? Without speaking of the homes in which actual poverty prevails, there are but a minority of homes in which the death of the husband and father does not make an immediate fall of income; in many cases the fall is from ease to penury. Perhaps the house has to be given up, the sons must be put to cheaper schools and bred to humbler professions, the grown-up daughters must go out as governesses and companions, the younger ones must do without education and thrive as they may on stinted meals—but, out of the scanty funds, mourning outfits must be purchased; every consideration must give way to that. And, if the widow and children should say “We are too poor; we should have to get into debt for these things, or to make sacrifices which it is wrong to make: we will wear our old clothes, and we will try to do honour to our dead by our lives of duty,” they would bid fair to incur a scandal which would forfeit them every help and perhaps fatally damage their prospects of self-maintenance. Those who can least afford the mourning are oftenest those who can least afford to dispense with it. There might be a more charitable result from some of the well-known wealthy and fashionable women of the West End defying impertinent comments and, for the sake of less prosperous and weaker sisters, abjuring all mourning but such as, like low dresses in winter noon-days and other barbarous usages, is compulsory at court, than from untold guineas in almsgiving.

Where the grief represented by mourning is deep and real, mourning is frequently a peculiarly cruel infliction. It is an unceasing reminder, not of the loved one, but of the loss. If we love our dead we want to remember them as they were with us, we want still to keep up in our minds the associations that made them, even in absence, a part of our lives. There should be something of pleasure still in thinking of them, or what honour or graciousness is there in our memory of them at all? But we have to clothe ourselves in a symbolism which sym-

bolises nothing but the undertaker; we may not put on so much as a glove or a necktie but it is to speak of the funeral gloom. It is thus that the dead get forgotten: from the day they depart we force their deaths, not their lives, on our minds, and the thought is too painful and we are glad when we can turn from it. It is a memory to put by with the black clothes; and it kills the brighter one that surely is the one we should all wish to be mourned by.

For such persons as have been spoken of above, those thrown on their own resources by a death, the perpetuation of, not the sorrow only, but the gloom and horror of the event, is particularly an evil. They need all their energies for their unwonted struggle with the world, and they have to learn a necessary cheerfulness; to brood on their loss is to be enervated, and they must put by even wholesome sorrow for convenient seasons. To women of impressionable temperament, to those especially with the artistic susceptibility to the influences of colour and light—a susceptibility which belongs to very many women who have no artistic genius, belongs perhaps to the majority of women—the lugubrious surrounding of their own clothes is an aggravation of mental pain which they should be forbidden for health and sanity's sake; and to any woman who needs the power of fixing her attention on other things than her misfortunes the reminder for ever in her sight is a practical mischief. Men's mourning, if not more reasonable, is less hurtful, because less obtrusive. Most men are habitually unaware of the pattern and colour of the suit they are inside; but a woman's dress is, at its skimpiest, too voluminous to escape her notice; and it is not a woman's nature not to see her dress.

As for the *reductio ad absurdum* of mourning, half-mourning—the announcement to the world by an admixture of greys and lavenders that you begin to feel resigned and hope soon to get over it—it may be left to the pleas usually put forward in its defence, “it is always such good taste in dress”—“it is so becoming.” So it is; good taste in dress, and becoming to most complexions.

PORTRAITS.

ANY collection of old portraits is interesting. Say the things are uncouth mimics rather than pictures, say the persons represented are unknown to any history; still we look on them with a sense of their reality and spend on them that curiosity about the past which is so strong an instinct in human beings in all, even the most unconservative, stages of civilisation. We see that the hard harsh lines have made beauty unbeautiful and outraged ugliness, that there never could have been men and women looking quite such masks of iron or wood as these, yet not the less we recognise in even the least lifelike of the strong old portraits that it has its own clear individuality and is somebody. It is the person it was meant for, and could by no possibility be anybody else.

Any collection of nineteenth century portraits would be uninteresting, unless so far as the persons represented had known histories. Any ordinary collection, that is, for there are a few nineteenth century artists of whom it can be said that a collection of portraits by them, or by any one of them, would fill the eye and the mind with a discreet pleasure. But take the customary sort of well-painted portraits of gentlemen and ladies set out in their best clothes and their best looks to fill a frame and enliven their dining-room walls—portraits so like that not only the servants but the very babies of the households in which they are treasures are lost in amazement at the counterfeit—and with what a trite and meaningless

monotony will they respond to your inquiring gaze. They are like the sitters, and the sitters differ in features and complexion from each other, therefore they are not like each other; and yet they leave the impression of their having no special identity, they are portraits of anybody. Any one of them you feel could just as well be the resemblance of any other person with a similar nose and coat or dress and no matter how different a story.

The common explanation of this triteness of our contemporary portrait painting is a sufficient one—if true. We are all alike in these days, it is said, all Philistine, all respectable, all smug, all Mrs. Grundy-ized, therefore the painters who make our likenesses have through a thousand faces but one mind to portray. That sounds superior and æsthetic, and we can say it, in whatever words, with an agreeable feeling of being ourselves exceptional, removed from the commonplace herd and able to walk ungregarious and criticising beside the simultaneous multitude. But is it true? First, has human life, in portrait-painting times, ever been free from the authority of common precedent? Nay, when the people whom whole-bred Englishmen curiously believe their progenitors, on no other ground than because their forefathers took their lands and as nearly as they could extirpated them—when the people who inhabited the woods and marshes which became the meadows of England wore their costume of skins and woad, they doubtless had fashions for one beast's fur rather than another and finished their skins after patterns that "everybody wears this season." For the last thing to be expected of savages and semi-savages is independence of each other's example. Rudeness imitates rudeness no less than courtliness courtliness; and semi-nakedness may be worn as much to the fashion as the most elaborate contrivances of superhuman tailors and milliners. And, even if that were not so, the tailors and milliners had come to the fore before the painters got their sitters; people dressed in each other's similitude, and, for the tailors and milliners of the mind had had their way too, acted and thought in each other's

similitude. In the best, as in the worst, days of portrait painting, education was chiefly a training to be like the rest of the world, and the artist's true work was to see the unlikeness through the likeness and to render both.

This is much to ask of any man. For it is the secret of genius. It is the poet's secret like the painter's, the sculptor's like the musician's. It is much to ask, but it is what we have the right to ask of any man who will have himself called artist. And what is the matter with our most modern portrait painting is that it is not the men who have this secret who undertake it—allowing always for a few too rare exceptions. In the later days portrait painters have not been truly artists but copyists from live patterns. They have copied well and with an amiable politeness; their works have seemed to sitters an improvement on the looking-glass, and to other beholders triumphs of the art of keeping *à côté de la vérité* and of Madame Rachel-like execution combined with a custom of accurate drawing, but, as to the value of the result, it can be calculated only by the worth of the gratification of the personal vanity of the sitter and of the affection of the sitter's relations who will have his portrait to remind them of him when he is gone. As a picture the presentment is nothing, for it means nothing. Portraits not less, as seems now to be commonly supposed, but more than any other embodiments on canvas need to be painted with brains, with that clear-sighted and comprehending sympathy of equal to equal or greater to less which is a chief property of imagination and cannot exist without it. If only commonplace men are to paint portraits we shall have only commonplace portraits, no matter who the sitters.

But how does it happen that portrait painting is so usually considered a branch of art proper for ineffectual painters, and unworthy of any who have that small skill in grouping which will satisfy the people who think it proper to see the new pictures of the season at the recognised exhibitions? We have workers in oil whose repute with the public and balance at their bankers re-act

with a continuous benefit on each other, who, putting live models into requisite clothes and histrionic attitudes such as nobody ever does use in real emergencies, will make copies of them in a group, and be proud to have produced a picture, and who would think shame to do as Titian and paint a mere true portrait of man or woman in untravestied dress, playing no adopted part. Looking on such a picture we see that it is but a collection of stagey imitative portraits; looking at a portrait by one of the men who have filled the world of art with immortal faces of everyday people they understood with artists' eyes, we see the high realities of imagination.

The artist who does not paint portraits can ill learn the secrets of faces. To paint again and again from the same hired models can only give facility in rendering such and such types and shaping them to such and such expressions; it cannot give insight. But the really great artist should learn something new from every new face, and deepen his knowledge by many such studies. His sitters for portraits will not have the obsequience of models, he cannot have them jocund or plaintive to his bidding, he is not to tell them what to seem but it is for him to see what they are and render that with his interpretative mind and hand. He cannot do this with varied personages and not be the more master of the art of rendering characters and emotions in shapes created anew by the artist's ideal memory. His library, so to say, will be the larger and the more varied from the faces he has reproduced in portraits, although he may never deliberately use the memory of one of them in his works, just as a writer who has strengthened himself by study may never make direct use in his writing of the books which have been his reading.

But it is not for the sake of the artist's development chiefly that one would wish to see portrait painting restored to its due honour; it is for the enjoyment of its higher results. A fine portrait is an exceeding enjoyment, and one of which the indulgence does not pall. You may go back again and again to the same still face and find it varied by something in it which "grows upon you."

Sometimes pictures of action, noble and splendid though they may be, long gazed on produce a sensation of weariness of their movement; then perhaps, more than ever, one can experience the grave delight of turning to a master's work in portraiture and resting in the thoughtfulness it produces. One could wish this satisfaction to be a little more frequently possible in galleries dedicated to the art of the season.

Can it be that the Royal Academy is answerable for the degeneration of our school of portraiture? It has not usually been considered hostile to that branch of art, at all events; but its kindness may have been the killing toleration of contempt. For certain it is that one of the elect teachers not long ago informed his audience, after dwelling on the uses of imagination, that if any of them were conscious of being devoid of that gift there was yet room for them to employ skill and perseverance in those branches of art which needed no imagination—namely, portrait painting and landscape! Portraits and landscapes! No imagination needed, quotha! Then let us own art a mistaken mechanical process and photography the most accurate way of illustrating things in general.

PROTECTION FOR THE WORKING WOMAN.

THERE is nothing more difficult than to protect without enslaving. Domination of the protector over the protected is, in most instances, an essential condition of the protection being possible at all, and where it is not thus involved in the protection it is by the nature of things its sequel: and domination, starting perhaps with the most unassuming intentions, easily out-does its part and becomes despotic. Protection is apt to be like that faithful manservant of whom his employer said that during the first ten years he had found him an excellent servant, during the next ten a considerate friend, and during the last twenty a terribly hard master. Such a master women appear to be getting—or rather to have got—but by a much more rapid transition. Protection of them threatens to take such formidable power that their lives will be a slavery, not to work, but to laws which forbid them to work. They will be able to starve, for no law can forbid that, but they will not be able to be weary with labour: they will be free to battle against poverty by the help of vice, but not to injure their healths by long and exhausting tasks, and their feminine dignity by coarse and mannish occupations. Some women would like a choice.

Nothing could be better for women than that it should be made impossible for them to be overworked, whether by themselves or by anybody else, if overwork were the only evil in life. But there can be worse things to suffer

than the cruellest tasking, and rest and holiday must be mere misery when they mean enforced loss of time which could be money and money means life or more than life. A mother will scarcely thank the beneficent policeman who interferes to prevent her selling hour upon hour of the time for repose which the law prescribes for her health, to buy the extra foods and the medicines for her sick child. Or, if she is a widow, or the wife of a sot, and has the maintenance of the family depending on her hard, and perhaps unsuitable, toil, she will see no mercy in her being precluded, perhaps from carrying it on at all, perhaps from earning at it more than half what she could if she were a free woman: and, true as it is that, *if* sufficient income for the home is otherwise provided, the best work a mother can do is to mind the home, the *if* carries all the argument. "Yes, children are better seen to when the mother stays at home" many a mother replies, "but if I didn't go out to work mine wouldn't have a shoe to their feet." It is a hard law, however gently meant, which can stand in the way of a woman earning for her needs and the needs of those dependent on her. Nor should even earning beyond needs be made impossible. To do that is to put hope of bettering herself entirely out of a woman's life. Why may not an energetic and intelligent young woman, old enough to be a free agent, work hard—overwork if she please, as everybody does who gets on in the world—to set aside a sum of money for a given purpose, for learning a better trade, for starting a shop, for educating talents of which she is conscious, or were it but for the humbler hope of buying a smart warm winter suit new for herself instead of the cast-off fripperies with which a sixth-hand dealer tempts her? There is a good deal that is uncomfortable in the world, and we are all conscious that judicious choice between greater and less discomforts, temporary or permanent, diminishing or increasing, is the secret of well-being, and that we can only estimate the balance of discomforts each for ourselves—when once we are old enough, that is, to understand what they imply. We make the choice for our babies and children because they

cannot understand this—the relative importance of the shorter present and the longer future, especially, being learned late; we must also make the choice for idiots. But women who have to fend for themselves are not likely to be idiots, and each of them is likely to be able to judge better for herself than all the members of Parliament put together can judge for her which sort of discomfort will be most to her comfort.

There was once—at least the story says so—a young woman, who went on work, work, work, at spinning threads out of nettles and sewing the stuff into garments. The employment was cruel to her tender hands, the nettles blistered them and the threads cut them; and instead of being limited to four-and-a-half hours' labour at a stretch and not going on a minute after four on Saturdays and nine on the other work-days, she went on through days and through nights in a limitless manner that would have set Mr. Cross's charitable hair on end. Her conduct seemed strange to the people of the country, and, being under a penance of dumbness, she could not explain it, but they had no Parliament to protect her, and the police did not intervene to stop her spinning and sewing. If she had been protected, if the police had intervened, she would not have been able to throw the garments at the nick of time over the eleven swans, thereby restoring them to human shape as her brothers and having herself accepted as the princess she was born.

Much of the work done by women is done under very hard conditions—long hours, little pay, unhealthy surroundings. One might say that most of the work done by women is so done. But their friends must be careful of the ways they take to benefit them in such matters. Otherwise they will not a little resemble the physicians of the Governor of Baratavia, who, to preclude injury to his excellency's digestion, sent away one after the other every dish of his dinner. Hungry women would rather have the hardest-earned pittance than none. Restrictions which, making the employing them inconvenient to employers as compared with employing men, will lessen their chances of employment, and which will limit their powers

of earning when they can get employment, if they succeed in removing some immediate taskmaster abuses, are certainly calculated to depress the whole position of working women and make and keep them worse off than they were. Legislation in its protection of children has been very far from keeping it in view to give a stimulus to the demand for them by employers, and it is all the better, we are all agreed, if one of the results of restrictions is that fewer of them can be put out to labour. But, in the present condition of our population, it is seriously injurious to adult women to close any door of the labour market which has been open to them. What tends to their true protection against overtaking is everything which tends to increase their opportunities for earning and therefore their power of self-protection. It is in their plenty and their cheapness that their weakness lies, and that weakness must increase if artificial restrictions upon their labour are to go on being imposed to lessen the demand for it. Neither men nor women can protect themselves from over-hours and under-pay if the state of the case is that there are hundreds as fit for the work as they half starving for the want of it, and only anxious to accept the same or worse terms. But so soon as workers see themselves scarce enough to have a value they claim it and they get it. There is no reason to suppose that working women have less self-assertion than working men. They have not combined in Unions, and, though a Women's Union League started a year or so ago has, the writer believes, met with some little support among some of the more educated crafts, they do not seem likely to combine so as yet; but no craft, whether of men or of women, could, with sanity, propose to better its condition by any sort of combination so long as the surplus proportion of workers to the work remained anything like what it is among women in almost all their callings. The attitude of female domestic servants during the last decade certainly does not lead to the conclusion that women of the working classes will be "put upon" any more than the men where once they find themselves not too many for the demand.

The protection of women against those male persons usually called their "natural protectors" by rendering it impossible for the natural protectors to coerce them to overwork, through the simple means of making the overwork impossible—so far as human inspectors and policemen can—is likely to be least available in the cases of just those natural protectors against whom it would be required. The amount of taking their own part—and sometimes rather more—against all and every mere verbal or but triflingly physical coercion on any subject, of which women of the working orders are habitually capable, is a frequent source of amazement to us who have learned to see woman's wont in the helpless sulks and fretful yieldings of ladies polished and finished; and working women with humanly bad husbands will not readily be driven to any sort of work against their will. But the woman who has fallen under the power of one of the dangerous brutes who kick wives to death can be made to overwork in other tasks beyond those which are fenced about with legal restrictions, or, under concealment, in those very tasks; and surely her chance of living whole would be infinitely greater if she could earn enough to make her worth keeping in a working condition, than when he found that the law had brought down her gains below what the enjoyment of mauling her was worth. And it is the wives of the worst husbands who have most need of lawful freedom to earn all they can; they are the mothers of the starving children. As to the adult single working women it is absurd to talk of their needing protection against their fathers' taskings. Parental control over sons and daughters is put by only too soon among the working classes, and so soon as she begins to earn enough for herself a girl is wholly free of her father. If she lives in his house she pays for her keep; if he makes his house uncomfortable she goes to pay for her keep in someone else's. The idea of obedience is over and, with her liberty in her hand, she will not submit to even justifiable command, much less coercion. Single adult working women do not need protection against their natural protectors, and such protection for

the married ones can only be that protection against brutal assaults which is otherwise so urgently needed. The power granted them of obtaining the Protection Order for life which should have the effect of a judicial separation, advocated lately by a well-known writer,* would protect them far more efficiently from coercion to overwork or unfit work than any well-meant attempt to put the work out of their reach.

The tendency of this protective legislation is plainly to bring about to the strict letter the division of labour expressed in Charles Kingsley's burden, "Men must work and women must weep." And how far is this protection to go? It is easy to call up ludicrous contingencies, restrictions on ball-going and so forth, but, without passing out of the range of reasonable contingencies, we can see into what much higher strata of society, what very different arts and callings, this restraint of adult women's labour may be justly carried on the same arguments. The control which members of Parliament so frequently now find themselves called on to assume over the details of women's lives, with all their individual as well as their class results, does seem to offer a strong argument for the admixture of some women among the voters who elect the members of Parliament. At present it is the blind leading the dumb.

* The scheme for the protection of wives referred to is that of Miss Cobbe—enabling magistrates, in cases of dangerous violence from a husband to a wife, to grant the victim a legal separation with alimony—which Lord Penzance has since introduced into the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1878.

THE VICE OF TALKING SHOP.

It is very wrong to talk shop. That is one of society's most venerated precepts, even if—not wholly unlike most venerated precepts in higher codes of morality—it is one of the least obeyed. Not to know it is not to know the rudimentary “my duty towards my neighbour” of social religion. And to enforce it—as occasion may require, of course—must be the duty of every self-respecting diner-out. For, if you fall among shop-talkers whose shop is not yours, you may get thrown into the background. The predicament is serious; it is not only that you may be prevented from taking part in the conversation with your accustomed excellence, but that you may have to hold your tongue altogether; and, in spite of so many compliments paid to silence by the many sages who have wished to do all the talking themselves, people are apt to assume that when a man says nothing in company it is because he can find nothing to say. And at any rate no one likes to play the part of the mummy at an Egyptian banquet, to be the blank guest whose silence conveys a protest against the whole proceedings and concerning whom the other guests must needs feel that the best they can do with him is to let him alone. He who finds himself in such a pass will no more doubt that it is a vice to talk shop than he would doubt that it is a vice not to pay one's debts if somebody else persevered in owing him an inconveniently large sum of money.

And yet there is something to be said on behalf of

shop. The rule of society no doubt is that we should talk of what we do not know rather than of what we do know; still there are many men, and perhaps some women, who are absolutely unable to obey the rule—except negatively, by not talking of anything. Women who mix at all with the world readily acquire the knack of talking companionably of what they know nothing about—a great many women indeed seem less to acquire it than to have it as a birthright; obedience to the rule sits upon them as easily and as fitly as the furbelows and gauzes in which a man would find himself like a fly in a cobweb. Therefore women, even women with specialities, rarely talk shop. In fact, partly under the dread of those fatal adjectives “blue,” “gushing,” “strong-minded,” and partly from a sort of mental prudery—one which has its good side but also its bad—which objects, as it were, to the real woman being too accurately scanned, they more usually shrink from any discussion of subjects in which they feel a close interest. But there is a large tale of men who never arrive at being able to talk on subjects about which they have neither information nor concern; and the question is, whether in their case it is not worth while to relax the stringency of the rule.

