

Mother's Ear

A WORD IN MOTHER'S EAR: WHEN NURSING AN INFANT, AND IN THE MONTHS THAT COME BEFORE THAT TIME.

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SEED CORN.

From 'Songs of an English Esau.'

'It's but for a year or two, sweetheart; a year, at the utmost twain,
And then, rich with the gold of our getting, we'll sail back home again.
It's six days over the ocean, and six over mountain and plain,
And who that had courage to venture, ever ventured in vain?
The may will be sweet in the meadows, and welcoming hands will wait
To cling to our hands, my darling, when we drive to the old white gate.
It's only a twelve days' journey; it's only a twelve-months' play;
Its May and the hope time, Mary! It will surely be always May.'

The waves sang them 'Westward to fortune'; but somewhere a seaman cried,
'Farewell to you, seed corn of England.' Closer she clung to his side—
Through gloom of forests gigantic, by the wan gray waves of the lake,
She answered their 'Never, never,' with 'Only a year for his sake.'
With a laugh for long years she laboured, making pretence to play
At the 'chores' that withered her beauty and wore her young heart away,
Until Hope crept into the forest, and one who lurked at the door
Heard a wife to a husband whisper, 'Only a year or two more.'

The years stole past whilst they laboured, unnoticed on mossy feet,
And one by one to the silence passed the comrades they longed to meet,
Till the lad and lass who started with a cheer from the old white gate,
Had they come home crowned as victors, would have won their crowns too late.
The lines came into his forehead, and the spring went out of his stride;
The blue was washed from a woman's eyes, the laugh of a young heart died.
If you fix your eyes on the sky line, you see not the road you roam:
These saw but the fields of England, they heard but the songs of home.

There's a farm where the buffaloes pastured, a patch from the forest torn,
Where the flag of his mother country waves over the rippling corn;
There's a piece in the world's mosaic, a thought in a new world's brain,
A haunting presence of England in city and forest and plain;
There are trails that his feet have trodden, though she lies under the sod,
The love that she bore for her mother-land, her faith in that land's God,
These linger. The seed corn sees not the wealth of the waving field;
The sower alone at his harvest shall measure the cost and yield.

—CLIVE PHILLIPS-WOLLEY.

A CHANCE INVITATION.

Mrs. Nelsh in London Daily Mail.

"You'll be sure to come, Dick?"
"My dear Cynthia, when am I not 'sure to come' to you?"

"You are such a comfort," sighed my cousin thankfully.

"Thank you, Cynthia."

"You see, you talk to old ladies," continued Cynthia, "and you do take in dull people I can't send in to dinner with anyone else."

"I see—on the principle 'sweets to the sweet,'" I murmured resentfully.

"And house parties are such a bore to arrange," continued Cynthia, ignoring my aggrieved tone, "and Vernon can't bear me to bother him."

"That is the worst of being a good and popular hostess," I said, "for you are bound to make your husband happy, and yet mix the right people, or lose your reputation."

"I have secured a lion for next Saturday, Dick—at least, I mean a lioness."

"Really," I said, "is she very alarming?" Cynthia nodded triumphantly. "No, she's delightful. I met her at Lady Alingham's—you know, that nice woman who knows everybody who has done anything, and where you never know whether you are going to sit next to the future Prime Minister, the latest thing in pianists, or Somebody's Homemade Whole-Fruit Jam."

"And you met your lioness there?"

Cynthia nodded again.

"Yes; it's Margaret Black—you know, the woman who wrote 'Life's Paths,' or 'The Divers Ways of Life,' or some name like that—I know it was awfully clever, and Frank said he would not have it in the house."

"What is the lady like—is she one of the dull ones to be given to me?"

"Oh, no," said Cynthia. "On the contrary, Dick, she is most amusing and very clever—at least I have always heard she was—you see, I've only met her once. Frank says she is fiendishly clever, but that's only his way of admiring her."

"And you have only seen her once, and yet you ask her here to stay?"

"Why not?" retorted Cynthia, a faint flush rising to her face. I met her at Lady Alingham's; besides, you know what it is—you happen to sit next to a woman who tells you she is fond of motoring, and never gets a chance to motor, and then—oh! I don't

know," broke off Cynthia, laughing. "I believe my motor-car is responsible for a lot of my invitations."

