

"ASTRA'S" TALKS WITH GIRLS.

[Correspondents seeking information in this department should address their queries to "ASTRA," Progress, St. John.]

I really think, girls, that I had better give up trying to translate French for you! After the woful hash the compositor made of my two poor little sentences last week I feel too dispirited to try again, and I think plain unornamental English seems to be more my forte. I can just pluck up sufficient courage to ask "Jess," of Nova Scotia, to read *que voulez vous* for *que voulez vous*, and *qu'est-ce que c'est* for the other quotation.

I hope you all enjoyed your Christmas, girls, and that you will write and tell me about it, and about your presents, and the day generally. Of course Christmas is not quite here yet, but it will be by the time you read this, so I don't mind telling you that I am going to hang up the pup's stocking. What a time he will have! Now, girls! just a word about the New Year. Do you know, I think you will find it much better not make too many good resolutions. You see when you make a great many they are not only hard to keep, but hard to remember, and I find that one feels a great deal meaner about breaking a nun than only a few. Suppose we all try making one, or two—and keeping them? In conclusion, as the clergymen say, may you all spend a very happy New Year.

ROBIN, St. John.—Where are you, Robin? Have you flown to the sunny south for the winter, or have you quite forgotten your friend Astra? Are you going to let Christmas pass by without pecking at the window frame, to wish me a merry Christmas, like the robins on the Christmas cards? I wish I could send you a card myself, and all the other girls, too, for that matter. Send me a line when you can, to let me know you are well.

WILFUL MISS.—Yes, some of the girls choose odd names, but I suppose the odder the better, as they would be all the more difficult to find out. My dear child how can I tell you? I never danced the miltaire in my life. I hurt my back some years ago and have scarcely danced a step since, so all the newer dances are an unknown quantity to me. The correspondent you ask about is a lady. I believe a glass of hot, very hot, milk taken just as you are going to bed will make one sleep "right around the clock." I really do not know of any way of arranging photographs on the wall. I never cared much for them, as they catch the dust in winter and the flies in summer, and so never look really fresh after the first few weeks. I have been in Nova Scotia so little that I can scarcely judge, but I do know that we have many prettier children in New Brunswick than the two youngsters referred to. I don't mind about the name in the least, as long as you tell me what the former one was. Thank you, my dear, for the compliment you pay me in saying you would not write to me, only it is an awful day, and you don't know what to do. It is quite a matter of indifference about sending up the card; if the lady you are calling upon is quite a stranger, send up your card, but if you know her well, and the servant says she is at home, ask to be shown up. Col. cream is excellent, but for the hands and face, especially in winter, as it keeps the skin soft and white, rub it on with your fingers. About the brightest and easiest little plays I know of are *Le Roi et la Reine*, and *My Wife's Second Floor*. The first is not in French, as you might think from the name. They each take about an hour in the performance, and they are very amusing. It is not at all too early to wish me a merry Christmas, just the right time, and I wish you the same. Many thanks from us all, for the love. You see I have answered both your letters in one.

SAID PASHA, St. John.—Do you know, you have asked me a hard question? I mean the first; and I can only answer that of late years the popular idea of modesty seems to have changed very much, and to be so elastic that it has practically no limit. Everything tends towards calling a spade not only a spade but absolutely a shovel, and I regret to say that the girl of the period is not easily shocked. Our grandmothers even in their old age would have blushed if anyone had asked them if they had read *Don Juan*, but our girls read books beside which Byron's masterpiece is as a Sunday school poem, and no one thinks anything about it, indeed the modern novel deals in a plain speaking which is absolutely startling, and the modern girl can tell a good story which a few years ago would have simply "littered our hair" and made it stand on end. I really believe that if I had been a young man and taken any girl to see the opera, which, I suppose, you refer to, I should have felt like asking her to come home; but still society in general went every night, and seemed to enjoy it. I have heard very few women speak of it, but one man gave me his impressions on the subject, and his openly expressed disgust made me wonder whether a really nice man was not more modest than a corresponding nice woman. Many people pronounce it *Pashaw*, and many text books tell us that it is the correct pronunciation; but I once heard a lecturer, who had lived in the East for years, and must have known exactly how to pronounce the word, and I noticed particularly that he called it *Pashwa*, with scarcely any accent on the last syllable. So I fancy the proper pronunciation of the whole name would be *Sad Pashwa*, with the *a* rather long and soft in the first word. Thank you for the Christmas wishes.

GIROFLIA, St. John.—(1) I think I would probably tell him so, and have done with it. (2) I should think it was entirely her own affair, and that she probably expected letters by each mail. (3) No, I don't believe any such nonsense; yellow garters are fashionable, and nearly all girls wear them without the least thought as to whether they will get engaged any sooner by so doing or not. (4 and 5) King street is a public thoroughfare, and anybody who has paid their taxes has a perfect right to walk on it as much as they please; I consider it is entirely their own affair as to how often they shall walk up or down that very attractive street. Excuse me if I speak rather plainly, but I really think you should have more sense than to take up my time with such questions as whether I "like to see a boy with a big head and long nose," and how often I think "the servant should trim the lamps;" your own common sense

should answer them for you. As for my opinion of a society young lady who stole a goose, I should think she was either a kleptomaniac or else she did it for a joke. (9) You should never accept presents of any value from young men. (10) No, I would not marry any man for his money. (11) It is quite a matter of taste as to the number of masculine friends a girl has, but if you have many it is best to treat them as nearly alike as possible. (12) By the time you see your answer it will be too late to give you any advice about Christmas presents, as Christmas will have passed. Your letter is dated on the 4th, but did not reach the office till 14th, so it must have been delayed. I will give the pup your love with pleasure.