Suppose a man's shop has so engrossed him that it really is the only thing he knows or cares about. He is not uneducated, perhaps not even narrow-minded, but his intellect is not of the much-embracing order, and his profession or his purpose has so absorbed his intellectual sympathies that, just as if he were some great artist, all he sees and learns gets somehow dovetailed into the one theme of his life. Whenever circumstances have led to a man's occupying his time and his thoughts in one especial manner with any sort of zeal, he will unconsciously acquire such a readiness in detecting everything that has the remotest affinity to his paramount topic that it can never be quite out of his memory. There will always be the temptation to get back to it—set him down where you will, some byway brings him back into the familiar highway. Cleverness will not

place him out of risk. Indeed, the cleverer he is, the more likely he is to become, to this extent, the slave of his shop. This is not meant of the man of genius, of course, the many-sided man, but of the busy practical man of common life. Say that he is of more than average intellect, that he has talent and, still better, a wise and honest love for his science, his art, or whatever may be the name of his work, he will be at a disadvantage as compared with the man who, failing either in the ability or in the energy necessary for concentration, has been enabled to learn a little plausible ignorance on a good many topics of general interest. Now over-concentration may be damaging to the balance of his mind, and, without doubt, concentration which is in other respects not over-concentration is detrimental to him as a conversationalist, lessening the superficies over which his tongue can travel. But, since the poor fellow is so ill off that there is only one class of topics on which he can enter readily, may there not be something gained for his associates as well as for him in letting him go his own way? If one found oneself in the company of the philosopher who has concentrated his life on the dative case, it might be better to put him to discourse on the dative case than to elicit his dulness on the weather. One might not succeed in achieving even a temporary sympathy with his fervour, but one would at least have learned something about the dative case. And a man must be very stupid indeed—or else his listener must be very stupid indeed—if he can talk freely and earnestly on a subject which thoroughly interests him without the listener's becoming interested, if not in the subject, at least in the interest it has for its exponent. Nor need the listener's interest be lessened, surely, if he is hearing several men skilled and eager in some special pursuit talking with each other, instead of only one such man talking with him.

But the truth is that the sense of exclusion which everyone has at some time or other felt, and in creating which the real wrong of shop-talking lies, has little to do with the subjects handled. The offence is caused by the

offenders' want of tact, or rather want of that sympathetic perception which is the reality of good manners. They do not put themselves in the position of the outsider and remember to—as the good old phrase has it—“take him along with them.” If the majority of talkers ignore this duty of fellowship towards the minority, the result is similar whether the conversation runs upon technicalities or is of the simplest form of minor gossip; and, on the whole, it is less tedious to have one's ears filled with craftsman terms and professional jokes of which one misses half the point than with, as so often happens to the luckless alien inveigled into a gathering of intimate neighbours and Christian names, unexplanatory information on unexplained private histories, and confidential epigrams in which one has no chance of detecting any point at all. There is no subject so simple or so general that it may not be made shop, in the offensive sense, by being made intimate in the presence of the unintimate.

The test seems to be the amount of silence the theme of the majority, or their treatment of it, compels upon the minority. If the talk be such that the outsiders take their fair share in it, or even that they listen with animation and not merely with the submission of conscientiously civil smiling, it is not shop in any bad sense let it bristle never so much with technicalities and guild gossip: if the talk be so contrived as to present to the outsiders a series of riddles if they try to follow it and a mere maze of chatter and reply if they take it as it comes, it is shop in its worst viciousness, even if it is on the most everyday subjects conceivable. May that sin be far from us! Still more may it be far from all our acquaintance, and from their acquaintances whom we may have to meet! But if talking shop is to mean, as people in general seem to take it, a man's talking most about the thing he knows most, then the vice does not seem so unmistakable but that it might at times pass itself off for a very decent-looking sort of virtue.

CHAMPAGNE.

THERE is a popular beverage of more or less purity, of more or less strength, of more or less cheapness. It is chiefly of British growth, but assumes a continental fitfulness and sparkle. It is considered exhilarating, and is too light to be seriously indigestible. We call it champagne. Supercilious critics cavil sometimes, and say it ought to be called something else, yet at bland moments they are known to drink it favourably and to avow that, under some other name, such as sparkling Saumur, sparkling Mosel, sparkling Hamburg, or what not, it may pass muster as a cheering and economical luxury. Supercilious critics with no bland moments say harsher things, and demand sincerity, clearness, even strength for their draughts, refusing the joys of briskness and froth alone; but the merrier multitude lets them say their say and quaffs its cheap excitement.

Which things are an allegory. For, if our wine-merchants flood the concourse of thirsty palates with champagne enough to drown the Champenois departments under a navigable sea, our book-merchants turn on for the supply of the reading public unintermitting mains from bottomless reservoirs of literary champagne unknown to the vineyards of Minerva. The receipt for the manufacture is simple enough: take an uncertain amount of ignorance, twice the amount of miscellaneous information; equal quantities of self-assertion, recklessness, and joke-making; a double proportion of imitateness; add

a seasoning of shrewdness, tact, and irreverence; mix, and you have the effervescence. If you have little else than effervescence, no matter; for who drinks champagne to be fed? You have had a palatable draught and are not athirst, you have tasted briskness and feel somewhat the brisker; presently, supposing no particular poison or surreptitious fusel to have gone to the compound, you are as you were before it passed your lips, no better but unrepenting.

Yet it may be questioned whether this literary champagne making and champagne drinking is a good thing for the world. The champagne makers might perhaps be using their ingenuity to more edifying purpose, the champagne drinkers might undoubtedly be employing their appetites more nutritiously. Admitting that a beverage is in itself innocuous, it does harm by the mere fact of the substitution, if it takes the place of muscle-making food; and, beyond that, if it does take the place of muscle-making food, it ends by enervating the digestion for it and creating not merely a distaste but an incapacity. People who grow into the habit of reading without tasting, of swallowing a sweet and sapid froth which leaves no after-trace on the palate, will not attempt severer flavours and the tonic zests of vigorous writers. You might as well try to feed a butterfly on beef-steak as to get them to spend their minds on a book which asks them to understand it if they would enjoy it, and to think about it before they admire. They must have nothing which can tempt them to skip, and nothing which, if the fancy takes them to skip, can lose importantly by the process. For them the poet is not merely to make his meaning intelligible to the ordinarily intelligent—which poets must do, on penalty of becoming obsolete with the ancient oracles, as irrelevant in an age too much in a hurry for guessing—but his meaning must be so self-evident and familiar as not to demand the exertion of any intelligence at all. The novelist must stimulate curiosity, but must not demand consideration; if he wants reflections he must make them himself, and, if he is judicious, he puts them in a detached and garnishing manner, so

that they form creditable adornments and give an idea of finish without getting in any way mixed up with the story. He may intersperse classical and mythological allusions, for nobody minds them, they are only scintillating bubbles which brighten the whole and compel no separate attention; he may quote in unknown tongues from unknowable authors, and may make his characters vary their conversation through four or five modern languages as if they were incarnations of Murray's Travel-talk, for nobody need be at the trouble of construing and one foreign remark does as well for flavouring as another; he may even write with a purpose, for a purpose is a who-runs-may-read sort of sign-post, and gives the reader no trouble. But he must not in any way require the employment of fatiguing faculties; his work must be a substitute for thought and imagination, not a promoter of them.

As to the historian, his office as caterer for the champagne drinkers of literature is chiefly to resemble their novelists as much as he can. Facts get in his way and limit his plot, but, on the other hand, he has more space than the novelist for effective amplification, and his imagination may riot unchecked in description, while his right to be readable and his duty to be instructive warrant him in any amount of time-honoured and humorous reflection.

When he finds himself getting dull from the political nature of his theme he must break the monotony by a sudden skittishness and sarcasm, an irrepressible liveliness, as of champagne with the froth off spurting up again when stirred by a piece of bread; and, where there has been too long a spell of mere battles and sieges and military manœuvres, and the unstrategical mind is likely to weary of so much war to so little romance, he must, if there be still no dramatic incident to hand, resort to general pathos and remind his readers of the silence and coldness of the slain on the battle-field at night and the tears of the young wives and unconscious babes at home. Yet with all his ingenuity, let him be never so startling and never so platitudinarian, never so pictorial, never so

pathetic, never so witty, never so pretty, let him be the very froth and cream of champagne, he will not enjoy the widest popularity. His distinguishing quality is against him: he is dry champagne (*absit verborum lusus*), and the sweet kinds are more favourite with his public. You cannot be an historian and quite leave out the history. And history is apt to get mixed up with dates and charters and treaties and other heavy matter repulsive to an unsophisticated taste.

But, if the historian loses by his themes, the essayist has no like hindrance from his. It is proper and intellectual to read essays; the occupation has on a week-day the same sort of virtuousness as there is in that of reading sermons on a Sunday, and it offers besides an evidence of the possession of a cultivated and well-balanced mind. And, as there is no reason in the nature of things that an essayist should say anything one need stop to think about in the reading or remember when read, an essay on quite a profound subject may be as unexacting a pastime as a novel. If you want champagne literature combined with a consciousness—on *your* part, for whether the essayist has or has not a similar consciousness is immaterial to the argument—a consciousness of intelligence and goodness, you can find to your purpose essays on Heaven, Earth, Hell, Virtue, Vice, Church-going, Spirit-rapping, Rouge, Modesty, The Fine Arts, Shakespeare, and The Musical Glasses, which will fulfil every condition of the laziest student and of the most zealous disciple of names. You can have your champagne, gooseberry or otherwise, and call it, if you will, communion wine.

Will much of it be good for you? That is another matter.

THE NOVEL-MAKING TRADE.

FEW modern inventions have had a more sudden and supreme career than light literature. It has multiplied and gone everywhere, like the railroad; and has made opposition an anachronism, like machinery. We are so used to it as one of the chief concomitants of life that we can hardly appreciate its influence: but we may partly do so if we set ourselves to try to conceive it non-existent, to try to imagine a world without a Mudie. And yet there was such a world. And what a very little while ago!

Much might here be said historically and critically about light literature; but many have said the much already, and the humbler aim of this paper is to say a few words about its remarkable result on women's labour. Before this invention women rarely wrote. As a rule they could not. As a rule, if they could, they might not. Some did, of course, in an exceptional fashion; so some women are taller than the average inches of men, and, although they may receive the consent of society, or even its beatification as "fine women," there is always an uneasy kind of feeling concerning these "daughters of the gods, divinely tall"—a feeling which even their genuine admirers cannot wholly repress—as if there were something not quite satisfactory morally in their stature, a sort of doing something scarcely in accordance with the strictest feminine refinement and the marriage service of the Church of England. Some women wrote, but to write

was not a woman's calling; those who exercised it were able to do so by a peculiar gift or peculiar defect, as opinions might go, and their thus employing themselves was oftener than not looked on as at best a dereliction pardonable by its success. Women who are in any way, mental or bodily, more than feminine run the risk of being therefore accounted also less than feminine; and, in the days here spoken of, sagacious parents, looking to it that their girls should get through the world in pleasant renown, discouraged all literary aspirations as indiscretions calculated to lower them in the esteem of the society they frequented; while the dangers and unseemly vanity of a woman's indulging in intellectual ability were a favourite theme of composers of guide-books to the feminine virtues.

But the developement of light literature has changed all that. It has had, but in a much larger degree, the same sort of effect as the introduction of the sewing-machine in the tailoring trade, which is said to have led to the employment of so many female hands. Women are its chief manufacturers. Its production is so distinctly looked upon as one of the trades properly belonging to them that it is a mere commonplace of argument to point out, in refuting pleas *ad misericordiam* for their admission to the remunerative professions, that, if they cannot get places as governesses, there still remain to them two perfectly open and feminine careers as sick-nurses and as novelists; and, moreover, when names of well-known women who have spent money in the former capacity or earned it in the latter are arrayed in proof of the wide possibilities offered the unprotected female by either career, the novelists to the nurses are in number as doctors to poets by profession.

It is coming to be understood that sick-nursing is at once a gift of grace and an art to be learned, and that not every lady is qualified for it by being a lady and penniless; also that, if she is a lady and penniless, a profession by which she can hope to earn, provided she becomes proficient and can get the best places, not much less than a lady's-maid's wages without perquisites, may

not supply all she needs a calling for—if she needs it, that is, as a calling in the common sense and not a saint's vocation—and that, from this point of view, this employment, of late years so frequently re-discovered for women asking for work, has too much the character of a luxury for those with ill-filled purses to afford it; also that sick-nurses' situations, with or without salaries, are not always to be had for the asking by untrained candidates. Altogether this career is not so unlimitedly open to ladies with livelihoods to learn as has been assumed, and we may expect some day before long to find the notion that being a sick-nurse could be classed with being a governess or writing novels as an alternative profession for gentlewomen of limited education looked on as of too obsolete an ignorance to be treated seriously. On the other hand the novelist's career really does exist for the women to whom it is proposed; it is undeniably a "woman's sphere"—that is to say a place a woman can fill without any money or any pains having been spent in preparing her for it—and, more than that, unlike "women's spheres" generally, it is one in which money can be made. Therefore, in those upper middle-class families whence novels chiefly come, women of all ages, no matter what may have been their habits and their tastes, their studies or no studies, their experiences or no experiences, when they find themselves compelled to do something for bread, take to literature much as their sisters of the working-classes set up a mangle.

It is not strange that women should thus rush into the one remunerative profession available: it is not strange that many of them should find in it only disappointment and failure: what is strange is that so many of them succeed in it. A somewhat ignorant person, little acquainted with society, less with practical life, encompassed with the most uneventful responsibility, nurtured on commonplaces and chronicles of small beer, with only poverty for muse and hopes for qualification, sits down to write a novel—and writes it successfully. Her book has the first great requisite—the requisite which wiser and wittier than she have often missed—it is

readable. Her plot fulfils its purpose; it keeps the reader intent, and always just about to guess, but never having guessed too surely, and arranges the necessary convolutions of crimes and secrets with just sufficient intricacy to entice, not weary, curiosity; or it offers scope for observant depiction of the Mayfair world in town and out of town, or for an ingeniously varied succession of love-scenes and divine despairs. Her heroes may sometimes present an unconvincing appearance, as of puppets spasmodically jerked—chiefly in consequence of their stupendous knowledge of the world and obtrusively masculine morals—but her heroines always behave properly, which to be sure may sometimes mean improperly from an un-novelistic point of view, and present themselves as personalities for the nonce, even if a critical inspection should discern them impossible. She has not a chapter's difficulty in acquiring the customary methods: she can button-hole her reader with asides and jointly confess his faults, sprinkling her pages with the *peccavimus* and *tu quoque* salt that once had the savour of Thackeray; she can point her sentences with pathetic epigrams and pungent platitudes, and weight them with philosophic musings; she develops a tom-tit-like aptitude for snatching up shreds and hairs of unassorted learning, and weaving them in to line her work. And there is nothing intermittent about her capability; unless outward and physical hindrances intervene, she can always rely on herself for three volumes, one off and the other on. Writing without the impulses and the efforts of genius, and without the deliberation and cancelling second thoughts of learning, she has her faculty always at her will, and whatever she has done she can do.

No theory is necessary or possible to account for a Miss Austen, a Currer Bell, a George Eliot; but it does seem as if there must be some common causes discoverable for the very general ability of but ordinarily gifted women to produce novels when necessary. One such cause immediately suggests itself in the paucity of active interests and of occupations requiring complete mental attention in their normal home lives. The mind, less

busy than the fingers, and with no engrossing themes, habitually "takes notice," as nurses say, and in time becomes possessed of a collection of minor facts of description and inferences which, purposeless heretofore, find their purpose when the novel has to be written; in the absence of events trifling incidents take importance, they are speculated about, analysed, looked at through and through and all round, the effects, direct or indirect, which they have or might have on affairs of more moment are more than amply recognised, and there is thus efficient, though unconscious, preparation for that use of minor episodes and sequences of the little causes from which great events spring which is the main difference between the novelist's and the newspaper reporter's way of telling a story. Yet, on second thoughts, one objects against this explanation that, if it be true, we must expect that women would make their novels photographs of homes and social circles as known to themselves, that they would put out their strength essentially in treatment of manners and character, and that their chief requirement in the matter of plot would be getting the right proportion and arrangement of Misters and Misses for entanglements and matrimonial *dénouements*, that the type they would instinctively assume would be Miss Austen's and hers the model they would deliberately imitate. Then come third thoughts, said to be wiser than second, and the answer is made that the same habit of mind which exercises itself on real surroundings will exercise itself on unreal—on the events presented to it by novels. People with plenty to occupy them read a novel and have done with it, but, with unaccentuated lives and brains at leisure, the last-read novel is as continuing a theme for recollection and the vague brooding that goes to the click of the needle, until the next novel is begun, as is the last piece of news till the next arrives. The more confined is the world of the unoccupied woman—or rather of the semi-occupied woman, for no woman submits to doing nothing at all—the wider is pretty sure to be her experience of the novelist's world; and, let her have never so little creative imagination, she has

reproductive imagination enough to find new combinations of characters and circumstances with which, no matter how exceptional and even impossible they may be, she is for practical purposes as much at home as she is with the material existence around her. Thus, although the woman who starts a new style of novel must possess genius, or at the least a special aptitude proper to herself, another with only fair natural abilities and a fluent pen can supply popular demand for the style with a not saliently inferior article.

Perhaps too many novels are made: it may be true that they would be better if, generally speaking, each author wrote fewer, and if some authors wrote none. But women must live. And instead of saying one word intended to injure a trade which affords a maintenance to so many industrious persons who would otherwise have at best the opportunity of earning the barest pittance, every conscientious man should make it his duty to read, or at all events to get from his circulating library, not less than one three-volume novel a week.

COMPANIONS.

IN spite of high authority highly confirmed, it must be admitted that there are some persons who, not being "either a beast or a god," yet delight much in solitude. There are persons to whom solitude is not merely the absence of interruption—an aspect in which all who have mental work to do must needs find convenience in it if not delight—but in itself an enjoyment: it is to them a luxury not to be measured by its use, but with its own completion in it, like the scent of flowers. Such an appreciation of solitude need not involve a dislike to society; it may be co-existent with even a strong taste for gregarious amusements. Each of the two contrasted forms of pleasure is such a repose from the other as leaves the mind fresh to return to the other as if to something new. Yet it must be owned that the balance is not unapt to get disturbed, and he who begins by indulging in solitude as but a various recreation may come to be so unwise a lover of it as to be unable to take a genuine pleasure in any other.

But liking solitude is quite a different thing from liking to be companionless. Indeed, it is probable that the charm of solitude is so much in the comradeship with things without speech that only those who are alive to this comradeship come under its influence. If you are of so sociable a nature that a green thing growing in a pot is a presence to you, a creature with a personality, your solitude alone with it is less than that of a lover of inter-

course with his kind at a crowded evening party where music flows on and talking is forbidden. There is, however, another comradeship which, though less distinctly, scarcely less really makes solitude sociable, and that is the existence of companions somewhere or other. One is not telling oneself, "There are such and such persons with whom an exchange of ideas is pleasant to me, and with whom I can presently—to-morrow—next year—in ten years' time—exchange ideas;" but, in the miscellaneous receptacle called mind, the consciousness of any fact personally affecting us is always within vision, even when not consciously looked at, and it must always be producing its effect upon us in much such a way as do material objects of which our sight is cognisant although we are giving them no heed. The knowledge that we have companions is company in itself, and that when the companions are not in any way being thought upon. We possess our friends as we miss them, not only while in reality or in thought we are with them or might have been, but while our perceptions are busy with matters in which they have no part, and memory is not advisedly aware of them at all. The solitude of an Alexander Selkirk, a Timon, a Prisoner of Chillon, is of a completeness unknown to that of the occasional solitudinarian, not merely because of its duration but because the occasional solitudinarian is not genuinely alone from his fellow-men; there is a presence of them with him all the while he is by himself forgetting them.

There are people, however—among women most, but many among men—who look on the merely being by oneself for more than an odd ten minutes or so as a melancholy event taxing the powers of human resignation to the full. For them no society can be so uncongenial as not to be better than none; they would ask Ate herself to come and spend an evening with them rather than get through it alone, and would prefer the escort of the Old Man of the Sea to taking a walk unaccompanied. And, while for themselves they will undergo any affliction of companionship rather than the affliction of solitude, their commiseration for anyone who has had to endure to be

alone is as great as if he had suffered some serious deprivation. To have your working time made empty with chatter they will not dream of counting your misfortune; but for having no one near you to chatter they will mete you out lavish measure of their kindest pity. They cannot understand that for any occupation the mind should need temporary isolation; still less that it should desire it as a form of rest. They will out of true charity offer the sick and the sorry, the weary, the busy, to "sit with them and keep them company." And they will herd in the public rooms of hotels with people they never saw before and have no desire ever to see again, and churn small-talk by the hour, and be content, for they are not alone. They have preferences, of course, and choose their society when they can, but the seeing any faces, the hearing any words, gives them satisfaction in its degree: and so much the better, for, if the people who cannot bear to be without company could never be appeased with less than real companionship, they would have had a hungry life of it.

Real companionship is rare—rarer than it need be if our manners did not impose a tone of sprightly banality and polite indifference on all conversation except among the most closely intimate, and even to a considerable extent among them. We may meet acquaintances time after time, till the frequency takes the name of friendship, and there may be a fairly pleasurable intercourse between us; and yet, unless some unwonted circumstance occurs to bring us into contact in a new way, outside the established courtesies, we may be quite unaware of the natural fellowship there exists between them and us. The sympathy we want goes past us looking for someone to sympathise with, and we have seen no indications of its possibility. It is wonderful how little we see of each other in society. Of ninety-nine out of a hundred of the acquaintances of whom we are perfectly able to say whether or no they are wise, witty, tolerant, obliging, and so on—for we have been with them often enough to have had opportunities for judging of all this—we yet cannot say in the least what really are their humours and their

tastes, by what principles they live or wish to live, in what directions lie their ambitions, what are their genuine enjoyments. We know what they are in society, we may perhaps have means of knowing what they are in the serious concerns of life; we can pronounce that they are agreeable and that they are estimable, but whether they are companionable—what would be companionable to us, for the quality is strictly a relative one—is barely a matter of guesswork.