"I see—"

"Besides, that's not the point. She's one of those women you know awfully well in five minutes, and I wanted to have a well-known writer in my party this week-end—and, anyhow, she's coming, and she's a very celebrated authoress, and you must take her entirely under your charge, Dick."

"Don't frighten me, Cynthia; women writers frighten me horribly."

"Oh! but she isn't a bit like some of them," said my cousin airily; "her hair is quite tidy, and she has a waist, and she's thoroughly nice, and has a very low voice; and now I'll tell you what I especially want you to do."

"I await your commands, my dear Cynthia."

"Well, I want you first to get all her books for me. I have read them, of course; but I must look them over again, as I am rather mixed about the characters, and I want you to talk about them to the rest of the people."

"To sort of coach them up, in fact?"

"That's it," said Cynthia, "and tell old Mrs. Burningham the names of the books; but don't let her read them, because they're rather improper, and you know what she is for lecturing people, and she would certainly lecture Miss Black if she got hold of 'Divers Ways.'"

"And authoresses cannot bear to be lectured, I suppose?"

"Of course not," snapped Cynthia, "and neither can you."

Miss Margaret Black arrived this morning. She is a very harmless little lioness, with soft dark hair and soft brown eyes, and an exceedingly gentle way of speaking. Personally, I should have thought her a humanizing ministering angel rather than an intellectual genius, and I can better picture her lowering the blinds for a suffering invalid or even romping on the nursery floor than taking mental shorthand notes of house-parties or writing clever novels. However, Cynthia tells me Miss Black spends all her time taking clever mental shorthand notes. I don't know in the least what mental shorthand notes can be, as they sound a little terse and snappy; but Cynthia says she is really very witty, though I dare say she would not waste her wit on conversation with a person so unimportant as myself. . . . On the whole, I was greatly relieved at the lamblike appearance of the little lioness, and I promptly and frankly told her so.

"But why should you be frightened of poor little me," said the owner of the soft brown eyes.

I didn't think it sounded at all like a successful novelist to call herself "poor little me," but combined with the big, dark eyes, and the soft dark hair, I thought the expression very attractive.

It was four days later when I strolled into Cynthia's boudoir, and, seating myself, looked firmly at her. "My dear Cynthia, I don't know what you think about your lioness by this time, but —"

"I've hardly seen her," said Cynthia. "You see I've been so busy, and there are so many of them to look after"—she paused—"but you seem to have kept her all to your self, and as to last night at the Murchisons' dance—" I felt myself blush under Cynthia's eyes. "I don't know what you've done, I interrupted severely, ignoring the hint, "but you'll excuse my saying so, I believe you are making a howling mess of your little celebrity."

"What do you mean, Dick?"

"I mean that she knows nothing whatever of her own books, and has apparently never even heard of them!"

"Pah! mere modesty. You don't know how modest real talent is."

"But I assure you—," I began.

"I tell you I've read them," said Cynthia, "and they're very, very clever indeed."

"But she isn't clever, not in the least—for which thank heaven," I added devoutly under my breath.

"She is," retorted Cynthia; "she must be, or she couldn't have written 'Divers Ways.'"

"I don't believe she wrote it herself," I said stoutly.

"What rubbish!—then who did?"

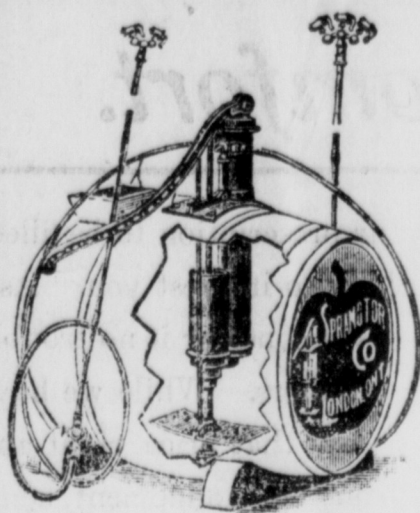
"Did she tell you she actually wrote them?" I persisted.

"No, of course not," said Cynthia, "but I know she did, and I've told everyone about her books, and they've all been reading up her last novel and—but here she is—you can ask her yourself, as you seem to have taken her under your wing," and Cynthia, laughing, left the room.