It is not because an individual has all the virtues you revere and all the mental gifts you admire that he or she must necessarily be companionable for you—not even taking it that you, on your side, possess all the corresponding qualities for impressing him or her. There is a something more wanted between you—the something like the yolk of egg in the cooking recipes, the *liaison*, as French cooks call it, which brings the other ingredients into harmonious cohesion. The something is not necessarily sympathy, in the sense of unity of feeling, for it may happen that a person from whose closest convictions we differ on a hundred points is truly a companion, and that another with whom our talk might be all “dittos” and “amens” could never be more to us than any other respectable unit going to make up the sum of society. It might be described as a concord of moods and inclinations; only that would be rather a superfine way of saying that it means that people suit each other.

The surest mark of the real companion is not that conversation with him is congenial—though he would be no companion at all if it were not so—but that you can be silent together. So long as there is a sense that there must be talking for talking's sake, by way of a civil demonstration of interest in each other, true companionship has not been reached. When people talk to each other from the impulse of what they want to say, and not because they ought, and when they are without any feeling as if silence kept them apart, their fellowship is sure. Of course silence does not here mean muteness of the mind as well as of the tongue; otherwise anybody with a highly cultivated habit of going to sleep would be

a cheering companion. And of course it does not mean mere taciturnity, the habit of neglecting to speak, nor indifference. It is intelligent silence, the postscript and the prelude of unfettered conversations—sociable silence, in itself confidential, silence *together*—which is the peculiar property of companionship. You can talk, one way or another, with anybody; but you must have luck indeed if there are over half-a-dozen people in the world with whom you can be silent.

It is conceivable that there should be even this utmost completeness of companionship without a strength of regard which could properly be called affection; though most people's experience connects it with some affection of relationship or close intimacy. And it is certain that the most genuine affection cannot alone create that affinity which, for want of a better word, must be called companionability. The love we have for the brother or the sister who has become to us in creed or conduct as a heathen man and a publican, with whom we have no thought or inclination in common, may remain in us one of our strongest feelings, and meanwhile someone who does not arouse in us more than a pleasurable goodwill and that sort of good-tempered gratitude we feel to those who make any part of our time acceptable to us is a companion indeed. It is even pretty generally believed that many a loving and irreproachable husband finds companionship in any mere male acquaintance who can talk newspapers, and perchance literature or turnips, or whatever his hobby may be to him, which—though the Women's Education women and the Women's Suffrage women foretell better things as imminent—is wanting to him in the wife who is, nevertheless, the most cherished thing in his heart. We must take life as we find it, and, if, as our strongest poet ironically suggests, there is not always liking with love, still less is there always the fellowship of congenially assorted minds. But life has its best for those whose luck is to find the liking with the love, the companionship with the intimacy.

YOKE-FELLOWS.

ONCE upon a time, in a Suffolk village, Bill and Jane, George and Martha—if those were not their names they might have been—went to the parish church on a Monday morning to get married. Clergyman and clerk were ready to the appointed hour, and the wedding service went on satisfactorily till the clergyman, joining the hands of the first couple as they stood where the clerk had bidden them, began, “I, William, take thee, Martha.” “No, sir,” interrupted William, “mine is Jane.” “It’s me, sir, for George,” said Martha. The clerk affirmed that his sorting was right and that Bill and Martha, George and Jane, had to be respectively joined in holy matrimony. The young people protested; the clergyman shut the book. For the banns had got mixed, and there must be three new “askings in church,” with the right names coupled, before the marriages could take place. So the disappointed bridegrooms and brides withdrew to the churchyard and the clergyman went to the vestry to take off his surplice.

But, behold, before the clergyman had had time to go away, there were the brides and bridegrooms at the vestry door. “Please, would he be so good as to marry them the way the banns were?” They had talked it over together, they explained, and they had settled it would do just as well that way. They were all friends, and came from the same hamlet; each young man could do equally well with either young woman, each young woman

could do equally well with either young man; they had come a long way and had had to get a holiday on purpose, and they did not want to have all the trouble over again. They should be just as happy with the exchange, they unanimously assured their pastor. So he put on his surplice again and went on at "I, William, take thee, Martha." And, true enough, the exchange did just as well.

Now, these were sagacious young people who judged themselves and life rightly. Marriage goes by choice—at least it generally does in this country—but then chance makes choice. There really is no reason why, in most of the marriages that take place between respectable persons of fairly decent tempers, another bridegroom or another bride would not have answered just as well. There is generally a certain romance about courtships and wedding; but generally it does not go deep. The gilt on the gingerbread does not last, and was never expected to last: the gingerbread is the important part of the matter, and the gilt but an embellishment which has to come away and let the substantial stuff be reached. So the superficial romance wears off and is not missed, and a wholesome, stodgy, affection is left for use. As soon as ordinary people have done getting married and being surprised at it, they recover from sentiment, as if it had been measles, and are safely restored to their normal matter-of-factness. What goodman and goodwife then need of each other is the performance of their respective shares in the business of family life and a reasonable good nature. And we need not think so badly of human nature as to suppose that the majority of persons with this ideal of marriage—that is to say, the majority of persons who marry—are not qualified to behave comfortably in the partnership with any partner, Martha as well as Jane, George as well as William.

Persons with higher requirements for happiness in marriage are, of course, harder to suit and more likely to be disappointed; but there is no need for taking them into consideration in this paper, which is not concerned with lovers in wedlock, nor with any sort of head and

heart companions, but with yoke-fellows — people in harness together with their jog-trot to do in step.

Usually, dull couples get on together the most affectionately. For, though dull people like to be amused, they are not quick to discover that their lives are dull, and also they take each other's uninterestingness as a part of the natural order of things in this world, and are not conscious of a want. If, however, only one of the couple is dull, the cheerfulness of their lot is less assured, for the brisker partner is apt to feel a responsive animation his or her due and to feel the absence of it at once a wilful neglect and an incompetence, and the dull partner is apt to be suspicious of not being respected at his or her due worth. Two passionate people are more likely to achieve a mitigated harmony, with no mischief in its little agitations, even than one passionate and one submissive, for they keep each other within limits and so exchange lessons of self-control. A fretful person with a passionate one is a very unpromising arrangement; fretfulness does not awe passion, and is supremely irritating, while passion gives fretfulness the desired and bitter grievance on which it feeds and sickens. Two nervous persons will infallibly vex each other's nervousness into a misery for each and both; but the harnessing a nervous with a phlegmatic person will drive the nervous partner to the extremes of the infirmity, and will develope in the phlegmatic partner the latent unamiable temper which, unless phlegm is sheer stupidity, is sure to be united to it. Nervous people, in fact, ought not to be yoke-fellows at all: if marriage fits them, it is in its more esoteric ideal. But, in saying this, reference is made only to nervousness as that irritability of physical, rather than mental, weakness which, though lessening intellectual strength, frequently goes with intellectual activity. Nervousness, as another name for ill-temper, cowardly agitations, or excitable silliness, is likely to be very inconvenient in yoke-fellowship, especially in the happily rarer cases of its being the attribute of the male partner; but, not being incurable, it is comparatively harmless where one of the partners is of a frankly good-tempered obtuseness.

But, be the tempers what they may, the great safety lies in the commingling of a secure affection with a certain healthy indifference—indifference is not a fair word for it, but the right one does not exist—which belongs to a respectable married life. Love, with the wooing left in it, is a sensitive and fault-finding passion, not wholly satisfied with its own sufficiency for deserving the return it desires, and keenly aware of coldness or rebuke. But love at its ease, as statutory affection with its reciprocal rights, content to have given and have got and have done with it, is a good-tempered purblind lumour that has nothing to desire and takes its response for granted. It is tolerant of shortcomings, for it does not perceive them, and misses no tenderesses, for it would be bored by them. It takes goodwill and loyalty as had for granted on both sides, and is content. It gives no trouble to anybody, and is there for use when wanted. It has Talleyrand's element of safety, "*point de zèle*," and so takes the good that comes and gives the good it may, without the mistakes of anxiety and the disappointments of enthusiasm.

When two people who, on the whole, think well of each other, and who are bound together by duty and common interests, like each other thus, genuinely but not to any disturbing extent, they rarely take to quarrelling for its own sake. They have no such need of each other as to be irritable for lack of attention and disposed to scold as the next thing to petting. And, if they do not quarrel out of goodwill, they have still less temptation to do so out of ill-will. Their quarrels will usually be on real grounds—about something in which their wishes are different and one of them must yield, something of which the decision involves a definite result. They will not flout and pout about mere lovers' wrongs, coldness and neglect and such undemonstrable omissions and commissions; their disputes will be more practical and will be easier to end, because there will be something to end them by.

It does not follow, however, that because disputes are on real grounds they should be on important grounds.

The questions which bring husband and wife, or other housemates, by the ears are not likely to be large ones, matters of faith or principle or of important acts where there is faith or principle to guide and conscience to be respected on either side. The issues that trouble domestic calm are on the details of the common life, trifles that cannot be left undecided, because something has to be done or left undone and the doing or leaving undone affects personal comfort or taste. If such differences of opinion as these did not arise, as they will do in every home, mere sedative goodwill would suffice for peace. But, to be sure, such peace might be, as Paley said, "mighty dull;" and quarrels on trifles, unless they are cumulative, do not leave great mischief behind them.

It is natural, in speaking of yoke-fellows, to refer specially to married people. But there are persons, spinster sisters for instance, no less linked together, although there is no law to enforce the bond. They are in more than couples sometimes, but the reciprocal influence on each other's comfort is, of course, less between three than between two in quite other than arithmetical proportion. They live together, not because they feel themselves companions by inclination and fitness, but because relationship or some other circumstance has thrown them together and kept them together, and they recognise the propriety of the arrangement. Such unions are often practically quite as indissoluble as the bond between man and wife; and in them too one constantly sees, with the same no reason in particular that each of the yoke-fellows should not have been as happy with any other, the success of the arrangement in bringing about all the advantages that could have been appreciated. The wonder is, not that yoke-fellows bicker sometimes, but that they get on so well together usually; and, whatever affection may be deeper or higher, there seems to be certainly none more honest in the wear than the liking by habit of yoke-fellows—husband and wife, sisters, or however joined.

SAINT OPPORTUNE.

Who was Saint Opportune? Her name sanctifies a street in Poitiers; but whether it is honoured anywhere else this investigator knoweth not. Nothing even there offers any indication of the character and career of this unobtrusive saint; the sole superscription is her name. But the name is enough; we know her history in it. It is the epitome of her virtues, her charter of beatification. No one can look on it and not henceforth hold her in affectionate reverence, longing after her as Numa after his Egeria, quoting the two words "Saint Opportune" as in themselves an oracle and an inspiration. Evidently the life of so unmistakeable a saint ought to be generally known; but it is not.

Thinking of late over the merits she must have displayed and the miracles she must have wrought, this investigator resolved to trace her course through the world she came to edify, and, in lack of chronicles and memoirs less accessible than could be wished, by reason of the investigator's not knowing where to look for them, to rely upon the circumstantial evidence. The task, with such ample material, has not been difficult; the results are incontrovertible.

St. Opportune was, of course, not a martyr. So much is certain from the outset. In her days anybody could have been that, and her grace was an exceptional one. Martyrdom implies that the martyr is unacceptable to the ruling party, and St. Opportune was in all things always

acceptable. She not only did nothing amiss, but she did nothing that seemed amiss, and she passed an existence of honourable safety secured by the confidence and goodwill of all classes of her fellow-citizens. Her life was not eventful: events generally happen to people who are thinking of something else, and she was never unaware of what was going on around her. Nor did she perform many noticeable miracles, her miraculous efficaciousness being of so equal and permanent a nature as to repress in the birth such emergencies as might have called for its open manifestation. Nor does she appear at any time to have practised a rigorous asceticism. Indeed, she once narrowly missed incurring the reproach of heresy for advising some pious women under her charge to be less punctilious in abstinence from the outward application of water, "for if your savour of a sweet righteousness shall seem sour to the noses of the heathen, and if the intact innocence of your skins shall seem griminess to their sight, who knows but they may withdraw themselves from reach of your seasonable words." Already one of her hearers, an austere virgin advanced in sanctity and of an ardent zeal for doctrines, had sprung to her feet, half choked with wrath, and was about to burst into denunciations, when St. Opportune passed on to an exquisite eulogy of that very abstinence—in the desert—and her description so moved the heart of her intending opponent that, bursting into tears of ecstasy, she rushed from the room and hastened to a distant wilderness, from which she never returned.

St. Opportune was the eldest child of wealthy parents, who, however, though of established position, were not possessed of hereditary nobility. Their union was childless for some years, during which they led a life of festivity in the capital; but, the husband having grown stout and indolent and the wife having become aware of severe diminution in her personal charms, they arrived at a preference for the healthful calm of country retirement and the undisturbed enjoyment of each other's society. After a while, however, the attached pair began to find themselves very dull, and, in consequence, quarrels were

becoming frequent between them; it was time for them to have something to occupy their thoughts, and the infant Opportune presented herself. The exact date of her birth is uncertain, except that it was in the summer. By being born at this favourable time of year the gracious infant escaped the risk of early chills, and was through her life free from the disappointing birthdays familiar to children who, having to keep those anniversaries in the bad-weather months, are always seeing some expedition or treat promised for the day prevented by the unfestive elements, and later to married persons of her sex, whose husbands are too wont, if stated epochs for those affectionate gifts which reward a wife's devotion fall too near together, to subtract one tribute from the other and, disregarding the birthday for the Christmas and the Christmas for the birthday gift, to reduce each to insignificance on account of the other and perhaps end by eliminating both.

Her childhood was unobtrusive, and there is little record of it. The only anecdote told of her occurs incidentally in a description of the inconvenient high spirits and communicativeness of her brothers and sisters. A venerable relation, a celibate woman of much wealth, whom their parents greatly honoured, having remained some weeks on a visit to these her dear kinsfolk, was distributing farewell presents in the nursery, on the eve of her departure, when one prating urchin remarked to her, "Mama says old Cackle-goose really is going to give her a holiday at last," and the others immediately followed in a chorus with "Do you know who papa and mama call old Cackle-goose?" At that moment Opportune entered the room with a melon, a fruit of which the ancient lady was ravenously fond, and of which her benevolence induced her to give some slices to the children. Had the conversation proceeded one moment longer, an irretrievable revelation would have been made, and those inappropriate brothers and sisters of the youthful saint would have paid dear for their sprightliness. Opportune herself never said, or even overheard, the wrong things. Though of a judicious and prompt intelligence, she was, when not.

required, somewhat absent in mind, and, engaged in her own pursuits, took no note of the conversation of her elders. Indeed, as a child, she was slightly deaf; but her form of deafness being that which aurists describe as existing only so far as the attention is not aroused and being compatible with perfect hearing when the deaf person is addressed, the ailment was not felt to disparage her. She was always at hand, and was never in the way. She spoke little of her own accord, though when spoken to she was ever ready with an apt and modest reply and could easily be brought to converse, which she did with an artless acuteness infinitely refreshing to observe. Her mental and her bodily growth were so just and equal that her teachers could calculate beforehand the precise length of time at which she would have effectually completed any given course of study and be ready to begin the next, and the persons in charge of her wardrobe could in like manner ascertain accurately what length of garments she would require next while those she was wearing were still new and seemly, and could rely on her fitting inside them for the due time of their lasting. So that, the inward nature and the outward material being always in co-ordination, the clothing for her mind and for her limbs seemed at all times rightly measured to her immediate needs, and, as she neither lagged behind her teachers' hopes nor prematurely outshot their skill, so did she never appear as if having lost her way inside her next year's clothes, or with an excess of progressive wrists and legs.

She had none but the necessary illnesses, and those but just perceptibly—except on one occasion—and such illnesses took place at desirable times, occurring not only in good weather for convalescence but so as to fit in with an eligible change of air for the family, or just when her mother must otherwise have suffered some serious social recreation. In her babyhood, if her mother did not want to go anywhere and had no excuse to prefer, the blessed child would always have teething; but under ordinary circumstances her teeth popped up without preliminary, like stars in the evening sky. The rare instances of her cry-

ing were always when tedious visitors were unconsciously keeping dinner waiting or in some other way making their taking leave to be wished. The one occasion referred to on which she had an illness she might safely have gone without, seemed at first to be a complete departure from her habits; her parents were proudly expecting the honour of a visit from the Governor of the Province, and nourishing well-founded hopes that, in gratitude for the magnificent splendour of his reception, he would use his favour with the Emperor to procure his host a coveted office then vacant, and Opportune took that moment to have scarlet fever, or the corresponding contagious disorder of the epoch. The Governor paid the visit instead to the owner of the next estate on the route of his state progress—a rival candidate for preferment. The faith of the parents was clouded; they believed that the mysterious virtue of the supernaturally endowed child was but a delusion, or at best a temporary and now departed gift, and they were tempted to reproach her with the destruction of their hopes. But before the young saint had recovered, which she did with marvellous celerity and without communicating the disease to anyone, the Emperor's orders had arrived; the Governor, the trusted idolised favourite, had been beheaded, and the rival candidate, involved in the ruin of his guest, held to be proved an accomplice in his treason by the glowing recommendation which was given to reward his hospitality, was hiding in thickets and swamps. Opportune's father got the post.

In like timely and adaptable manner with the proportions of her body did the singular virtues of the young saint continue a seemly growth and arrange themselves to her age, so that there was never noted in her the harshness and hesitation of change, but her passage from childhood to the period of marriageable manners was of an impalpable steadfastness, like the blowing of a violet, which needs not to struggle from a concealing sheath, as the vehement daffodil, nor is suddenly transfigured from bud to flower, as the assured and conscious rose, but alters only from its unfolding to its unfolded self.

There emanated from her an inspired unobtrusiveness peculiar to herself and yet undistinguishable in its nature, which no mere human sense could apprehend to imitate it, nor even to express it in words. It was said of her that she was a girl about whom it was remarkable that she never was remarked; and a local poet, desirous of including her eulogy in an ode in which he recounted the perfections of the admirable maidens of the neighbourhood, had to describe her merits by so many *nots* that a profound critic to whom he submitted the work convinced him that the picture would be yet more complete and resembling by its total omission. Everything she wore became her unobtrusively; everything she did succeeded sedately. She was never known to desire ambitiously, nor to fail in any desire. If she set a seed it came up at the seasonable time; if she went out in her third-best garments and bad-weather wraps, it rained, or at the least continued to threaten rain; if she joined a pic-nic party the sun never failed to shine.

In person she was of an agreeable beauty, not excessive at first sight but more apparent to those who beheld her constantly. She was considerably above the middle height of women, being always able to reach down things from topmost shelves and pegs; but a modest stoop, natural to her, made her look shorter than she was. She was of a mirthful disposition, but easily moved to tears and prompt to share sorrows. She was fond of hearing discourse and took great pleasure in observing skill of all kinds, but was indisposed for her own part to the practice of accomplishments. At need she could perceive a joke, but she made none. She joined little in such amusements as most young girls are eager for, taking more pleasure in seeing others whirl with their partners in the dance, or sport with them at outdoor games, than in personally sharing in the pastime.

So greatly did her family esteem her virtues that they openly regarded them as a distinct manifestation of the design of Providence for her withdrawal from the world, thus giving to heaven the dower of her sanctity, and to them that dower of earthly coins which her marriage

would require. Yet, to their infinite amazement, Opportune held back. Her eldest brother was so shocked at this strange indifference to her higher destinies and his own that he would have had her at once compelled to follow so manifest a vocation ; but the father and mother, with a wiser faith, suspected in their supernaturally-endowed child's unlooked-for reluctance the promise of a better issue than they could prepare, and resolved to wait a while. Nor was their trust misplaced. They were at that time, for the sake of the education and establishment of their children, living in a house they possessed in the principal town of their province, a place of great concourse, to which many youthful nobles resorted at certain times of the year, and where St. Opportune might seem to run every risk of so choosing and being chosen as to fulfil her brother's apprehensions. But in this, as in all things, she was protected by her miraculous infallibility. One day, as she chanced to drop her kerchief in the street, a sudden puff of wind blew it before the feet of a horse, who, taking fright at its fluttering, shied and pranced dangerously. Opportune gave a faint shriek of horror, but the horse was ridden by an expert cavalier and the street was thronged with an aristocratic and fashionable population. The expert cavalier was filled with pleasurable emotions which resolved themselves into affection for the young girl to whom he, with admirable deftness, returned her kerchief. He was at that moment setting out, at the head of his retinue, on his departure from the town, but, changing his purpose, he turned his horse's steps and rode back to his lodgings, which were fortunately not yet let. The next day he waited on St. Opportune's parents and demanded her hand. He was a neighbour in the country, and an enemy ; he had never been able to forgive Opportune's father because a lady to whom they both were suitors in their early youth married someone else, and recently he had manifested his enduring ill-will by secretly outbidding him for a piece of ground which not only he but his predecessors for generations had had it at heart to obtain, on account of its jutting interruptingly into their estate. He was of great rank, he was very

wealthy, and he would accept his bride without a dower. But the parents were uneasy; they had spoken of Opportune as the destined bride of religion, how could they command her if she should hesitate to wed this most unthought-of suitor? They would have liked, at the least, to break his wooing to her apart, but they could ill refuse his request to have her summoned, and with heavy hearts they called her to the consultation. St. Opportune heard in silence and blushes, then, bidden answer, timidly but frankly avowed that her suitor's gallant horsemanship had won her young heart. The marriage treaty was at once concluded, and the gratified old gentleman made her father a wedding-present of the coveted piece of land.

St. Opportune's career as a wife was the perfect accomplishment of the highest auguries of her youth. No matter at what moment of unpunctuality her husband came in bent upon his dinner, whether a quarter of an hour before time or three-quarters of an hour behind, the soup was steaming ready in the tureen, the boiled fish firm and flaky or the fried fish at the evanescent perfect phase of crispness, the joint done to a turn as he liked it, the entrées at their harmonious prime, nothing soddened, nothing hurried, all ready and right with no too much and no too little, according to the variable standard of the tastes of the master of the house. If her husband brought home friends to dinner, she unforewarned, there was to the fore without one moment's delay an exquisite dainty banquet nicely fitted to the number and humour of the guests and the host; if he came home in an economical mood and a moderate appetite, his dinner came before him in a chastened and refined cheapness, just enough for him without too much for anybody else, everything palatable and nothing betokening an ill-timed lavishness. If he was inclined for conversation, her ready ears were glad; if he wished for the calm repose of music, her fingers were fluent on the instrument while he dozed; if he displayed learning, she was proud of it and only wished she had been better gifted to understand; if he displayed ignorance, she never discovered it and was yet the prouder. In all things she

was, as it were, his shadow made feminine, and her thought to-day was that which he had said yesterday or would say to-morrow. Only, because the frailty of human womanhood takes long, even in so high a saint, to be utterly purged away, she owned on her deathbed that she had taken it amiss that her husband ever most praised and most served such women as were least inclined to those virtues and humilities which he approved and which, therefore, she most possessed. Yet did she never so much as perceive this righteous severity, as of a man not too obsequious to his own beliefs, in her husband, until her perceiving mattered nothing to him, nor avow it except in repentance in her extreme hours, when, that her innocence save in this might be the more clearly known and for the warning of saintly women against her fault, it was good that her only, yet much and needfully lamented, shortcoming should be revealed.

She bore no child: a thing much to be regretted, for the worthiness of her example as mother might have been singularly profitable to women in these days; and who so fitly would have shown the valuable submissiveness desired of mothers-in-law? But the world was not worthy of her child. No second woman such as she was needed, for she, as patroness and pattern, had in her all completion of woman's holiness; and for such a man men are content to wait.

Her withdrawal into a convent was of a piece with her whole life in its singular and miraculous fitness. Her husband, whose third wife she was, had a dislike to excess of maturity in women and much loathed the writing of it on the face in wrinkles; and she was beginning to show a wrinkled forehead. He had seen a damsel of pleasing aspect who reminded him of her in her fairer days. It was just then that St. Opportune felt, what all had foreseen, her irrepressible vocation for the convent. Her husband remonstrated; she wept and obeyed. But he saw her secret sorrow, her wasting, her pallor; he offered her her freedom. It was her truest desire, and she hailed his gift with joy. She took the veil, and he married the young girl who was like what she had been.

She did not live long in the cloister. A neighbouring convent lost a nun of great sanctity, who on her burial began working miracles. St. Opportune's convent, till then the leading one in those parts, was much mortified but saw no remedy. St. Opportune at once died and instantly worked a miracle. What that miracle was this investigator has failed to discover; but it restored the convent to its former supremacy and proved to all after ages the right of St. Opportune to beatification. It was of her that it was said, "*Tu vero felix non vitæ tantum opportunitate: sed etiam opportunitate mortis,*" and this was the inscription on her hallowed tomb.

IMAGINATION.

IMAGINATION is the wings of the mind. But then a good many practical people hold that the mind is a bird which ought not to fly. It should exercise itself sedately, they think, within comfortable bounds, with its feet safe on well-known ground, like the unvolatile barn-door fowl. They will consent to exceptions, birds of Paradise known as geniuses, who, having, as they surmise, no legs to stand upon, must needs fly ; but, rationally enough, they decline to base their theories upon exceptions ; birds of Paradise, they say, since they must fly, may, but birds with legs should walk, and the only question is whether wings, being a temptation, should not be kept clipped. They are inclined to look upon imagination as a merely accidental quality, for which there is no need in ordinary education and no employment in ordinary life, which can be got rid of, and, because of the risks attending its unrestrained indulgence, ought to be got rid of.

But imagination is not an impulse or a habit which can be conquered by avoidance ; it is a mental necessity which cannot be avoided. It is as essential a faculty of the human intellect as memory, and while, like memory, it can be degraded by misuse and dulled by disuse, it can less be disused than memory, since, though we may get on without conscious reference to the past, we cannot ignore the immediate future, the future of to-morrow or of the next five minutes, and the simplest forming a purpose involves conceiving something that has not

happened—that is, involves a distinct effort of the imagination. For imagination is merely the faculty which enables the mind, nay compels it, not simply to re-present to itself former conceptions (which re-presentation requires the assistance of memory), but to arrange them in fresh combinations. The combinations may be as varying and fantastic as the changes of figure of the bits of coloured glass in a kaleidoscope, yet, where the will does not actively intervene to control them, they will be obeying the secret law of the sequence of ideas just as the bits of coloured glass in the toy assume their apparent order by a principle apart from chance. They may deal with high themes and poetic visions, or with the humblest details of existence and the vicissitudes of the money market, but the faculty at work is the same. Whoever presents to his mind, or passively allows to pass through it, possibility of any kind, must imagine that possibility, and thus sentiments and ideas of the most humdrum nature may come within the province of imagination. It is evident, then, that we cannot crush out this faculty, that it inheres in every man, and can only die with him. It is not synonymous with romance or with genius: a Gradgrind possesses as much imagination as a Dickens, the difference lying not in quantity but in quality. You may say if you like, most respectable practical person: “I have learnt the folly of giving way to imagination, I despise poetry, I abhor fiction, I live only for facts,” but you cannot be declared free from imagination; it can but be praised in your case for its obedience to the laws of gravity in clinging pertinaciously to the earth when it might have soared to the skies. Sordidness itself cannot annihilate imagination: one can fancy no human being more imaginative than a miser.

The gradations in quality, however, are infinite. First there are those arising from individual constitution. Then there are the differences caused by education and local surroundings. Then the manner in which the events of his life influence each person's mind. And among persons of equal general power great varieties arise in this faculty from the different ways of associating

ideas. Every object must be regarded either as it exists in time or as it exists in space, and we cannot investigate it from both points at once. It has been pointed out that when "sensations which form the elements of knowledge" are received successively—as existing in time—our idea is that of an event, while the other method, of regarding the sensations we receive simultaneously—or as existing in space—gives us the idea of an object. Hence it is argued that the mind which pursues the former method will probably tend more to absolute science, while that which, from being more susceptible of vivid impressions, is prone to the latter method, will possess greater love of beauty and greater enthusiasm. This distinction at once points out different qualities of the imagination. The second method is more especially that of imaginative genius, or creative imagination, but is also that of many minds which, not possessing power of this creative kind, or possessing it but slightly, are yet able to enter fully into the spirit of poetic imagery. The difference between minds of this order and those possessed of imaginative genius appears to lie mainly in their seizing with less facility the hidden resemblances of dissimilar things, and thus failing in that power of vision which shows to the poet link upon link joining earth to heaven, high meanings to humble things. To enter into the spirit of the poet's conception it is only necessary that we should have the power of looking at subjects in the second or simultaneous manner. We must be able to perceive the analogies when hinted to us, and to complete for ourselves the unelaborated idea, for the poet cannot check his own ascent to point us out every link of the chain. He will carry us on after him if our eyes can trace out for ourselves the rainbow track he indicates, but otherwise his description will seem but vanity, a saying "Look!" when there is nothing.

Thus it is from no lack of intellect that so many cultivated minds can find no true enjoyment in poetry. Following from nature and habit the first method of connecting ideas—that of time—only, they overlook the subtler relations of analogy, they know no use and no

pleasure in dwelling on them. What poetry they read will be moral, didactic, emotional perhaps, but unadorned, never descriptive or metaphorical. They will read it for the sake of sentiments they have experienced or which they consider instructive, and, but for what satisfaction they derive from the musical cadence of verse—a question of ear, of course—they would enjoy far more the same sentiments expressed in prose. And there are some persons to whom all poetry is a weariness, however simple in style and subjective in matter, from the impassiveness of their nature. Persons not easily capable of strong feeling, not conscious of much mental fluctuation, will not find in emotional poetry even that echo of themselves, that something they have experienced or could have experienced, which is the charm by which poetry wins the unpoetical. Yet in any of these classes of unpoetical beings the imaginative faculty may be as strong as it is prosaic.

But, if it be true that imagination cannot be got rid of, the question of those many educationalists who puzzle themselves with asking whether and how they should abolish it from their pupils' minds meets with the negative of impossibility. What is left for them to do is to cultivate and train and trim it so as to get the best growth and fruit from it. It must have food of wholesome facts and of wholesome fiction too. All fresh knowledge enlarges its scope, for knowledge is its experience, and it is from experience that it draws its materials. And so far it cannot be original; there can be no absolute creation from any human mind. But between things known from experience, direct or indirect, analogies before unnoticed may be perceived, inferences may be drawn from them and personified or pictured, and thus there is the freshness of originality, although the facts may be known to all the world and long called commonplace. But nothing is commonplace except to commonplace people.

It is not excess of imagination that is dangerous, but defect of judgement. Judgement must be the prop to save the climbing plant not only from trailing itself on

the earth, but from spreading itself upwards and awry in straggling lavishness, weakening itself in tangles of leaves and aimless tendrils till it can bear no flowers. A sad thing is the morbid and artificial melancholy which the sickly-sensitive so often prize and parade as a high proof of high imagination. A sad thing is the life that gives itself up to dreams, and calls weakness strength, as if the misty purposelessness that too often mars genius were itself genius. But this is not to cultivate imagination, it is to leave it to run wild, to spend itself unmeaningly. In minds prone to this sort of error the true training is to cultivate energy, judgement, reason. In the lack of these qualities imagination may indeed become all-absorbing, because alone, but it is generally itself weak and trifling, flickering much but throwing light on nothing. It becomes itself a dream producing only most hazy dreams. No great work of imagination was ever performed by merely imaginative mind. Men do not dream immortal poems and pictures. And common sense will lend imagination greater strength than it could possibly have unaided ; all the more because it will check its exhausting itself in fruitless vagaries.

WORD-MEMORY.

“*La mémoire, ennemie presque irréconciliable du jugement,*” says Fontenelle; and this idea of the enmity between the faculty which retains and the faculty which compares and draws conclusions is one held, with more or less modification, by many thinkers on thought and, like very many such philosophic semi-truths, accepted as complete in the philosophy of the careless, and, filtering through the multitude of minds that take and transmit each other’s wisdom as it comes, has obtained all the limpid influence of a platitude. The gift of a good memory is frequently looked on less as an assistance to study than as a substitute for study: less as a helpful means of providing matter for reflection and inference than as a knack for dispensing with other intellectual effort than that which it renders trifling, the effort of reproducing words and statements just as they were received. And, thus looked on, it is no wonder that it should be reprehended by thinkers who perceive that the right training for the mind to its right final work should be a developement to action of its own and not to mere receptivity. A skill of remembering other men’s thoughts which should exclude our thinking thoughts of our own would be of about the same service to us as if we were possessed of the accomplishment of walking on stilts to such perfection that we could barely use our feet on the strangeness of the ground. The man who has a prodigious memory and all other brain faculties weak is

like a catalogue; he is good for purposes of reference, but of neither use nor pleasure otherwise. He has no wisdom but that of a copying-machine, to give back in duplicate what was put into him. His value will be more or less according to the subjects on which he has exercised his memory, but at best his use to himself and the world is transmission: he discovers nothing, he decides nothing, he creates nothing. A man absolutely uninformed but with a strong judgement and a capacity for original thought would be in every field his incomparable superior.

But, though this be true, is it also true that memory, "the purveyor of reason," is inimical to the higher rational faculties? Certainly memory sometimes, instead of being reason's purveyor, is only her own. But, if injudicious teachers make abuse of a ready faculty to the mischievous exclusion of a naturally tardier and more reluctant, or if a man who has preserved the facile and retentive memory of childhood indulges his bent without adding severer study, it does not show that the used and unused powers were contradictory, it only shows that not to use a power is injurious to it. If you choose never to use your right eye you may get it purblind, but that will be no proof that the possession and use of a left eye are of debilitating result upon the right. Or, since memory and judgement are not so entirely allied in their work as eye with eye—though indeed they are nearly so—one might make the simile of some other limb and say the purblind eye is no proof of the disadvantage of an active hand. The faculties of the mind are friendly and helps to each other, like those of the body; the development of one, far from in itself injuring that of another, only provides it with a more serviceable comrade. But it frequently happens, with mind as with body, that the zeal and the time given to develop one faculty bring about neglect of another, and, very naturally, it also happens that the faculty exercised is a dominant one, less needing to be called out, and that the faculty left in comparative disuse is ineffective, and the more needing to be practised and trained. If riding makes a man a bad walker it is

because he rides instead of walking: if he has time for both the strength gained by his riding exercise will strengthen his walking. And memory and judgement should both be given their strengthening—which can the better be done that it need not always be apart; there is little mental work, even of mere preparative schooling, in which they had not best go together.

There is another adverse way of regarding a good memory. It is often treated, not indeed as the cause of weak judgement, but as the mark of it. People cite you a fool of their acquaintance with a super-excellent memory and several wise men with notably bad ones. And, of course, they cannot cite you a fool of super-excellent judgement nor wise men inconsequent and shallow. On this want of negative reciprocity between memory and judgement they found their theory which, briefly, is that fools remember and wise men forget. The theory is one very commonly current—the stock instances of men with miraculous memories and high intellect being too few and too manifestly exceptional to have application against it—and there is nothing in it to make it unpopular, since those of us who have good memories can, while boasting the memory, meekly accept the civil inevitable supposition that they belong to the exceptional beings with intellects wide as the wide memory, and those of us who have bad memories are, for conversational purposes, *ipso facto* proved of admirable judgement. Yet it might be argued that fools with good memories would not be wise men without, but only fools unredeemed by the remembered wisdoms learned parrot fashion, that wise men without memories are the less for the missing wisdoms of others which they have not been able to garner into their storehouses. The men from whom ages learn are those who have remembered and who have thought.

Memory is the handmaid of thought. It first collects the materials, then in after days furbishes them. And handmaidens, though not above their mistresses, are very necessary for their mistresses' ease and well being. If the mistress has to do the handmaid's work she is the less free for her own, and probably the work the handmaid

should have done is the less efficiently fulfilled. Therefore memory should be encouraged to its best, not despised as a brainless drudge but trained to do its drudging diligently and with its own drudge prudence of the least labour to the best end. Much of its work is mere by rote cataloguing—mere lists of dates and terms and grammatical variations of affixes and prefixes. And these it is the fashion with many educationalists of the present day to despise. They have, however, their two-fold use. First of all, you can learn no science, no language, no series of events, without condescending to those unintelligent words and numbers which serve to mean so much when you afterwards find them as your familiar friends explaining in their right places all that surrounds them; next, the exercise of your memory upon them is of essential good to its growth. It is not so pleasant to “learn by heart” as to use your reason and guess your grammatical facts upon argumentative grounds—which by many is accounted the more philosophical process—but reasoning and argumentatively guessing about such arbitrary facts as conjugations and declensions is in the end a wearying and wasteful procedure; and he who can lightly trust his memory with the storing of words is the sooner able, master of mere words, to use his judgement in thorough interpretation. Undoubtedly nothing is well known that is not understood; but there is a way now of trying to make beginners, children especially, understand what they are to know—but on no account to know by word-memory—which makes one think that it ought in a similar way to be the right philosophy to let no child walk before it could soundly explain the anatomy of its legs and the muscular action involved in the movement, no baby begin to try its mother-tongue empirically. But in learning as in living “*mémoire et usage rendent l’homme sage*,” and what is acquired by rote may be doubly possessed by the reflection and comparison which that first crude verbal acquisition has made possible.

It has long been a question—centuries long indeed—whether the art of mnemonics is of true value in the

cultivation of memory. Many believe it to be of actual harm to the power, however it may serve, to those who can remember a mnemonical system sufficiently to keep practical use of its rules, as a prompter substitute. Bacon, making of it the common complaint that it does not fitly fulfil its purpose, defends it from the accusation of harm-doing. "It is certain," he says, "the art, as it is, may be raised to points of ostentation prodigious; but in use, as it is now managed, it is barren (not burdensome, nor dangerous to natural memory as is imagined, but barren), that is not dexterous to be applied to the serious use of business and occasions." If, however, a co-temporary system of mnemonics was what enabled Mr. Marvin to carry off in his head verbatim the contents of a long document, it looks as if the art could now be applied seriously enough to occasions. Yet the art seems in Bacon's day to have arrived at the results most boasted for it now, results such as the "repeating a great number of names or words on once hearing"—serviceable enough, one would think, if the repeating could remain a capability permanently and not be a matter of once, like the hearing. But the permanence is the question. Does Mr. Marvin know that document by heart still? If he does, the art which has given him that power gives a whole supplementary intellect; if not, it is, though accidentally serviceable, no more than, as Bacon esteems the mnemotechny of his day, equal to the "tricks of tumblers, funambuloes, baladines; the one being the same in the mind that the other is in the body, matters of strangeness without worthiness." In the former case we ought all to rush in hottest haste to the professor who can give us "the custody of knowledge;" in the latter we can, if we like, learn his mnemonics for purposes of "ostentation prodigious;" but there are a good many other ostentations which will do quite as well for us and not inflict so much tediousness on our friends.

HOME GOSSIP.

ALL virtuous persons condemn gossip. We all know that we ought not to pry into other people's affairs, and that, if the proper study of mankind be man, it is nevertheless not a study to be prosecuted by treating our visiting acquaintance as specimens for the moral microscope and displaying our powers of diagnosis at the expense of the confiding caller who has talked unwarily and gone; we know that, although we may not exactly live in a glass house, we do not want our neighbours to amuse themselves with throwing little pebbles at our windows, and our dislike to the possibility of the pastime with ourselves for its victims quickens our sense of its ignoble frivolity and its tendency to do mischief. We agree to class gossip as but little less degrading to its practisers than espionage, and we ridicule it as the theme of the ignorant. Perhaps we sometimes commit gossip ourselves; but when we do the lapse is accidental, our misfortune rather than our fault. It is difficult to distinguish absolutely where a readiness to hear and even to tell news about private events is a healthy sympathy with our neighbours and where it is mere intrusive tittle-tattle. We should not be human if we refused to take even a moment's passing interest in the lives of our neighbours, if we stopped our ears to tidings of Mr. This's promotion and Mr. That's bankruptcy, if we frowned down the relater of the happy engagement between Mr. Smith and Miss Brown, and severely diverted the

conversation to the Eastern Question when it began to turn upon the surprises of Mrs. Jones's new pigeon's-throat drawing-room or the despair of Captain Robinson at his regiment's being ordered abroad. An amount of reticence which should withhold us, on the ground that they were no business of ours, from commenting or conjecturing on these matters would be impossible to any sane mortal—perhaps would not even be desirable. And it must happen at times that even orthodox haters of gossip drift unawares over the hazy boundary between neighbourly news and busybody rumours and researches, and become for the nonce as heathen men and gossip-mongers. But these are only passing eclipses of virtue, errors of inadvertence to which the best of us are liable, and their rather frequent occurrence does not disprove the agreement of all good people in the condemnation of gossip, and more especially of that form of it which may be described as analytic and dissectional, which explores motives and infers minute secrets. And no moral doctrine is more distinctly and frequently declared, in print and on the tongue, through proverbs and through preachings, through satire and through persuasion, by novelists, by dramatists, by essayists, by clergymen, by governesses, by everybody who talks about gossip, including the gossips themselves, than the unlawfulness of gossip and its damage to the minds of those who indulge in it.

Yet, strangely enough, a form of gossip more inquisitorial, more treacherous, and, to those who indulge in it, more injurious, than the talk-over-my-neighbour chatter which, if many love, none praise, flourishes among us almost unblamed. Many a pious and thoughtful family—perhaps all the more probably the more pious and thoughtful it is—constitutes in its sheltered home a permanent court of inquiry upon the member who happens last to have left the room. Why is he restless? Why is she pale? Is there anything amiss with the conscience? with the heart? Or is it not rather the temper? Each member of the court gives evidence, everybody sums up in turn and frequently. Perhaps the member who has

had the misfortune to leave the room is known or suspected to be striving to conceal some pang of disappointed ambition or love, or cherishing some hope or affection not yet ripe for revelation: in such case there are little accidental self-betrayals, unwary speeches, unguarded expressions of countenance, or even confidential talks, to be told and discussed. Perhaps there is no concealment to tear away, but some distinct event, little or great, for good or for ill, makes the member of the court who is out of the room an advantageous topic. His or her conduct can be expounded, arraigned, discriminated upon—even approved; but the temptation of the home court of inquiry is not to approvals. Or perhaps the member who has left the room is in a normal state of nothing particular, and not debateable as being doing or suffering out of the family wont. Well, there is a subject, then, for domestic pathology. The court goes into a detailed analysis of temperament, character, antecedents; the discussion is at once vague and minute; anecdotes from earliest childhood may be brought to point a moral, possibilities in the farthest future may be predicted from yesterday's trivial indiscretion. No matter how or why, the person who is out of hearing must be theme of the talk, and the talk must be investigatory and judicial. The microscope is in full play; diagnosis runs riot.