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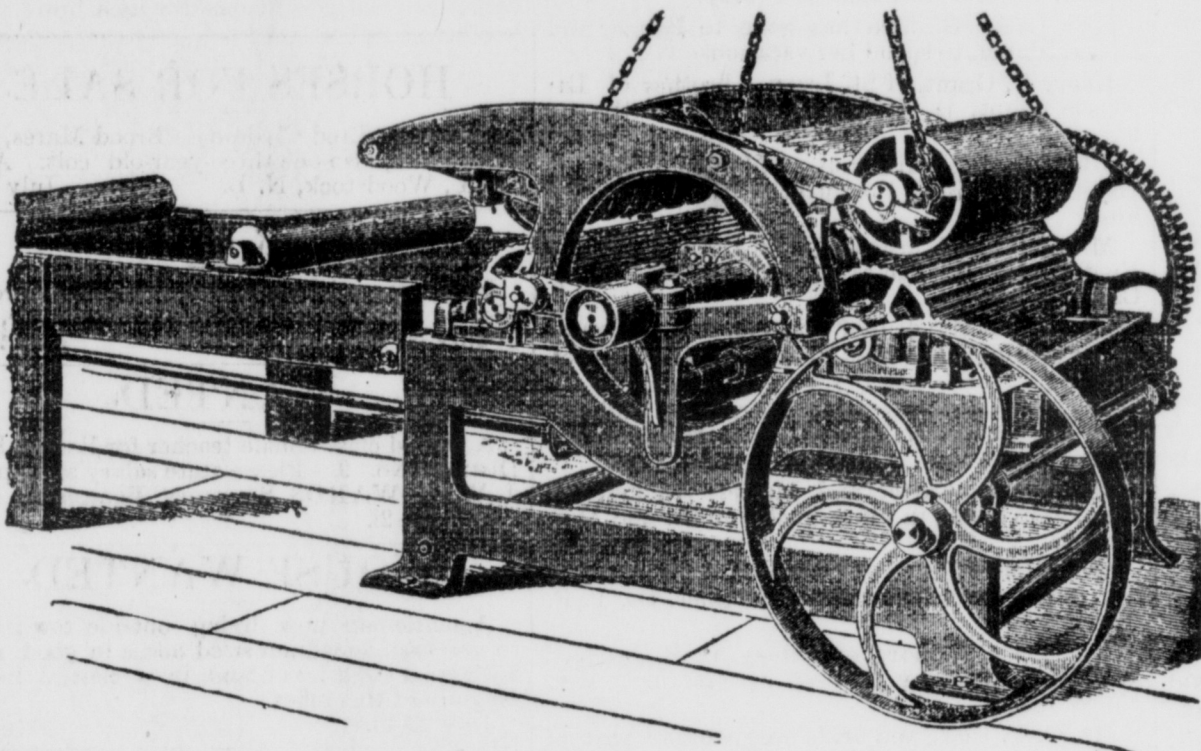
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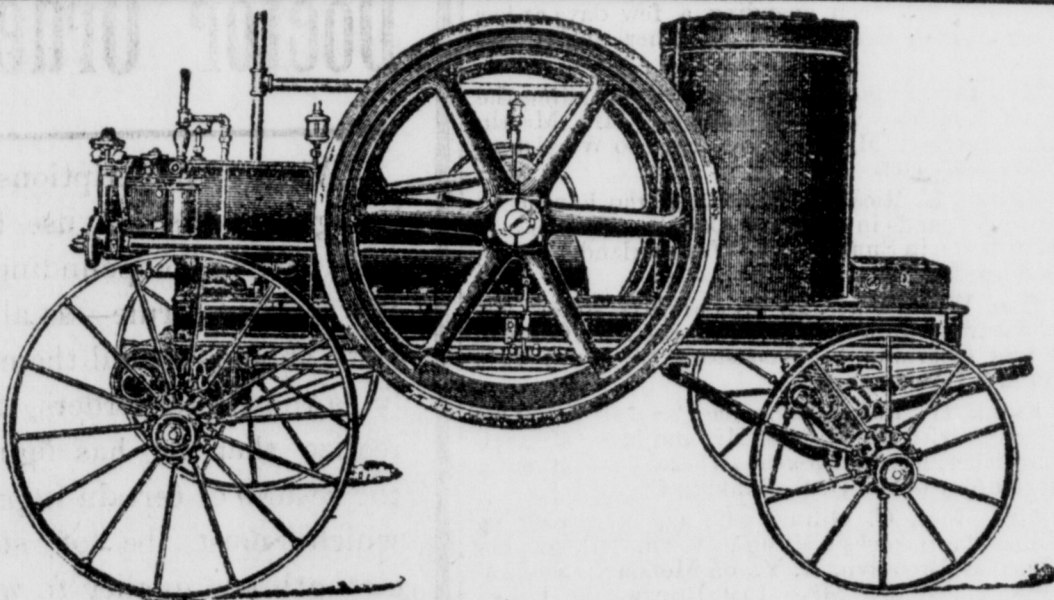
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"I've two questions to ask you Miss Black—if I may—and dare!"