It has been said that the temptation of the court is not to approvals. There needs no malevolence or proneness to believe evil to account for this. The reason is simply that, the whole pleasure of the process lying in discussion and criticism, the tendency is inevitably to bring forward such points of the subject's character or conduct as are open to discussion and criticism—that is, as are more or less faulty. To instance only good deeds or indisputable virtues would be to call forth only the short and simple interjections of praise, and there would be an end of the conversation. It would be all affirmative, and affirmative conversation dies of its own completeness; to have any life and lasting worth speaking of, conversation must be negative, must be full of doubts and gainsayings, must be brisk with censure and profound

with suspicion. And therefore even real affection cannot give a tone of tender faith to the conclaves of nearest and dearest who have learnt to make a need of family gossip, and well-grounded respect for proved good qualities cannot restrict ingenuity in discovering errors.

Each member of an inquisitorial family being exposed to the operations of the inquisition, one might at first sight suppose that the glass-house principle of conduct would have its influence and induce all to refrain from participating in a recreation of which each must in turn bear the cost. But in such matters habit is stronger than reason, and the reformer's martyrdom looks more alarming than the disciple's endurance of an oppression in which he is also an oppressor. And a main reason for the very frequent existence of this fatal enemy to family confidence, family gossip, is that it is looked on as rather a virtuous industry than otherwise. Nobody is ashamed of sharing in it. There is a self-approving sense of taking an enlightened interest in the welfare of the person vivisected, of doing it for his good, of looking on his faults from a moral and affectionate point of view, of backbiting him with pure and amiable motives. There may be small appreciation of similar benevolence conferred on the individual self, rather there may be engendered a suspicious sense of wrong and an extreme dislike to leaving the room when there are several dear ones in it, but as the occasions for the benevolence of blame behind the back arise they are used with a clear conscience and a refreshing feeling of superiority.

An amusing instance of the common inability to perceive the unwholesomeness of family gossip, and of the tendency to consider it—when not exercised on ourselves, of course—actually a meritorious work of affection, is afforded by the novelist of gracious and High-Church homes, the inspirer alike of gentleness and gentility to youths and maidens, Miss Yonge. In the numerous families which she delights to pourtray, the amount of conscientious tittle-tattling about their brothers and sisters perpetrated by the chief paragons is something appalling. They review them as if they were books, they

speculate upon them as if they were perplexing historical personages, they pick their characters patiently to pieces, they put them together again with logical nicety, they define them and class them and label them. And nobody in those very good books ever says to those very good young people "You naughty little prigs, don't you know that you are only gossiping?"

But, whatever they may be as examples, Miss Yonge's pictures of family wont in this matter are, as to truth, only deficient by being too lenient. There are few homes in which the court of inquiry does not sit, no homes where it sits in which it is not harmful. People look about for reasons to explain the want of warm affection and confidence in after life between near relations who esteem each other and have no quarrel; is not the severing effect of the home gossip of their earlier days together quite enough to account for the more evident separation of their later days apart?

*MATRIMONY AS A MEANS OF
LIVELIHOOD.*

It was to be gathered from a recent debate in the House of Commons that a certain well-known and energetic unmarried lady has been calling matrimony a profession. She used this language, apparently, in a petition in support of the Bill for removing the Electoral Disabilities of Women, and thus it came to the knowledge of two startled M.P.'s, who, shocked at the irreverent celibacy of the expression, shocked still more, as their separate utterances show, by its ungracefulness, each awe-fully quoted the unholy words, that the House, amid horror and derision, might recognise in them the epitome of feminine resolve to make an end of husbands and homes. It is not easy, in the absence of the context, to see how far this form of reference to marriage could be relevant to the subject of the petition ; and it is never wise to use these set sayings—argument be-Liebged into half a lineful—in documents in which necessary formality and want of space preclude the developement or, as the case may be, the limitation of after explanation. But, however that may be, it does seem rather unfair on Miss Becker that she should have charged upon her this invidious responsibility for a phrase which has been current for at least the last half-dozen years. And her case is the harder that the phrase has till now been treated as particularly respectable. It was even, in its early youth, put forward as an especially “graceful” one—put forward under the

notion of its conveying a protest against the masculine aspirations, real or imagined, of Miss Becker and her allies. By giving the name of "profession" to the lot and duties of a matron it was supposed by many that they epigrammatically conveyed a rebuke to such women as permitted themselves to desire the mental training and the remunerative careers apportioned to men:—"Here, ladies," the phrase was held to say, all in a word not so long as Lord Burleigh's nod, "here, ladies, is your lawful and only career, here are your duties, here your recompense. Educate yourselves to this end only, for only marriageable and married are you recognizably women. She who being no longer a girl is not a wife has lost her place in creation." Ladies of the independent school not only submitted benignly to the phrase, as seeing no discomfiture in it, but forthwith used it for their own. They said: "True, matrimony is a profession—women's highest profession, if you will: it is, however, a profession not open to all the women in England; and it is one some of us think too serious to be entered on merely for its material advantages of board, lodging, and clothes, and a position in the world." And in their employment of it the phrase became indicative of a protest against any state of society in which young women generally should, for want of an alternative means of subsistence, be induced to desire marriage in the spirit of the anxious and accommodating advertisers willing to accept anybody's situation with any duties and any wages, and "a comfortable home the first consideration."

Then, again, some married women have been found to use the phrase in the intention of a hint, and rather more, that married women are not—as some of their actively occupied single sisters, and as very many men, fall into the error of thinking—persons contributing no serious service in payment for their maintenance, but that they are carrying on a grave and busy calling worthy of its hire, and a calling as important to the world and to their families as any by which the husbands procure the joint income. This is an interpretation consistent either with feminine submissiveness to masculine rule or with feminine

self-assertion. Used as a rebuff to spinsters it boasts superiority over their highest claims to consideration as workers in the world: used as a reminder that the wife too has her business value in the marriage partnership it savours of something less than simple gratitude to the husband.

With whatever shade of meaning the term "profession," as applied to the duties of a married woman, was used, nobody, till now, was much startled by it: it seemed no more irreverent to call matrimony woman's profession than woman's sphere, or woman's mission, and it sounded more practical. And, indeed, if the exercise of the duties of Holy Orders may be called a profession, why not the exercise of the duties of matrimony? Nobody was much startled till, the other day, Mr. Hanbury and Mr. Beresford Hope—not given to reading the *Saturday Review*, it would seem—discovered the phrase in a lady's petition and each made haste to warn the world.

Yet why their horror? Matrimony is not a profession for men, because their labours, even when for the home, lie outside the home, and are such as belong to Benedict and bachelor alike. But for women, who by becoming matrons undertake responsibilities and tasks which absorb the greater part of their time, and, oftenest, all their faculties, and which can have no place in solitary life, matrimony *is* a profession in the best and highest sense of the word. That is it is or ought to be so in the highest sense of the word: if not in that sense, then it is so, at all events, in the baser sense which considers a profession, not as a career chosen first from the impulse of fitness and which, beyond the necessary considerations of subsistence to be earned by it, is most of all its own reward, but as merely a way to earn the subsistence. It would be pleasant, of course, to be able to say that young women in our country never do consider marriage in an unwholesomely practical manner, that, lulled in maiden meditation fancy-free, they wait as unconsciously as the Sleeping Beauty in her enchanted palace for the lover who awakens them to the fulness of life, and that no chance comer ever lights upon one of them wondering who will arrive to

fetch her and quite ready to start with whomever it is on the journey to wherever he may be going to take her, provided he can pay the travelling fares. But, though, fairly enough, the position of our multitude of fresh unpremeditating girls with no particular office in life except to be marriageable may be likened to that of the spell-bound princess waiting, forewarned yet unconsciously except in dreams, for a husband, it is not possible to assert that in all marriages the bride believes her bridegroom is the prince. There are women who marry for position; there are women, fewer probably, who marry for money. But these are the gross cases—cases which, if too frequent, are yet happily so few by comparison as to be exceptional—and they need no criticism. They are crimes, and there is an end of it. What is to be really deplored is the number of women who marry to be married, to be “settled in life,” to have a home and be thought a somebody and be taken care of and never be called “old maid” and, above all, not to have to pinch and pine and perhaps starve at last in a struggle with the world for which they have had no sort of preparation. Marriage is for them a means of livelihood, and any marriage better than none. In this mood joy at an offer often enables a woman to set up for him who makes it such a comfortable good will as may seem to meet all his requirements in affection and appreciation for him, and, in many cases, even her own: when this is so, the amicability may stand wear, and, in a kindly and unromantic nature, develop into a very proper wifely regard. Happily this result is the more frequent, and pleasure on getting married, if aided by a pleasurable sentiment towards the bridegroom, does fairly well as a substitute for more exalted feeling, being, if inadequate to the needs of the highest companionship, less likely to find its end in the resentment of disappointment than is an intense and sanguine affection aspiring to nothing less than the marriage of true minds. But plainly there is no hope that the profession of matrimony entered upon in no loftier a spirit than this can ever be carried on after its best ideal. And where the woman has not succeeded in learning, but

only in hoping to learn, what she feels to be a sufficient affection to last her as a wife, or where, having acquired as much affection as suffices for most women who marry for marriage's sake, she is yet aware that she would have been capable of a different, deeper, feeling to some different man, she is accepting a position in which her nature cannot but deteriorate and she will become that worse thing than a "social failure," a domestic failure. There is no need to suppose her more ready to drift into flirtations or misconduct than her neighbours who have married with more love or a less conscious indifference; a woman's distaste or inclination to such faults depends far more on the nature of her esteem for herself than on the amount of her esteem for her husband. Supposing a married couple to be permanent lovers and companions, the wife, receiving all the devotion she requires to keep her womanly *amour propre* comfortable, and being absorbed in her husband, has the same protection against undue pleasure in the attentions of other men as the engaged girl genuinely in love with her betrothed, and, so far as the effects upon that part of her conduct are concerned, it matters little with what amount of self-protecting staidness she may, or may not, be gifted; but as a general rule the respectability of English wives comes of the fact that English women are for the most part respectable. And, of the two, the woman who has felt enthusiasm for the man she married and has had to grow out of it is more likely to take, from dangerous sympathies and homages, compensation for her disenchantment, than is the woman who was never enchanted to ask outside of marriage the emotions she was prepared to dispense with in her married lot. The moral harm which comes to any woman who not only has taken to marriage as a means of livelihood but who knows that she has done so, is that which must overtake anyone, man or woman, who enters on a worthy office from an unworthy motive, it is the savour of conscious yet now compulsory hypocrisy henceforth clinging to the mind even in its frankest impulses; it is the growing steadily down from the best one could have been to the best one may be with the least trouble, which overtakes any person

who embraces a self-sacrificing profession for the sake of its material advantages.

The women who, marrying for marriage, are reluctant as to the man are much rarer—and alas are often higher natured—than those whose less fastidious hearts learn to look on any man as an agreeable concomitant to a marriage with him. These latter have the best prospect not only of their own sort of happiness for themselves as wives but of being comfortable wives to their husbands. If a man marries expecting the growth in marriage of larger and tenderer sympathies and completer intellectual confidence between him and his wife than the sunshine of courtship could expand, if his idea of the union is of a companionship and his idea of the affection is of a steadily widening and deepening pleasure in each other and respect from each to each as man to woman and woman to man, if, in short, he wants what is far more than it need be the exceptional perfectness of marriage, a comfortable wife of this sort will be utterly and hopelessly discomfoting, and the best thing that can happen to them both will be that he should promptly recover from his love for her, so as to be enabled to take her for granted and be tolerant. But for such a man the choice of wives is limited, and, to be sure of making no mistake, he might have longer to seek, and more warily, than most men care to do. For a man choosing as most men do choose, and with no super-ordinary ideal of married life, there might be worse luck than to hit upon one of the thousands of pleasant properly brought-up girls who, with the chance of marriage for all their future prospect, will accept that means of livelihood from anyone and love him into the bargain. There is no particular misfortune to such girls in their depending upon marriage, provided they do marry; the misery is that so many of them must perforce remain single and be sooner or later left to provide for themselves, weighed down, not only by the social difficulties in their way and their own incompetence to undertake any fairly remunerative labour of a “not menial” description, but by the depressing sense that providence has dealt sternly with them in refusing them their one fitting means of livelihood, matrimony.

HUSBAND-HUNTING AND MATCH-MAKING.

PEOPLE think women who do not want to marry unfeminine: people think women who do want to marry immodest: people combine both opinions by regarding it as unfeminine for women not to look forward longingly to wifedom as the hope and purpose of their lives, and ridiculing or contemning any individual women of their acquaintance whom they may suspect of entertaining such a longing. This is hard upon marriageable women. Their time is short, in many cases their opportunities are few, and meanwhile they are hampered with difficulties more numerous and more contradictory than were the old man's with the ass when he tried to take everybody's advice. They must wish and not wish; they must by no means give, they must certainly not withhold, encouragement; they must not let a gentleman who is paying attention think them waiting for his offer, they must not let him think they would admit the careless homages of a flirtation and are not waiting for his offer; they must not be frank, they must not be coy; they must not laugh and talk indifferently with all comers, they must not show preferences—so it goes on, each precept cancelling another, and most of them negative. How are the girls to get themselves married and escape censure in the process? And if, whether by fault or only worse luck than her neighbours, a mistaken damsel brings herself under a ban of more than momentary censure, gets "talked about," as the phrase is, henceforth there is

small hope of her ever accomplishing her destiny at all. If she be attractive it will be her vocation to be flirted with. She may, as she acquires experience in pleasing, make half-a-dozen men jealous of each other, she may, more or less unwittingly, hinder half-a-dozen other girls of their husband in view, but the first column of *The Times* is pathetic literature for her, for it is her fate to see there her admirers' weddings.

Nor is the case of the parents of marriageable daughters less perplexing than that of the daughters themselves. They know how to do their worldly duty by their sons. They establish them in fit professions giving them scope for the employment of such talents as they may possess, a definite place in the world, opportunities for achieving distinction or wealth or may be both. They have not a moment's apprehension lest they should be degrading the youths or themselves by taking all possible pains to place them in the posts for which they have had them educated, and they would think themselves wanting towards them, in the highest degree of blameworthiness, if they left them in such a matter to chance and their own resources. But as for their girls, for whom marriage is everything, they cannot with a free mind set themselves to arranging them a future at all. On the one hand they see that if they die leaving them husbandless they will have left them in an abnormal, masterless, position for which nothing in their previous education has prepared them, and with, in perhaps the majority of instances, insufficient or no income to live on and no especial talent which can be turned to profit. On the other hand, for us in England where the matrimonial partnership has not yet become a sober bit of business to be negotiated for the young people by their more experienced and reflecting seniors, any intervention possible to parents anxious to see their daughters provided with homes and happiness is of an indirect and furtive kind, and is stigmatised accordingly. The match-making mother is universally felt to be a thing for scorn and laughter, her prudence and her policy are classed with the lowest greeds and cunnings which make human nature pitiable

mirth for human beings; she is in her own eyes a sensible guardian doing her duty with a just regard for the future, but in every one else's eyes, including those of all the other match-making mothers, she is a vulgar schemer making merchandize of her daughters. As to the match-making father, for him there is added to all the obloquy that falls on the match-making mother the contempt and disgust with which all regard womanly vices in a man. And, if parents, rashly hoping not to be contemned or not to be found out, will occupy themselves in their daughters' affairs and try to promote their marriage, they expose the young women to the ridicule and disrespect of all the men of their acquaintance and to the indignation of all the women; no matter how guiltless the daughters may be of share in the arrangements for their being eligibly fallen in love with, their complicity will be taken for granted—they will be "husband-hunters," "man-traps."

While young women know, and their parents know for them, that marriage is not merely the happiest and fittest condition to which they can look forward, but the only happy and fit condition—the only escape from dependence on charity or on their own incompetences, from loss of social position, and from all the hardships and hazards of an unskilled gentlewoman's precarious existence—it certainly does seem unreasonable that neither the young women nor their parents are able to take active measures to prevent the catastrophe of final spinsterhood. But the instinct which is at the bottom of the prohibition is one too sound to be gainsaid. Marriage should mean love, and love has its own laws and cannot be transacted according to the principles of demand and supply, nor through the medium of parents or any other accredited agents. That a young woman will have no place in the world unless a husband gives her a home and a purpose for her life is, no doubt, a strong temptation to marriage, but it is not a reason for it. There is only one allowable reason, and that is love for the man she marries. And, whether it be so by nature or only by the training of generations, women, unless most exceptionally, do not love unsought. They may, of course, be deceived as to

the seeking, or as to the extent and earnestness of the seeking, but that is another matter. Their choice of whom to love is among those who have chosen them or who they fancy have chosen them, and it may be that a girl finds no one present himself whom she can regard with the highest affection, or even it may be that no one presents himself at all. But she will have sinned against her womanhood if for any reason, even if because she thinks marriage the crown and highest duty of womanhood, she gives herself to a husband whose love she does not wholly return—still more if, not having a suitor at disposal, she counts her chances and selects a man to lead with her to matrimony. But, if this be so, she must leave her getting married or not to chance, and so must her parents for her. No judicious foresight of anybody's will bring the exactly right somebody to fall in love with her and be loved in return, and that under appropriate circumstances. If he is to come, destiny and chance will provide his arrival; if not, then that all the welfare of her future should depend on her marrying is her grave misfortune, but, without the worse misfortune of moral degradation, she cannot marry at all. Thus it follows from our English theory of marriage for love; and nothing in the results of the continental system of marriage brought about by parents and guardians, according to their judgment of expediency and reciprocal advantages in the union, can incline us to exchange our somewhat incongruous sentimentalism for so venturesome a prudence.

Not all girls, however, have so strong a self-respect and so high a courage as to look forward patiently to the contemned position of the poverty-stricken old maid rather than to marry for the sake of marriage. And not all girls who are prepared to marry for the sake of marriage and think any suitor the man of their heart have still so much self-respect as to quietly run their risk of getting no offer, or none available, rather than make choice themselves for matrimonial purposes of some likely male acquaintance to train into winning their hearts and hands. And not all parents can resign themselves to

seeing other people's dowerless daughters getting comfortably settled and their own left unprovided for, and can believe that their daughters have a better chance of real happiness unprovided for than married on the hook and crook plan. And so there come to be husband-hunting damsels and match-making parents—usually mothers, for fathers have rarely time to give to such matters, and are scarcely equal to the tactics.

Concerning these persons, the husband-hunting daughters and the match-making mothers, it may be remarked that their efforts oftenest fail from two contrary and idiosyncratic causes, the mothers erring by too palpable a concentration of their attentions on the one chosen son-in-law to be and by an oversight of any other possibilities, the daughters by desultoriness and a propensity to regard too many men at once as encourageable into serious suitors. A wise old lady, skilled in these matters, used to warn her young disciples of this:—"the mistake girls make," she would say, "is paying attention to two or three men at a time; they lose the chance by wanting more chances than one. My dear, *mark your bird.*" But husband-hunting girls are a foolish race of sportswomen and apt to waste powder and shot indiscriminately.

THE DEARTH OF HUSBANDS.

WE seem only recently to have waked up in England to any distinct perception of a fact which has now been at work for years in altering, without any one's premeditation, the position of our women. The dearth of husbands was known as a statistical discovery, but it was not recognised as a practical fact with direct bearing on the everyday life of the everyday world. Men enough to match the women, and a few over to spare, are born into England, but, as each generation ripens into marriageable years, a large proportion of the men and scarcely any of the women have left the country. Men's employments are more dangerous, and in that way some lives are lost against which there is no balance on the women's side to set, yet probably this difference is one which would have been met, leaving pretty well every Gill her Jack, by the slight excess in births of male over female children: but the one-sided drain from temporary or permanent expatriation could not but from its beginning produce a disproportion between the sexes which there was no diminishing influence whatever in the number of the female population to retrieve—a disproportion which has yearly increased and will yearly increase. Still, though this was pretty generally known, it was somehow not clearly apprehended that if some people's sons were settled in the colonies, spending the main part of their lives in India, following out their careers all over the world, other people's daughters, at home in England, would by the

laws of arithmetic be left without partners for marriage. We all knew of a good many husbandless women; but then we all knew that it by no means follows in any individual case that spinsterhood comes from want of opportunities for becoming a wife, and even if, in any individual case, the probabilities were that there had been no such opportunity, we only felt that the unwooed lady in question had been the victim of an unusual fatality ascribable to some unusual want of the power to charm at least one man in the world—victim of just the fatality that might have kept her single if she had lived two hundred years ago. It did not strike us that it was not merely that there were many husbandless women, but that there *must* be; that if every woman in England were a Helen of Greece for fascination, and every woman in England were bent on being married, still, out of every three, one must waste unwed. So we went on, unwarned, educating our daughters to the occupation of waiting till somebody came for them, and educating them to no other occupation.