The soft dark eyes were raised to mine in some astonishment. "You look very serious," she said, smiling.

"They are very serious questions," I replied, gravely, "and one of them is —"

"Well!"

"How many novels have you written?"

Miss Black stared at me in utter amazement. "How many novels?—what, me? she cried, with ungrammatical directness. "Why, none, of course. Whatever made you think I had?" A sudden light broke in on her. "Do you mean to say you have been taking me for Margaret Black, my writing cousin?" She drew a little away from me. "I'm sorry for your disappointment," she added, stiffly, "but I'm not in the least clever—in fact, mother says I can't even write a decent letter."

Her voice was very cold, indeed, and something was clearly vexing her. She evidently thought my open admiration had been merely for her talent—I, who can't bear women with talents. I drew a little nearer, lessening the space that she had made; and felt it was time to put my other question.

"Well," she said, quite sharply, for so soft a woman, "and what else did you want to ask me?" She was half-laughing, yet half-annoyed. "Do you want to know if I paint, or if I sing? Because I may as well tell you I can't do either. I'm only the most ordinary, dull, domestic female." She paused, and added impatiently, "Well, what is it that you want?"

I drew a little closer still, and, bending, touched the soft, dark hair. "I want," I said, "to ask if you'll marry me."

Blue Blood.

(Milwaukee 'Sentinel.)

'The tad of tracing one's ancestors back as far as possible has a firmer hold in the East than in the West,' said Mortimer E. Walker, of Boston. 'One winter I spent some time in a certain Southern city which is noted for its blueblooded and exclusive inhabitants. There was much jealousy in the highest social circles, as there were two factions which desired the honor of being the original grandees. Finally the leader of one faction gathered together a few friends and started a society known as the Daughters of Ferdinand de Soto.'

This was supposed to be the ultra fashionable society of the city, and one by one the aspiring matrons produced the indisputable proof that they were eligible for membership. Finally one of the younger set had the temerity to try and force an entrance into the charmed circle. She was blackballed almost unanimously.

'She determined to be revenged, and to that end did a little real investigating which was more thorough than any ancestor hunt which was ever made in that city. The result of her investigations she made public, and the result was the utter rout of the Daughters. For the young woman proved beyond the question of a doubt that Ferdinand de Soto had died a bachelor.'

Tom Masson on Matrimony.

To keep orange blossoms from fading, never put them in hot water.

When a girl marries an Englishman she frequently spells alter with an H.

Married folks cannot live on rice and old shoes as a steady diet.

It is almost impossible for the best husband and wife not to have an occasional understanding.

After the first year the sofa never creaks.

About the only thing in a honeymoon that can be renewed is the trousseau.

It makes a great difference whether the girl's father gives her away, or her friends.

Sometimes, through her husband, a woman meets some delightful men.

The wedding ring is no respecter of persons. As the first wife sows, the second wife reaps.

Never Again.

It was a pitiful mistake, an error sad and grim. I waited for the railway train; the light was low and dim. It came at last, and from a car there stepped a dainty dame, and, looking up and down the place, she straight unto me came. "Oh, Jack!" she cried, "oh, dear old Jack!" and kissed me as she spoke; then looked again, and, frightened, cried, "Oh, what a bad mistake!" I said, "Forgive me, maiden fair, for I am not your Jack; and as regards the kiss you gave, I'll straightway give it back." And since that night I've often stood upon that platform dim, but only once in a man's whole life do such things come to him.

Senator David Russell.

A pretty good thing got by the keen eyes of the Montreal Gazette proof reader recently. In its issue of the 14th instant The Gazette declared that an important contribution to the debate in the Senate was the speech of "Senator David Russell." Senator David, city clerk of Montreal, a well-known litterateur, was the man who made the speech. In some mysterious manner the name of the promoter had been inserted in the copy in place of that of the Montreal Senator.