This sort of delusion could not last for ever. Parents died, and nobody had come. Portionless daughters found themselves compelled instantly to awake from expectation and set about earning bread in such a present as they might happen to find it—a hard one enough generally. Usually they became governesses, the education of girls being such that any woman with good manners was thought competent to conduct it, and, unless there existed some special literary or artistic faculty which could provide a means of livelihood, there was nothing else open to a poor gentlewoman but to become a companion. Companionship however could not, like governess-ship, be often undertaken without any qualifications at all; agreeable skill in music, deftness in millinery work, good reading aloud, must naturally always be customary requirements from the lady who is employed expressly to amuse another and to be attentive to her personal convenience. Therefore, even if the post of companion were not to most natures less acceptable than that of governess, and even if there were anything like

as many companion's situations as governess's, not every woman whom employers would readily believe a sufficient teacher could hope to be thought eligible for a companion.

The inevitable result of all this arrived. The increasing rush of unmarried women eager for governess's places would have choked the market even if there had not been an addition from below to the influx: but, with the downward spread of education, such as it was, which came with the advancing prosperity of the lower orders, competition with half-educated gentlewomen became possible to similarly half-educated women of the classes which had formerly filled the more comfortable and once well respected places of upper servants. The governess's profession, overstocked from the beginning, was evidently foredoomed to be crowded past possibility of existence for half those struggling in it; the social changes which made governesses of the unmarried daughters of small shopkeepers and small farmers—of those whom it is hoped again to restore to domestic service under the complimentary name of lady-helps—hurried on the crush. And then things, having, it would seem, come to the worst for women, began to mend.

It is not necessary here to enter into description or discussion of what has been done for women, and what they, still more, have done for themselves of late years. What is here to be said is that, but for the dearth of husbands, the ameliorations made and still being striven for in the social and political position of women, in their education, and in their opportunities of earning, would have been left for some far-off future to propose out of mere enlightenment instead of necessity. For, though the conception of why and how women should be admitted to sounder intellectual training and a wider range of work and interests is now based on general principles going deeper than the immediate material need of saving a few thousands of them from hunger and cold, the presence of that need was what compelled consideration to the whole question of our modern treatment of women. It was seen by all that persons who have to fend for themselves must not be trained merely to the adherent

clingingness which may be very seemly and loveable when there is the due somebody to cling to, but which is looked on as inappropriate, to say the least of it, in women unattached. Gallantry and chivalry are all very well within convenient limits, but men could not go on in risk of having to be gallant and chivalrous to "unprotected females" at large. So it was generally recognised that the class which produces the Unprotected Female must, like the class which produces the Habitual Criminal, be brought, for the public good, under the redeeming influences of sound education. But education does undoubtedly lead to self-assertion—foolish often, but also often wise self-assertion—and the spread of education bids fair in its first stages to increase the already widely-felt discontent of women at the artificial limits put to their power of self-help.

But education has by no means yet come within the reach of the majority of women, and is most of all out of the reach of gentlewomen likely to be left penniless at their parents' death. For them there is, with the exception of what may be had at a dozen or so new "high-schools" here and there over the country, no cheap solid elementary teaching; for they may not, like their poorest neighbours, use the Board Schools and be taught at the cost of the public. And, as needs must be without endowments, there is no cheap higher education for them at all. And their parents are unable to incur a large expense for them; especially without any clear prospect of a correspondingly remunerative return. Meanwhile the educational movement has succeeded in greatly raising the ideas of employers as to the qualifications indispensable for a governess and the proofs of fitness to be demanded of her. The profession, less accessible and so less thronged, will gradually become a more advantageous one than it has been; and will remain so until, as will inevitably happen, there is a too ample supply of women educated just up to its requirements, and it is again in a state of overcrowding. Meanwhile its gates are already, and not even slowly, beginning to close against precisely those women whose one resource, failing

marriage, it has hitherto been to become governesses—the women, that is, who have had little education and who have no original talent to supply the deficiency and help them to employment in some other direction; who cannot do anything without having been taught and who have not been taught to do anything.

There are many occupations denied to women in England by custom or other restrictions which are in themselves perfectly suitable for them; some which are undeniably more suitable to them than to men. Most of these will probably sooner or later be opened to women, simply because employers are beginning to think it to their interest to employ cheaper and more tractable workers than they usually find their men. But not many of these are appropriate for the class of women here spoken of; they would involve a loss of social position, a giving up connections and intercourse, which would be like renouncing all the ties of the earlier life, and the change would, by most of these stranded gentlewomen, be felt more painful than the sharpest poverty. There are higher remunerative callings, the medical profession, “devilling” for conveyancers, a branch of legal work in which ladies are able to achieve success under present conditions, house decoration, and—and this seems to end the list; for what may be called inspirational work, literary and artistic work, the result of a strong natural bent which, after a sort, can struggle on untaught, cannot come in question here. But these callings require such very considerable educational outlay as puts them out of the reach of the daughters of people who can do little more for them than board them and dress them; nor, though it has seemed to be supposed that every woman could, without education, successfully become a teacher, have we as yet any theory that every woman could, with education, successfully become a physician, a conveyancer, or a decorative artist. It is not easy therefore to find fault with parents who, having no means of subsistence, or only insufficient means of subsistence, to leave their daughters, do not struggle at every sacrifice, as they do for their sons, to establish them in a profession. No

doubt at the present time this might be done much oftener than it is; but in the majority of instances it is merely impossible.

Still, something might be effected. Young ladies might learn, not as mere fancy work, but thoroughly, handicrafts by which they could at least maintain themselves in reasonable comfort according to their class. Needlework, to bring in any income adapted to the most moderate needs of persons with the appearance of gentility to keep up, is a wearing and disappointing drudgery; and moreover gentlewomen, in taking to it for a means of livelihood, are competing with the already too great multitude of working women who by long possession have a prescriptive right to the employment of the seamstress. There is better paid and fitter work open to gentlewomen, if only they could be trained for it, with a training, that is, which would involve some expense—say thirty to fifty pounds. Engraving on glass is a pretty accomplishment and one which, whether practised for pleasure, instead of beadwork, or as a serious trade, can be carried on at home, and by it an income of from a hundred to two hundred a year might be earned by a worker with deft hands and a little taste and skill in designing. Painting on china, on tiles, and so forth, might be learned for much less than it costs for a girl without special musical talent to acquire the accomplishment of playing the piano objectionably, and would offer means of making money by no unpleasant toil. A little inquiry would show many similar occupations of a fairly remunerative nature possible for gentlewomen, but all requiring due apprenticeship. When the moment for having to earn comes—suddenly as it usually does—it is too late to learn an art to earn by; time presses, there are no funds to live on, let alone to pay for lessons, and something by which the fatherless spinster without income left her can keep body and soul together must be found for her to do at once. In haste and despondency she gets what drudge's place she can, and her destiny is forthwith decided. If but six months' time, even without payment to make, would qualify her in a handicraft whose

exercise would keep her in comfort in some home of her own, still she could not become qualified, she could not live for the six months; and the suggestion that she should pay some pounds for her training is a mere mockery.

Supposing we made a rule of having our daughters taught some such semi-trade? Say there were never need of it, say a girl marries, or that her parents, well to do and not overtaken by any financial disaster, leave her provided for at their death, her skill will have been used to make prettier and more valuable things for home than antimacassars and sofa-cushions. But the ability to earn her livelihood at need might save a girl from ruining her self-respect and her happiness by a mercenary marriage, and from the anxieties of a hopeless poverty if she made no marriage or if she made an unfortunate one from a pecuniary point of view or became, instead of a penniless spinster, a penniless widow with children to work for. An objection will be made that to give our daughters only such means of earning a livelihood is still to do too little. That may be: but to do too little is more than to do nothing, which is for very many the only other alternative.

CREATING SINS.

Who created sin, is one of the largest and least answerable of the theological questions which vex faith and refresh dogmatism—a theme for argument through time, and decision in eternity at the earliest. But who created most of the sins, is a matter-of-fact question with a demonstrable answer. The good people did it. They did not invent the worst and abhorred sins, not the difficult sins, not those which have in them their own punishments, not any sins, alluring or repellent, with evil in their nature: but those are the minority of sins, and they have some safeguards for us about them. Many of them we could not commit if we would, many of them we would not commit if we could, and all of them, even in their temptings, offer conscience the warning of a savour disliked by the moral sense. The good people invent the sins which need not have been wrong: that is nine-tenths of the sins which make us all pass our lives as intermittent penitents or hardened culprits. Most of them the good people mean for merely minor guilt, only deadly by cumulation—though, to be sure, highly cumulative—but their great successes rival the seven deadly sins and could forfeit a saint his share of heaven.

We might say that transgression which neither his Bible as he can understand it, nor his reason, nor his moral instinct, class as such, should seem no transgression to any sane man, and that each of us should be able to reject the burden of artificial sins and to feel his inno-

cence in the face of laws without authority over him the same if he chanced to break them as if he chanced to keep them. But such an independence is rare; for, to arrive at it, most people must pass through a long period of mental hesitations and reasonings, of contests with their own prejudices and inquiries how they grew, of examination into rules of living which education and example have made all alike so traditionally matter of course that it is a thing of immense difficulty to get into an attitude of mind in which their different claims to respect can be appreciated. Not everyone has time, or patience, or courage, or humility, for the process—a process, too, so much more painful than the obedience it would discard that often those who see the need of it shirk it, pacifying their pangs of thought, as people shirk a visit to the dentist. Thus we accept the sins the good people have made for us, and commit them just as if they were real. And they *are* real in harmful results. To the wrong-doer the worst harm from wrong-doing is its malarious poisoning of the conscience, and this effect is produced just as much from an innocent act as from a guilty, if the innocent act is by way of being a guilty one. It is in the faith or the fear that the thing we wilfully or weakly do is a wickedness that the moral blight to us lies. If we genuinely believed that to sing a hymn was a sin, and we sang a hymn, while we genuinely believed that to filch our neighbour's purse in a railway-carriage was no worse than a discourtesy which good feeling ought to prevent among fellow-travellers, and we filched a purse, evidently the hymn, however conducive in itself to edification, would be a demoralising indulgence, and the theft of the purse would be a comparatively infinitesimal error scarcely worth the repenting. And it is because this is so that the creation of sins is such a mischievous exercise of meritoriousness. To provide a crime is to provide its criminals, and, though the crime be innocent, the criminals are not.

It is quite conceivable, for instance, that there may be a little truth in some of the stories in pious books about the despondent profligates and fallen women who, on

their hopeless death-beds, avowed that their whole moral ruin came from having joined in the dancing at a friend's tea-party, or having gone to see *Hamlet* acted, or having played beggar-my-neighbour, or some such damning dissipation. A weak and ignorant young soul fallen into what it believed abiding taint, and stripped of the comfortable sense of self-respect, might, no doubt, rush or glide, according to its nature, from the first appalling sin against conscience, represented by what ordinarily rational beings cannot even conceive of as blameable amusements, into absolute vice, and, thanks to early training, never to the end know the difference, though knowing well that the vices would not have been temptations in the innocent time when the round game or Sir Roger de Coverley proved so fatally irresistible. Even the instructive anecdote of the "Sabbath"-revering highwayman that used to be in nice little story-books for the young, *se non è vero*, may be *ben trovato* and instructive to a different end from what the story-teller intended. That contrite and converted person, it was stated, when on the scaffold, pointed to a woman in the front of the crowd who was weeping violently, and entreated that she might be brought to him for one moment's farewell, for she was his mother. She was brought, and, bending over her as if for a kiss, he bit off her ear. The bystanders were about to remonstrate with him, but he made haste to remove their disapproval by exclaiming to the public in a loud voice that he had acted thus from religious motives, for his mother had been the cause of his career of robbery and murder: she took him out for walks on Sunday when he was little. Walks on Sunday, though the apostles and a greater than they did not think them wrong, may have all the hardening influence of persistent vice: they are vice to those who believe them so. And such stories as all these, feigned or true, strongly exemplify the danger to the weak of multiplying offences.

What the creators of sins do is just the converse of the old not allowing the devil to have all the best tunes. The zealous hymnologist set the profane tunes to holy

words and turned them righteous whether they would or no ; but these good people make the devil a present of a whole host of harmless actions and convert them perforce into mischief. They offer us temptation whatever way we turn, for they dot about their regulation sins everywhere, they make recreations depravity and reason rebellion. They transform our tastes and meek pursuits into weapons against our consciences ; they make a Mephistopheles of Mr. Mudie and a snare of Satan of the Royal Academy.

Now, the good people are of course quite within their rights in making as many sins as they like for themselves and enjoying, like the performers of the egg-dance or the sword-dance, the nicety of their escaping movements among the risks they have set for themselves ; but they ought to let the rest of us alone. They cannot do that, however, because it is not in their nature any more than in their principles. They are people who believe their opinions proved true by the fact of their opinions existing, and if true then necessary for every human being in a world of perdition ; they do not allow of logic in opposition because, on inspirational grounds as connected with their own opinions, they consider it irreligious, and because, from personal habit, they do not understand it. They are too sure that there will be heavy retribution for not thinking as they do to see any fitness in using their thoughts for their own guidance and not their neighbour's as well. Our freedom can only come from assertion of it in action—and without defence or apology for what we do, for *qui s'excuse s'accuse* and to plead in defence is to acknowledge the authority of the Court. But it is this assertion which is so difficult, for we may have to shock and even to pain and to offend persons whose affection and esteem we prize, in order to do or refuse to do something about which in itself we are comparatively indifferent. Yet perhaps, for truth's sake and freedom's, we ought to insist with ourselves on not abstaining from sins which have been causelessly created.

OLD ACQUAINTANCES.

SHOULD auld acquaintance be forgot? Decidedly, in nine cases out of ten, if the forgetting, and above all the being forgotten, were possible. It is one thing to grapple the friends we have and their adoption tried to our souls with hoops of steel, and another to be grappled by miscellaneous persons whose claim on our regard and proof of theirs is found in the almanac, and only there. Why are people who are old acquaintances and nothing more to take possession of us like conscious benefactors, speaking of us, if not to us, by our fireside names, criticising us with the air of experts, being self-complacent on our successes and candid on our failures, exposing our motives and lamenting our hidden beliefs? Why do they question us on our private affairs, offer us point-blank condolences on the skeleton in our closet, jocosely blurt out unpalatable truths, find fault with our new carpet, advise us? These are the privileges of intimacy, of friendship, and they have known us so long. By the popular computation the having been aware for a long time of each other's existence is intimacy, indifference multiplied by years is friendship. Only let a man have been acquainted with you from your childhood and he has, by every recognised law of good feeling, the same right to take an aggressive interest in your proceedings that your relations possess by their relationship, and your bosom friends by your own conferring.

Old acquaintances have no monopoly of familiarity

unmitigated by similarity of tastes or the sympathy of affection. A relation you have seen for the first time yesterday, or, in the country, a next-door neighbour of a fortnight's standing, wields a like prescriptive right of intrusion. But old acquaintances have a special authority over you, peculiar to them. They tether you to your former self. They will allow nothing for growth; what you were, you are. No matter what developments, or even what changes, may have removed the man from the boy, for them and among them he is stationary. It is even so to himself, he cannot take his true place among them, he is clogged and hampered with all sorts of minute fetters, gradually woven round him, which he can only burst by an unseemly struggle; he feels like a lobster squeezed back into a shell he cast aside some sizes ago, the thing rasps his skin, but yet it does seem to be his own proper shell, and he tries to accommodate himself to it.

It is in this accommodating process that the chief mischief of the repressive influence of old acquaintances is to be found. If a man have some sure gift of genius or skill which old acquaintances ignore because he was nothing remarkable when they knew him as a boy, the gift will eventually prove itself outside their circle, though perhaps never to them; if he have advanced himself to a social status which they are unable to admit as a practical fact because he was nobody at all when they knew him as a boy, he will hold his position in the world none the less securely for their tardiness in appreciating it. Nor can the demurs of old acquaintances close the path to success or withhold the foot that is on the way. Strong ability, absolute talent, compel their use and achieve their own result. The harm lies in the crippling, by compression, of the moral side of the intellect, to which the man beset by old acquaintances condemns himself for their sake. He knows that they have a vested interest in him, that he is responsible to them for the sobriety of his views and the gregariousness of his conduct, that to think anything they had not expected of him is to annoy them, and to differ with them in opinion

is to insult them. He shrinks from disturbing the peace of mind of all these good folk who have known him so long; he has visions of squabbles and admonitions and backbitings, of "the old familiar faces" lowering retributively. He tries to live and learn within the bounds prescribed him, he wishes to see no further than his neighbours in any dangerous directions, he is afraid of telling or hearing new things. He may be even driven to a sort of suppressive hypocrisy; he may have to follow out opinions he has discarded and to indulge tastes he has forgotten, he may have to keep his deepest convictions in polite abeyance or to slur over the expression of them with a faint-hearted laugh. Meanwhile the true man is decaying within him. Having foregone the "*courage de ses opinions*," he loses first the habit and then the power of forming opinions for himself. He may never suspect the loss, he will indeed, if of a loud-voiced turn of mind, impress himself as well as other superficial observers with the notion of his being of especially self-reliant judgment; since no persons are so positive in their opinions as those who, having received them at second-hand in a crystallised state, are free from the recollection of change and fluctuation which belong to the mind that has thought them into shape, and positiveness easily mistakes itself for self-reliance. He may come to speak, write, teach, what his own conclusions if he had followed them up would have distinctly opposed, to feel a zealot's anger against those who hesitate over religious dogmas which have never reached his inner heart, or to display himself an unflinching panegyrist of political measures which his intellect, left to its freedom, would have condemned, and yet not to be aware of a stunted or twisted conscience. His mind is like one of the old-fashioned clipped box-trees, green and flourishing in the abnormal shape into which it has been arranged.

And the process of accommodation may be, if not the most injurious, the most weakening where the least complete. There are men who, having submitted to it for peace's sake, or, as they may have thought, for duty's sake, have never been able to adapt themselves completely to

the intellectual conditions they accept. They are conscious of two minds within them, their own and their neighbours', and, earnestly bent upon reconciling the two, they cultivate the logic of compromise and train themselves and those who come under their influence to the unsatisfying and often painful art of cheating conscience for conscience's good.

There are men, too, who can live in quiet in the bondage of old acquaintances, or in any other social bondage, by professing all they are called on to profess and doing all that is prescribed as right and proper for them, while they keep their dissent from the manner of their lives a secret, shared perhaps with one or two trusted friends with whom they can have the relief of free expression. But these are merely dishonest: *non ragionam di lor.*

The fact that no one can do his level best until he has got away from the trammels of old acquaintanceship is much more generally recognised by deed than by word. It is not because there is no sphere for his abilities in his native town that the youth of promise selects his career in some other; it is because in the new place he will start free. The attraction of the metropolis for the country-bred genius in love with green meadows and the song of the lark is, not the society and the resources, but the independence, it offers him. He knows that in London and its concourse of men is the quickening centre of the life of the nation, that the artist as much as the politician, the poet as much as the merchant, will find his lessons and his work there; he knows this and says it; but in reality London is not so needful to him because it is London as because it is not the other place—the place where the old acquaintances are. No one likes, however, to put forward his desire to escape from his old acquaintances as a motive for his departure from among them, and many who act upon this motive are loth to recognise it to themselves. They go away for any reason rather than that; but they go. And surely their going is wisdom. They might find their precedent in sundry old fairy tales, where the hero's wits are under a cloud

till he sets forth on his travels and, once well out of reach of his old acquaintances' eyes and ears, straight-way becomes a marvel of ingenuity and courage and wins the beautiful princess with half her father's kingdom. He would have won no princess if he had stayed.

Of course new acquaintances may be moral wet blankets as much as old, if you choose to let them. If a man makes it one of the great aims of his life to have a footing among some special class or clique, or if he is bent on being fashionable or popular or on an eminence of respectability, he may be in social bondage of the straightest kind to acquaintances of to-day, and but of to-morrow. But that rests with himself. And of course new acquaintances may take possession of him with the harassing intimacy usurped more commonly by old acquaintances. But that also rests with himself. New acquaintances can make no claim on him for more than he chooses to give them. His duty to them is only theirs to him—civility and an exchange of dinners and "at homes." With them he may require that liking should precede intimacy, and that unceremoniousness should not do duty for cordiality.

DULL PEOPLE.

It sounds like a paradox and is almost a pun to say that dull people never feel dull: yet, let it seem paradox or pun, it is but a matter-of-fact verity. The people we call dull people are those who have little but their tediousness to bestow on others; but their tediousness does not weary themselves; and when they are in society it becomes the business of brisker minds to amuse them. The hostess, sorting her dinner guests with a view to the cheerfulness of the greater number, perceives that there is a risk of dull Lady Monosyllables making an impassable barrier of silence at her corner of the table; straightway she allots to her the most brilliant of the agreeable rattles on her list—he will amuse Lady Monosyllables, and, she fondly hopes, will have time and energy to keep up a conversation with his other-hand neighbour, and around him. And Lady Monosyllables is amused; but scarcely her brilliant cavalier; and the chances are that he is sacrificed to her single entertainment, for she listens with a placid exactitude and omits no necessary yes or no to keep the *tête à tête* continuous. And the monosyllabic man is even better off than the monosyllabic woman: he has all her accustomed advantages of being paired off at dinners with the cleverest conversationalist of the other sex available, and he has above her at other entertainments his advantages of freer locomotion. The difficulty of getting her dress along with her through a crush, the waylaying politenesses which commit her to chairs to find

herself wedged into them for the rest of the evening, her lurking doubts of the propriety of moving about independently in a room full of people, leave a woman little choice about the companionship she will have for the time. She is stationary, much like a sea-anemone on its rock when the tide is high, waiting for what drifts towards her, accepting it of necessity, and clutching it tenaciously, or letting it drift on again, partly according to wish and partly according to power. But a man has with the pains the privileges of his normal chairlessness; he moves about and selects the person or group where his pleasure for the moment lies. If he is a dull man he has only to select; only the temporary obstacles of human bulk and pieces of furniture to be slipped between and circumnavigated can delay him of his object, and he will infallibly arrive at the people he covets to make his evening enlivening to him. Nobody looks to him for enlivenment, and he may go his way unmolested by the dull, and use whom he will for his entertainment. The man who is not dull is hindered on his way a hundred times, he sees the group of talkers he has been struggling to join break up, the person with whom of all others he wanted to exchange a few words go away, he is button-holed and forced to talk his best small beer while a discussion he is longing to join is going on within earshot, he is caught at unawares and introduced to dull people who are dummies and dull people who he heartily wishes were dummies, and at last, going away empty of recollections, he remembers that he has somehow conduced to a good many people's entertainment, has been very lively, and dismally dull.

In society if wit is silvern, dulness is golden. Wit is the bee that works, dulness is the drone that waits snugly for the honey to come to its mouth. And dulness pledges you to nothing. If you adventure yourself as an apt talker, a sayer of good things or clever at the give and take of recreative conversation, you are bound to keep up to your level or you will be set down as wanting. For mere civility's sake you might have exerted yourself a little, it will be said, if you have been overtaken by a

stupid fit; you may have had headache, or heartache, or both, but you ought to have been consistent: once clever always clever. And there will be dire hopes that there is nothing wrong with your affairs, or your brain, or your conscience. And people who had met you for the first time will say of you that they had expected to find you agreeable and entertaining but that they found you less than commonplace, quite hopelessly stupid, unless indeed you were giving yourself airs. But dulness has no condemnation; it is not even called dull, for nothing was expected of it. If you firmly take up the judicious position of being a dull person—that is, a person to be amused and never betrayed into amusing—you will go free of criticism and incur no suspicions, excepting, may be, suspicions which incline to credit you with a hidden fund of all sorts of abilities.

The crediting dulness with abilities of which it is the only evidence is a very favourite exercise of discernment among people who know that it is wise not to be misled by superficial circumstances. Thus, if of two school-boy brothers one is a vivacious lad who likes his studies, learns quickly, and always brings his lesson perfect, and the other learns with toil and distaste only because he must, and as often as not prefers the dunce's place or the risk of a flogging to the tedious effort, there will always be some of the more overtly sagacious of their kinsfolk to shake their heads over the facile progress of the clever lad, as inevitably delusive because facile, and to predict the success of the future for the dull boy, on the ground that he is a dull boy. The fable of the hare and the tortoise has a wise moral; but that moral, well weighed, is a warning to hares not to go to sleep instead of running, rather than, according to the interpretation frequently fitted to it, a disapprobation of the natural speed of the hare as compared with the sober making haste which an anxious tortoise can achieve—and still less as compared with the pace of a tortoise indisposed to racing at all. It is probable, to say the least of it, that a hare who did not go to sleep would be at the winning-post before the staidest of tortoises, and one may venture to doubt

whether diligent dulness can match diligent aptness, but a great many Mentors and guardians of youth are possessed by the idea that all hares must by the nature of them take naps and all tortoises be somehow or other plodding on, and, with similar confusion of inference, they have a reverence for dulness in itself as safer and sounder than aptness. Many bright children, fond of their books, and using their young abilities to all advantage, are unwisely discouraged by admonitions that what they acquire *must* be superficial and soon to be forgotten because they are able to acquire so easily, and assurances that their dull comrades will in later grown-up days be solidly their superiors. The old hare and tortoise story thus applied dashes the energy of many a hare for one tortoise it spurs on.

But the respect for dulness as a sign of sound capacity is not extended to the ripening intellect only. A discreet amount of dulness will pass off any sane man for the possessor of great practical judgment; and, if his face be of the shape that smiles, he will be understood to be a shrewd and cautious observer. He can have a reputation for deep success in any department of learning or science or connoisseurship to which his taste may lead him; or he may wear the character of a general philosopher with thoughts that lie too deep for words. Dulness is not so good a certificate for a woman's intelligence—it is understood that speaking to the point by guesswork, with a promptness in answering questions rightly on wrong grounds, is the merit of a woman's mind; and the soundness which dulness infers is incompatible with this more ethereal quality—but the dull woman is pretty sure to be generally held to have a great deal more in her than she shows, and the brilliant woman will as surely be accused of not being so clever as she seems.

The dull man *nascitur non fit*. Yet, just as by the imitation of good models and much taking pains many a versifier has arrived at all the honours of the poet, a careful disciple might emulate the dull and secure their privileges. Few arts could be more conducive to the

enjoyment of their possessor than the art of dulness : not to have it is to be liable to be bored and fatigued by dull people wherever you go ; be dull yourself and you are master of the witty and the wise, wherever you find them, to make you diversion.

ENGLISH EXTRAVAGANCE.

WHEN a certain terrible heroine of About's is urged by the wealthy niggard she has made her husband to adopt his principles of economy and to accept, with him, for motto "*Dépenser peu, gagner beaucoup*," "No," she replies, "I know one much more intelligent and more amusing," and at a breath she converts him, for her motto is "*Dépenser beaucoup et gagner énormément*." According to our critic, M. Taine—a critic who certainly does not put on yellow spectacles when he wishes to examine us—this system of great expenditure and enormous gains which brought M. and Mme. Jeffs to bankruptcy is our English plan of thrift. We are not able, he says, to practice self-restraint, we must live at our ease, keep up a good appearance; we choose rather to add to our labour than to lessen our living; instead of retrenching we strain our means to the utmost; at the end of the year we have at the very best just made the two ends meet. *Trop de travail, trop de dépense*, is his epitome of our economical errors. It has not however escaped him that much of the over expenditure he blames is compulsory; he notes that we rarely save money, but he adds that a doctor, a lawyer, a landlord, has too many public or private calls on his purse, has taxes, subscriptions, education and journeys of his children, hospitality, horses, servants, *confortable*; and he, throughout his comments, treats the four last items as as inevitable by the laws of our social system as any of the others—which indeed

three of them are, for our hospitalities, our servants, and even our *comfortable* are no matters of choice but are imposed upon us as necessities of our social position, indispensable for maintaining it. It may sound wise philosophy to tell poor gentry to live only as their personal wants and tastes require, or as their purses easily allow, and take no heed of the what-people-say unreality we call position, but position, like many other unrealities, has an immense influence on our lives. To alter our social position is to alter, for good or bad, our habits, our opportunities, our acquaintance, our social, and frequently our material, prospects, to give good-bye to the life that has been familiar to us and learn our world anew. We cannot all of us afford to do this for ourselves and our children. We see too much to lose, even should we feel convinced of the ultimate prudence, from a pecuniary point of view, of the sacrifice of the airy merely borrowed thing, gentility. And in very many cases a man's assured social position is a most important part of his stock-in-trade, like his honesty and his skill, and to let it be damaged would be about as useful economically as if a labourer were to cut off one of his arms to save expense in shirt-sleeves. The struggle to keep up appearances, which is the misery of half the respectable homes in England, is not so merely ascribable to petty emulations and pretentiousness as moral censors find it their readiest wisdom to declare it. Those who are involved in it are frequently better aware than their severest satirists can make them that the blunt acceptance and acknowledgment of mediocrity, or even of poverty, would make their lives far easier and more enjoyable than they find them; that only to be relieved of their efforts to seem living in luxury and refinement would be in itself luxury and refinement; that their labours and their anxieties, their pinchings and their spendings are all being used for what brings them neither comfort nor true pleasure. But the things which they struggle for, knowing them not worth the struggle, represent something which is worth the struggle—that something for which we have no better name than position, but

which as often means self-respect, and which lost means decadence.

There are many people living, for their means, extravagantly, who would never strain their expenditure for the mere vanity of display or for love of luxury, who only want to live as they needs must to satisfy their acquaintances of their good breeding, their tradesmen of their solvency, and their servants of their gentility. Their misfortune is that, while of late years the cost of living has greatly increased, the standard of living has been raised too. But that the standard of living has been raised is easily said to be their own fault. "Who but themselves have raised it?" is the easy retort. It is not, however, the people for whom the standard has long been too high who have raised it, and are raising it: it is the people for whom it is not too high. There are, of course, among us in these days, as there have been in all societies in all days since money was, spendthrifts and cheats who rush foremost into the excesses of fashion and outmillionaire millionaires: but one may fairly set aside these, or count them among those with whom they for the while pass muster, in saying that costly ways are begun by those who do not feel the cost. When the proportion of wealthy persons in a community is very small, and when wealthy persons are only of the highest rank, such ways will never spread far; poorer persons, far from being under the compulsion of society to adopt them, would be thought guilty of a preposterous mimicry if they did so. But when the proportion of wealthy persons is so great as it now is in England, and when this leaven of riches permeates all ranks, the costly ways are so easily frequent as soon to have the overbearing force of custom, and the great social law of self-protection "Do what your neighbours do" impels people of moderate incomes, and then people of small incomes, to follow each other whither the rich are leading. In this there is, taking it on the whole, rank unwisdom for the multitude of the unwealthy; but yet, as has been said, in many instances this unwisdom has a wisdom in it and the poor man must take the fashion of the rich lest he become still poorer.

It is not easy to see what is to be done by people with small incomes to make head against the encroaching sea of troubles—for pleasures their luxuries are not to them—which is overtaking them. Canute did not make much of it when he tried to keep back the tide: and, having failed, he judiciously went away. But it is just the going away that is the impossibility; keeping back the tide is, in this matter, the thing to aim at, and how are we to do that? Luxury is, for people who cannot afford it, easily disdained when it comes in a coarse and materially sensual form; but now it takes the subtler form of grace and refinement. It is art, elegance, even simplicity; it is delicate cooking, choice flowers, Queen Anne homely brass fenders and honest square-backed furniture. Gorgeous vulgarity consumed less money than the *simplex munditiis* fashion of domestic luxuriousness of the present moment, and it offered its own antidote. We can most of us, after all, recognise the hideousness of a hideous fashion when it is also seriously expensive for our purses; but we cannot so easily recognise the expensiveness of a fashion which has fitness and beauty to recommend it. We have only therefore our instincts of economy to fall back on for our safeguard; and with the English those instincts are few.

A lady, who has been delivering a lecture on the Extravagance of Modern Life to pleased audiences in many places, speaks of the numerous cases of men spending hundreds a year and leaving “debts behind them and their families penniless.” So at least quotes a newspaper report. The statement seems a wide one. The leaving debts is no question of extravagance only, but of sheer dishonesty. Many men do commit this dishonesty, as many men commit other dishonesties, but the manner of the statement referred to would imply that this dishonesty is to be taken as the customary concomitant of extravagance of the kind expiated on—the extravagance, that is, of the numerous class of people who with incomes, professional or from capital, adapted to modest humility of the comfortable sort, or scarcely to that, strive after a standard of living only easily to be reached by the

wealthy. Such people, as a rule, if only for the thought of what people will say, pay their bills and do not run up debts to disgrace their memories. But, if it is exceptional that people who spend their means for appearances' sake spend more than they can succeed in paying, it is the rule that they leave their families penniless, or next door to it. M. Taine points out as an advantage in this English peculiarity that sons, expecting to have their incomes to earn, are awake to the necessity of energy and industry and from the first start on their careers prepared to push their own way. Probably this is so and English want of thrift may have its perpetual re-action, both present and progressive, on English energy. For the daughters, and above all for the widow, pennilessness has little compensation. But undoubtedly the father who spends liberally for good education for his children, and who places them in advantageous professions at the cost of a strain on his means which precludes him from putting by money to leave them, has done far more towards their prosperity after his death than if he had left them legacies of the sums he has spent upon them. It will not do to overlook this in discussing the "extravagance" of parents who "pinch and starve" to put their children into positions which require outlay.

Extravagance in ordinary things is a matter in which we must judge for ourselves and let our neighbours alone. Most of us have not money enough to spend as we would; we choose in what we will skimp ourselves and in what shall consist our luxuries. Some of us keep a plainer table than we like, in order to indulge a cherished taste for engravings, or books, or flowers; some of us are stingy in amusements to have the more to spend in travelling; some of us, for the sake of comparative lavishness in hospitalities, let the chairs and carpets in our unseen rooms go shabby: outsiders note the expenditure, but know nothing of the counter parsimony. Unless we know all sides of his life we have no business to accuse our neighbour of extravagance because he spends differently from ourselves. And, for ourselves, safety lies in not troubling ourselves too much about what

our neighbour thinks of our way of spending. He calls us extravagant, and he does not know of our secret thrift; he calls us stingy, and he does not know how scant are our means. We had better cut our own coat according to our own cloth and leave him to do the same. There would be less extravagance if we criticised each other less and lived more after our own beliefs.

WAITING TO BE READY.

“Look before you leap” is a wise proverb—indisputably wise. Rashness is not courage but its witless substitute, and hurrying we know not surely whither is pretty sure to befool us after one fashion or other. Blind Gloucester, for want of being able to look before his leaping, made a stumble on the downs by way of a spring from a stupendous altitude, and if, on the whole, his mistake could be accounted advantageous in its issue, it certainly made an impotent conclusion to a supreme resolve. And it may be that, in the practice of life, the failure which comes from leaping without sufficient preliminary verification of the ground is oftener that of having mistaken little for great, and concentrated all energies in what proves a stumble instead of a spring, than that of having underestimated the difficulty and flung oneself at an impossibility. Be that as it may, whichever mis-estimation of the leap to be made is the more frequent, either is pretty sure to be fatal to the object of the leaper—although, of course, in this as in other affairs of life there are instances of mistake proving better than wisdom, or failure the best success. If leapers in the dark, however, have sometimes had a special fortune of their own, akin to that which is said to favour fools and drunken men, to make their ignorance or their rashness prosperous, the instances savour too much of the marvellous to furnish encouragement to the indiscreet, and are too easily answered by hosts of examples the other way. Usually

success is due less to fortune, and less even to genius or ability, than to prudence, to the power of accurately estimating the force needed and the force possessed, and, for many kinds of success, no whit less to the power of accurately estimating the results needed for convincing others. When the wild goat and the grasshopper and the flea competed for the hand of the king's daughter it was for want of that last piece of wisdom the best jumpers let the worst prevail over them. For, since the prize was for who should jump the highest, the flea inappropriately sprang his utmost and nobody could see him up so high as he got; the grasshopper, keeping within range, yet sprang without measurement, hit the king's nose, and was out of the scoring; but the wild-goat, heedfully scanning his distance before he stirred, bounded to the princess's side where she sat on her chair of state, and was proclaimed to have jumped highest of the three because he had jumped to the prize. That is the way to look and to leap if you want to be a winner in the world.

But, if leaping without looking be unwise, it is not the only unwisdom in this matter. It is told of the fortunate wild goat that he waited so long motionlessly preparing that it began to be thought that he would never spring at all. But he did spring: and that is the difference between him and a large number of persons who live waiting to do what they mean to do. They are not idle persons who are here meant, not procrastinators; for they have a business of preparation and they are not delaying for the languid pleasure of delay, like those who like to think any by-and-by a better time than none. They are waiting to be ready to begin. They need some particular combination of circumstances, some vantage point which is to come to them instead of their going to it; they need more leisure, more money, more health, more something which is not yet theirs and likeliest never may be. Whatever the something is, it is no fancied requirement but really what to begin without is so difficult as to be justly discouraging and even perhaps to threaten impossibility. To start without it is to start like a lame man on pilgrimage without a crutch, or like a Hop

o' my Thumb on a race with the giant without the seven-leagued boots. But many times the waiting is none the wiser for that. If the thing needed is too long of coming and life is going by with what is to be done unbegun, or if the thing needed is from the first out of natural probability, it is worse than folly to wait, and we should begin the enterprise unready or we should resolutely put away the thought of it. Nothing is so weakening, morally, to energy as to be spending our time in one sort of duties while all the while we are counting a different and future sort of duties as our real outcome and judging what we do now as only our accidental use apart from the realities of our purpose. The desultoriness with which, it is often complained, very young single women, *demoiselles à marier*, carry on even their chosen tasks, and their wearying in good works when the freshness of first zeal has worn off, are unquestionably largely owing to the feeling, more or less conscious, that what they are about now does not belong to the life which they are waiting to begin when it comes to them, that, when as married women, they have arrived at their destined position and work, there will be no continuity between their present occupations and those which will date from their new and veritable starting-point. And much such a feeling of the irrelevance of the present clings to persons of either sex and any age and condition who are engaged in living a life which, to their minds, is not the earlier future but a substitute for the future. It is one thing to feel that you are setting a seed which is to be a tree, and another to feel that you are setting a seed which is to be a little plant with scarcely a summer's life and be rooted up to make room when you have your tree ready to plant in fit season.

It is very hard for a man who believes himself chosen by his nature and the fitness of things for some particular vocation, some achievement, some consecrating purpose, to set himself against his highest hopes and, putting his best into less fit work, accept, as it were, another man's destiny instead of his own. Yet if circumstances have, as circumstances do at times, somehow given him another

man's destiny by way of his own, and made nature and the fitness of things useless voices calling him whither he can by no means come, he can only make the best of himself by treating himself as somebody else, and doing his utmost with his life as circumstances have made it, he must, to be wise, absorb his faculties in it as if he never could have contemplated another. He must make himself feel that he has begun and has nothing to wait for.

But, though there are cases in which courage as well as wisdom requires that the waiting to be ready to begin should be ended by the renunciation of the idea of the proposed beginning, there are many cases more in which, unreadiness itself being the true cause of the unreadiness, the beginning is the real need for the being able to begin. Men wait to do easily what is only possible as the fruit of difficulty, they would have ease before effort, success before attempt. They are like the man who would by no means go into water before he was sure he could swim. Nothing great, nothing sure, can be accomplished so. The Columbus who will win new worlds must, sailing from the old, take his chance of storms which will prevent his seeing any world of land again. He must know what he can do if fate will, and he must be content to fail if, when he has tried all, fate rules that he shall fail. If he would succeed he must measure his strength and he must prepare; but often to have begun is a chief part of the preparation, and never will waiting, hand upon hand, for an impulse from without, the waft of a wind, the urging of an augurous moment, stand in lieu of quiet strenuousness and step by step determination in the teeth of wind and weather. *Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte*; but St. Denis tucked his head in his arm, under adverse circumstances, and started. A saint who, in his plight, had waited to be ready to begin, would never have made the first step and so never have achieved the miracle of his two miles' walk. *Prosit omen.*

AN IRREPRESSIBLE ARMY.

THE defect which Napoleon is said to have pointed out in English soldiers certainly seems to exist equally in English women; they do not know that they have lost the battle, and they go on all the same. They will not understand their case and retreat—and that is very hard on their antagonists, for it cannot be but disheartening and confusing to any combatants to find the out-manœuvred troops who ought, if they had but the sense to see it, to be flying from the field in disorder, obtusely standing to their guns and attacking and advancing and behaving themselves altogether as if it was they who were winning. Defeating such troops naturally gets fatiguing before the fight is over, and the result of their obtuseness is apt to be that their defeats culminate in a signal victory at last. And a signal victory is what the Women's Suffrage women resolutely affirm that they will have; they look upon a check as a mere matter of detail, part of the process. Such an incident, they consider, may not be exactly agreeable but it was to be looked for, and now it has happened the next thing is to go on going forward. Each time their Bill has been thrown out in Parliament they have instantly set to work holding more public meetings, printing more pamphlets, signing more petitions, and all the while they have steadily, and even rapidly, gained ground. And they accept with more than equanimity the augmenting violence of their opponents in the House of Commons, looking upon it as quite a cheering

circumstance, "for," say they, "the tremendousness of the efforts made to whip up a majority against us is in itself an assurance of the progress we are making; if the measure could be defeated with little trouble, only little trouble would be taken."

Their Bill to remove the Electoral Disabilities of Women has been six times rejected. No matter—or rather all the better; six is just a nice number for failures. That spider Robert Bruce saw six times fail to throw her thread and succeed the seventh is reported to have been similarly observed by other victors in a defeat stage of victory. As the Women's Suffrage women, whether from housewifely conscientiousness pure and uncorrupt or from Machiavellian policy, make it a point of honour to be notable, one must not venture to assume that any of them, sitting brooding in her own chamber at home, caught sight of the prognosticating insect at work on her walls; but she may have remarked one when she took her walks abroad, or in the house of a non-suffrage friend, and may have been inspirited for the coming effort. At all events, spider or no spider, the effort is to be. And there is no secret about it; the enemy is forewarned. Paragraphs in a dozen newspapers, evidently on authority, have informed all whom it may concern that there is to be another battle next session; the Bill will be voted on the seventh time.

The phalanx stands united, nothing changed in it; but there is a new leader. Mr. Jacob Bright, it is announced, has been compelled by the state of his health to relinquish that post, and Mr. Leonard Courtney accepts it. The Women's Suffragites may safely be congratulated on the successor they have found to the leader who has so long and so well earned their gratitude. To begin with, Mr. Courtney is a dauntless champion. His courage and his ears can stand any amount of assault. His recent prowess will be remembered—how when the oxen encompassed him, gaping upon him with their mouths as it were a ramping and a roaring lion, he stood Van Amburgh-like amid them, drank a glass of water, and went on with his speech. His advocacy of the cause

of which he is now elected chief advocate is no new matter; he was earnest for it when it was not merely unfashionable but unpopular. He is known to be possessed, not only of highly educated and proved ability, but of that practical perception of means and possibilities which is of all qualities—excepting perhaps the quality of selfishness—the surest safeguard against the fascinations of crotchets. It may perhaps without too much rashness be inferred from the Bulls of Basan episode just referred to that he is obstinate; and obstinacy is a very fine gift in the leader of a reform movement.

The demand of the Women's Suffrage societies continues to be what it was, in spite of the tempting provocation of their opponents to widen it to cover the case of married women. They accept with placidity—especially the married ones—any statements that may be made about the superiority, moral and mental, of wives to spinsters and widows; they are quite willing to admit that it will be a pity the advantages of the wisdom and experience of the women enhanced by husbands should be lost to the nation simply because they are so enhanced, but they are not going to run the risk of asking too much. They content themselves with taking the electoral qualification as they find it and claiming that all and any women who have this qualification, with no disqualification apart from the fact of womanhood, should be allowed to vote; if, because of laws which affect the status and property of married women, only spinsters and widows can fulfil the conditions, they do not hold themselves responsible for the exclusion of the British matrons so highly venerated—once a year—in the House of Commons. They do not feel themselves called on to defend it; and they do not feel themselves called on to insist on a revision of the conditions of married life as a preliminary to asking for the suffrage for such women as are at present living under precisely the conditions prescribed by the electoral laws for electors. Probably they find it all the easier to keep within the limits prescribed them by those confounders of logic, things as they are, that they take it that there can be no

real division of the interests of spinster, wife, and widow, so long as every one woman has the possibility of being in turn all the three. This is a view of the case which seems to escape certain orators who, in the edifying thrills of a comprehensive uxoriousness, raise the war-cry of all the married women against all the single ones, and, so to speak, shy their wives' wedding-rings in their aunts' and sisters' faces.

But, supposing Mr. Courtney, like a modern and more fortunate Conon, to have led on the 11,000 virgins, more or less, not to shipwreck and martyrdom but, by good steering and good fighting, to the reward of the franchise in this world, what will they do with it? "Plunge England into interminable war," says one; "Sacrifice the honour of the country for the sake of peace," says another; "Bring us under the yoke of the priesthood, and set up an abject conservatism," says one; "Abolish morality and masculine authority, and hurry us into political anarchy," says another. There are fears that they will make matrimony illegal, suppress cooking, and have the Prime Minister chosen for his good looks and his skill at lawn-tennis. It is also apprehended that they will at once throw off all their present customs, tastes, virtues, and attractions—which, as is well known, are the compensations bestowed on them by nature for the absence of a vote—and will become coarse-featured unmannerly hybrids, men-hating, and hateful to men. They will wear coats and trousers, they will refuse to sew on shirt-buttons, they will leave off *poudre de riz* and auricomiferous waters, they will be Bishops and Judges, and will break all the commandments. And they will wind up by enacting a law against men which will compel the men to rise in arms to resist it, and there will be a sanguinary pitched battle between all the males and all the females in the country, in which the physical force of thews and sinews will prevail and so most of the women will be shot down, and then everybody left alive can start fair again and there will be no more votes for women.

Qui vivra verra. The women will get their votes some day, for the men will get tired of refusing them. And

then it will probably be found out that it was never worth while to refuse. Women will be women, and men will be men, as before, and no less able than before to dazzle themselves with each other's merits when in love and to discern each other's defects when out of love. In matters of legislation their interests will be found to be the same, with the same modifications by the same circumstances, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred; and the hundredth will be some matter specially affecting women, in which it will come to be admitted that it is, in the long run, to the advantage of men also that women should have a voice. The women, as a class, will be the better by all the educating and nerving influence of the suffrage and its stamp of equal rights and responsibilities, and the men, as a class, will be none the worse; while, as a nation, men and women together will gain by the removal of an unnecessary inequality, which, like all unnecessary inequalities, disturbs the balance of relations and lessens the just importance of superiorities that really have their reason.

*PARLIAMENTARY FRANCHISE FOR
WOMEN RATEPAYERS.*

THE National Women's Suffrage Society, by announcing the subject of its public meeting at St. George's Hall, under, not the familiar heading of Women's Suffrage, but the restrictive and more explanatory title of "Parliamentary Franchise for Women Ratepayers," has made so judicious an attempt at forestalling criticism by definition that it is a pity it will be quite thrown away. The Society's object manifestly is to place in unmistakeable prominence the exact claim they are making for their clients, and to restrain their opponents from confuting their arguments for it by replies against claims which they are not making. But it is not the way of opponents in any matter to allow the other side to limit attack to where it can most easily be met. Taken by itself, on its own merits, a measure which would do no more than allow certain women whom circumstances have placed in a position of independent responsibility to have the vote by right of their possessing the same legal qualifications as their male neighbours, involves no particular principle but that of commonplace justice. If there is disturbance of the relation of the sexes, of the Paradisaical, or Miltonic, subordination of women, it is in allowing them to hold independent positions at all. The whole mischief is done when once a woman is permitted to take control over herself, to manage her own affairs, to be mistress of a house without a master, to pay rates and taxes with her

own money in her own name. The State, and society, have accepted her, Eve without an Adam to obey, as an authorised being, and made a citizen of her; the giving or withholding a vote in the election of a Member of Parliament for her borough can scarcely affect the relation of the sexes after that, though it may very much affect the worth of her citizenship to her and its use to her country. And in a country where, with not men enough to marry all the women and polygamy still forbidden, the women who are spinsters and widows cannot fairly be condemned for their solitary state, and where living is too expensive for men to take the cost of their female collateral relatives upon them and leave no woman unprovided with a man's house to live in under a man's guardianship, the majority of men would feel, if the case were allowed to go to them fairly, that the class of women whom Mr. Courtney's bill would enfranchise are reasonably entitled to the help towards self-protection of the electoral vote. But the Society which exists for the purpose of getting this bill passed, charm it never so wisely with judicious headings to its cards and posters, will still find the deaf adders argue on their own themes. In a little while one member of Parliament will, in opposition to the bill, defend marriage, another the Bible, another the right of Man to have his dinner cooked by Woman; one will shudder over the feuds the bill's fatal gift would raise between man and wife, another be merry over the influx of lady-bishops to come of it.

It must always be well in taking any step to see what is the next step to which it naturally leads, and what again the next. But this form of wisdom may be pushed too far. Unless the subsequent steps are inevitable if the first be taken, we need not refuse to move at all because we do not want to go further than a certain point, or because, from where we stand, it is not possible to see round the corner, and we might not like the road beyond it. In our own small daily affairs we should never get any good done if we never dared make a useful change lest some other change we think not useful should afterwards seem to somebody its logical, though by no

means its compulsory or necessary, sequence. We make the change so far as it is to our purpose, and we stop short of the point where we think it would begin to work amiss. English liberties, as we all know, have been established and legislated for in the same piecemeal but practical fashion, and there seems no earthly reason why the question of extending the franchise to a special class of women whom our laws and customs recognise as qualified citizens in all other respects should be treated as if the desire for it could pledge its supporters, or why its success could pledge the country, to even the smallest advance beyond it in the same direction—let alone to a seven-leagued-boot rush towards putting the men and the women in each other's places and governing England by the laws of the Amazons.

The women for whom enfranchisement is being asked have a definite and, all fair reasoners will admit, reasonable claim. It is a generally admitted principle that taxation and representation should go together, that those who put the money in the national purse should all alike have so much share in controlling the spending of it as comes of a voice in choosing the national representatives in Parliament. But these many women—about a seventh of the number of the present male voters, it is calculated—are, as householders and ratepayers, sharing their full burden of taxation with the male voters, and are politically helpless. Their case is manifestly a strong one. They have a right, and the country has a right, to require that it shall have due consideration. It is only proper that all objections there may genuinely seem to be against granting them the political privilege of their responsibilities should be brought forward and fully urged, and that, if on careful examination it should seem that this act of impartiality to them could be injurious to the commonwealth, it should continue to be withheld. But it is not fair to drown discussion of their claim in denunciations of revolutions in the airy future with which it has nothing to do; in arguments founded on the duty of the wife's submission to the husband—the women in question being husbandless; in combating a principle of

the parity of the sexes in all points which the bill not only does not seek to establish, but which it does not even insinuate. Nor is it fulfilling the duty of honest discussion to meet such a claim by assertions of the superiority of married women over single and of the reasons for believing that the wife's mental fitness to vote would be no less, or would be greater, than that of the spinster and the widow. Married women might, or might not, make better voters than the others, but this is not a question of a fancy franchise to be created on competitive examination principles, but of a claim to the existing franchise in virtue of the possession of the qualifications now established by law. It is no just answer to say "You are women under your own control, recognised by the law as in the position of men, and you are householders and ratepayers and so have men's qualifications for the vote; but your betters, being wives, are not in this position and have not these qualifications: therefore you ought not to have the vote."

It is quite true that the granting the women in question the vote, and so removing from them all legal stamp of inferiority on the ground of sex, must have effects reaching further than to themselves individually only, and no discussion on the subject would be complete which ignored this fact. We should not find so many married women prominent as workers in the Women's Suffrage Society if it were not generally felt among them that to remove the stamp of inferiority from the women on whom it is inflicted on the ground of sex alone, is to remove it from all women, and that the result must be favourable to the general position of women altogether. The disqualification of only married women would be of course felt in its true light, that is as one not of sex but of circumstances only—no worse a stigma than is put upon a son living in his father's house on his father's income—and it would bring with it none of that sense of humiliation with which so many women now look upon the position given to women in a nation in which every man and no woman (Queens excepted, but then they are rare) is held to be capable of feeling an interest in the

commonwealth. The disqualification of sex alone which presses on independent women is unquestionably a marked disparagement of womanhood, and it is not unnatural to suppose that its removal would gradually and indirectly have its effect on the general conception of the moral and mental position of women, and therefore on the position itself. If evil consequences can be apprehended from such a result, our legislators and those who seek to influence them ought to look into that part of the matter narrowly. No objection based on any result genuinely deducible from the proposed measures can be irrelevant or unfair. But to discuss, apropos of a Bill for not withholding votes from husbandless females who have achieved the masculine distinction of paying rates and taxes, the theory of marriage, Adam and Eve, ministering angels, Tennyson's Princess, physiology, psychology, and things in general, is—may be honest.

Clever Alice went down to Hans in the beer cellar, and, while the beer ran, noticed a hatchet in what seemed to her a threatening place. Clever Alice at once perceived that, when she was married to Hans and had had a son and the son was grown up and just going to be married, the son might go into the cellar to draw beer for his betrothed, and the hatchet would tumble down on him and chop off his head. Clever Alice explained the danger, Hans listened and lamented, and the beer ran away unnoticed and left the barrel empty. Clever Alice was honest.

THE DOMESTIC ECONOMY CONGRESS, 1878.

THE second yearly congress on Domestic Economy and Elementary Education, held at Manchester, has certainly had one sort of success; it has attracted public attention. And if, as some will say, it has had no other success, it has at all events been useful in doing this much towards getting people in general, the people who live illogically and have small enthusiasm for sciences and systems, to take an understanding interest in the proceedings and various projects of the reformers of the old empiric art of housewifery into the new Science of Domestic Economy. For there is great risk of this most practical of subjects being left completely in the hands of doctrinaires, and a little of that valuable ballast provided by the rough-and-ready instincts of expediency, the uninquiring adherence to things as they are, and the prejudices of the commonplace, would make the future of the movements which the Society of Arts is endeavouring to promote by Congresses considerably more hopeful. At present there is really too much zeal, too much thoroughness, too much tempest in a teapot. Ladies and gentlemen of much information on many subjects have, apparently quite independently of the world's experience before them, discovered that some of those subjects—such as chemistry, physiology, cloacal science, natural philosophy, and so forth—have a direct bearing on everyday matters belonging to the business of the cook, the housemaid, or the “matron of all works:”

they have also discovered that Englishwomen are bad cooks, that any ordinary French working woman could give lessons to any ordinary "thorough" cook at high wages, with her kitchenmaid and perhaps scullerymaid to boot to serve her, in preparing an acceptable meal—being her superior alike in skill, cleanliness, and thrifty management. On these data they have set to work to invent a new science, and England is to be made regenerate under the auspices of Domestic Economy.

England, presented, amid a flourish of trumpets, with this great gift of a new science, seems to be in two minds whether to accept it as an invaluable acquisition or to decline it as new-fangled. But the fact is England is in much such a position as a woman who is being shown, under the guise of a new bonnet, her own old one revived and new trimmed to the fashion. Domestic economy is to teach women cooking, cleanliness, thrift, home rules for health, the management of children, needlework, how to choose and to store provisions, how to choose clothing, how to make it, and how to keep it lasting. But there is nothing new in this: modern advance, especially in sanitary and hygienic doctrine, modern habits, and even modern retrogression, have somewhat changed in some of these points what our women must do from what their grandmothers did, but less than the practice of our doctors, our builders, our provision purveyors, our manufacturers, our diners out, has been changed from that of their predecessors. The theory and practice of household skills is no more a science left for the nineteenth century to discover and teach to women for the first time than are the theory and practice of any of the skills and trades influencing household skills which time has improved or deteriorated but has not made superfluous. If Domestic Economy is new, something which taught such women as would learn them cooking, cleanliness, thrift, home rules for health, the management of children, needlework, how to choose and to store provisions, how to choose clothing, how to make it, and how to keep it lasting, is older than the English nation. For some hundred years it was known in our tongue as *housewifery*, but the word, like

many other good meaningful word, at last found its condemnation in its merit of homeliness and all but disappeared ; and *house-keeping*, which still continues allowable, has failed to take effective place as its synonym. Thus, like the man who, if he did not discover America, because it had been discovered already, could give it a name, domestic reformers have been able to impose a name of their own on our grandmothers' pet virtue. In their time women, in whatever class of life, when they fairly knew and practised, according to the lights of their day, the duties of home work or home supervision were called good housewives ; next such women were good housekeepers ; now they will be good domestic economists.

Under whatever name the work of women who have to fill domestic offices in their husbands' or fathers' homes, or as servants, is to be taught, there is no doubt that at present it needs teaching and is not taught. It is the fashion to reproach women of the well-to-do middle and upper classes wholesale with this state of things, ascribing it to their personal holding back from active share in the household labours, and ascribing that again to their selfish indifference to home duties. This is hardly fair. The changes in our habits and our hours, the changes, above all, in the relations between servants and employers, make the lady mistress's joining her servants in their tasks undesirable and well-nigh impossible ; but those same changes have added so largely to the lady mistress's duties and cares in other points that many an anxious gentlewoman would feel it rest to exchange her responsible inactivity for the bustling vigour of the notable managers who presided over unæsthetic homes in the days of roast beef hospitalities, and envies her cook and her housemaid their mechanical tasks with a beginning and an end to them. There is no need to assume that because the duties of the mistress of a household have changed with other changes they have lessened, still less that they are being neglected or wantonly abolished. But under the present system young ladies do not grow up familiar with domestic operations from having lived among them from babyhood,

and when as new-wed wives they come to the duties of, not merely ruling probably incompetent servants, but of teaching them their work, they find that, even if the servants would consent to learn of them, they are not themselves fitted for instructresses. They have instead to learn by degrees, partly from the very servants whose incapacity they can perceive generally but not guide to better things, partly from their experiences of failure, partly from books of advice and recipes which, good or bad, have always been plentiful. Domestic service under them cannot be a solid education in housewifery for a young woman of the working classes, as it might have been, even without that close personal supervision by them which no servants in these days would accept, if they had received even only book and lecture instruction in household arts and processes. Experienced and conscientiously industrious servants, the best trainers of all to practical domestic economy, are fewer and fewer as time goes on: and girls in service, more than half ashamed of being employed in housework at all instead of being "young ladies" like the seamstresses and shop-girls, teach each other their slipshod and wasteful ways of "how not to do it."

The papers read at the Manchester Congress were, without exception, in favour of teaching girls domestic economy—cooking more particularly—by a school curriculum, as it is already decided by the London School Board to do in its locality: and Sir Henry Cole advocated most strongly the establishment of a National College of Domestic Economy—a proposal which seems somewhat like erecting a steam-engine to crack a nut; although it is true that "the army of elementary teachers cannot be trained to know all the technicalities of cooking, health, thrift, household management, or, perhaps, even needle-work," and one is no more able to differ from Sir Henry Cole in his opinion that there must be special teachers, with other than a literary training, for Domestic Economy than to be surprised that "at first Domestic Economy was not understood by Her Majesty's Inspectors." Oxford and Cambridge do train very excellent practical experts

in one of the branches, but the education of those experts is conducted in the college kitchens, and has not hitherto been allowed to entitle them to a University degree. This neglect of our Universities to honour academically some of their greatest men may be an argument the more in favour of Sir Henry Cole's new college. At all events it is easier to laugh at his ideal institution than to see where the requisite teachers of the new science are to be trained without it. They must not only be able to cook but to lecture, and they must not only be able to lecture on cooking but they must be able to do it in the impressive and scholastically technical manner due to the dignity of science. Otherwise one might have ventured to suggest that, for the cooking department, which, with only needlework anywhere near behind it, is the great and foremost subject of the Domestic Economy reformer's efforts, a batch of French cook-maids from small *bourgeois* households would be the best teachers for the object in view.

As to teaching household processes in the elementary schools, for elementary education it certainly is an evil that girls whose only opportunities of intellectual training are those given them at these schools, and whose school career is necessarily timed to terminate while they are still children, should have a large portion of their school hours appropriated to household arts which could better be learned with opportunities of household practice. But, on the other hand, the evil of the common ignorance, slovenliness, and indifference as to these important home technicalities, of working women is so great to themselves and to the nation that something must be sacrificed to impress them with a respect for housewifery. If the mother cannot teach needlework the schoolmistress must; if the girls have no chance anywhere else of seeing clean sensible cooking they must have it "demonstrated" in class-rooms. It would be over sanguine to expect the pupils to learn much serviceably in such a way, but one thing they will certainly learn, and that is that it would be creditable to them to excel in such matters. Leaving

school with this feeling and not entirely ignorant of processes, with, too, the need for care and cleanliness drilled into their minds, many of them will enter service anxious to improve; and domestic service thus rehabilitated could not but become their best training school in household skills. Better trained servants, marrying, will be better trained managers of their husbands' homes, and their children will have in them better patterns of housewifery. And so improvement may make improvement till home and domestic service are, as they ought to be, sufficient without turning schoolrooms into kitchens and planning colleges to train cooks and seamstresses—or seamsters are the professors to be?

The commonplace advisers we hope for will surely notice that nobody advocating the advancement of Domestic Economy has given any sign of being aware that the cleaning processes need quite as much looking after as the culinary processes. Cooking is no worse than it was fifty years ago, but indeed improved and improving—in consequence, evidently, of the frequent employment in wealthy households of French *chefs*, whose teachings spread on from their subordinates, and also partly in consequence of the continental trips of masters and mistresses who acquire a taste for lighter and more varied cooking than our own and do something, the mistresses at all events, to indoctrinate their cooks. But scrubbing and scouring and burnishing and many other of the various cleansing arts known especially as “housework” have grown scarcely less than obsolete; some of them, though not forgotten, have come to be omitted as troublesome, and such as are ostensibly practised are done perfunctorily or destructively, or, more usually, both. Domestic Economy might well offer some instruction on the materials and methods for cleaning different substances—metals, glass, wood, marble, for instances—information for want of which many well-meant mistakes are made, and which really can be perfectly conveyed by book or lecture—and might as easily explain details and give general advice on the duties of her calling to the

housemaid as to the sick-nurse and to the washerwoman. And, for the practice of dexterity in important home duties, a class for scrubbing boards wholesomely clean and sweeping the dust out of corners is, after all, as needful as one for cooking.

THE END.

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