ROBIN HOOD, St. John.—Many thanks for bright and most interesting letter, Bob—I mean Robin Hood. Perhaps you may be right about that "instinct" I spoke of, and yet how do you account for a woman divining a man's love for her when he has never consciously shown it to her by word or look? The way you speak of "a good woman" and "the blessedness of married life" does one's heart good, and goes a long way towards proving that chivalry is not quite dead in this prosaic age. You must pardon me if I still hold to my opinion about Browning. I admit that he has written some very beautiful things, but I still believe that there are many poets who repay one better for the time spent in reading them, and surely poems that require such close study before you can obtain even a glimmer of their meaning, must weary one in the end. Of course I admit it is largely a matter of taste, but still that is my opinion. I have read the poem you mention, "In a Balcony," and I think it most exquisite, but then, there are so many others of his, which make my head swim, that I get discouraged. When I want a thorough rest, I like to read Jean Ingelow, Lord Byron, and Longfellow, extremes, are they not? I am very fond both of Dickens, and the earlier works of Charles Lever, and, as long as I have eyes to read, I shall love Rhoda Broughton's novels. In spite of all that has been said about her writing, she is a perfect mistress both of humor, and of pathos, and her books are true to life. Don't you know that those who read little, end better educated than many people who read everything, and forget it. I think it an excellent plan to write out one's impressions of a book, or poem, and a great help to memory. Yes, it makes it much easier for me, if you write on but one side of the paper. A happy New Year to you, Robin Hood!

LOCHINVAR, St. John.—You never forget me, my friend, do you? What do you mean by saying that you "have been writing blindfolded long enough, and only making a fool of yourself?" I do not understand. I think you are a shrewd fellow, Lochinvar, and about right in what you say concerning the opera and the churches. So many of us are too poor to put a quarter in the alms box in church, and yet can easily afford three quarters to go and see those scantily dressed damsels in the chorus. Yes; I think you can safely depend on PROGRESS to "come out bold on the liquor business," or anything else it disapproves of, and I always intend to let my light shine, as you suggest. So you think we have been a little dull in our column lately? Well, I think so, too; but you see we have been too busy to be very bright. Thank you for your Christmas wishes, and let me return them most cordially.

THE UNITED RIVALS, St. John.—I do not usually answer letters like yours, but I will make an exception in your case, my good men, in order to give you a little piece of my mind. If you imagine in your thick-skinned ignorance that respectable journalists are in the habit of giving anyone who chooses to write to them information concerning their correspondents, you are displaying that ignorance to a remarkable extent. It is no affair of yours who the young lady is, but I think you may safely conclude that you are, as you elegantly express it, "not in it" since, if I may judge by my correspondent's letters, she is only in the habit of associating with gentlemen. I never received any such box as you mention, and to show you how necessary it is for a person who tries to tell an untruth to know something about the subject he is dealing with, allow me to tell you that the man you say sent it—number one—has been dead for some years. Now I hope you feel as small as you look in my eyes, and if you do, any man worthy of the name can easily carry you home in his vest pocket.

Will the kind friend in Nova Scotia who sent me the lovely box of French *bon bons* accept my warmest thanks? The kind thought absolutely brought the tears to my eyes. Ah, Lucille, I think I know whose hands tied that bow of pink ribbon. I thank you more than I can tell, and I don't believe I can make up my mind to let them. I shall keep them to look at.

ASTRA.

Winning a Wife.

Without a dash of "modest assurance"—or shall we call it modified impudence—no man is likely to make much headway with any lady. No woman, however bashful, admires sheepishness in a lover; on the contrary, retiring, sensitive women usually prefer bold, outspoken fellows, who push matters to a crisis with earnestness and dispatch. He who sits down before the fortress of a woman's heart with the hope of bringing it to terms of capitulation by slow and regular approaches will usually find that it "laughs a siege of scorn," and the chances are that, while he is drawing his lines of circumvallation, a more passionate wooer will assault the work at some weak point and carry it by storm.

Some Pointers on Powder.

Don't let any talk of "nature pure and simple," or "dispel all artifice," banish the powder chamois; it is the best friend of womankind. Of course a confessedly powdered face is vulgar, but a greasy one is as bad. The tiniest pinch of powder on the chamois will remove the oily look, and need not be observed in the strongest light, but be sure it matches your complexion. The mistake many women make is to think any powder will do. Any powder won't, and a dark girl who uses fair powder deserves to have a red nose. Get the shade that suits your skin, and then never leave the house without a little on a chamois in your pocket; only be sure to apply it in a strong light, and don't let it get in your eyebrows.—*New York Press*.

MY LADY OF THE EMPIRE.

She has Pretty Arms and Likes to Show Them.

Now-a-days she who has perfect arms makes the most of them, as is shown by the wearer of an Empire frock in the illustration. The material is cream pink China crepe, very deeply crinkled and embroidered in gold all over the skirt. At foot is a border almost solidly covered with the gold, from which long graceful sprays run up almost to the wide pink satin sash that is fastened directly under the bust and falls in gold-trimmed ends almost to the bottom



of the deep train. Wide old-rose point, yellow with age, fall away from the dimpled neck that is innocent of jewels, as is the perfect gloveless arms and hands. Indeed, her only ornament is a big pale-pink enamel orchid blossom with a diamond heart and encrusted with diamond dew, worn at one side of the waved Empire coiffure. She wears also pink shoes, high-heeled, gold-wrought, with double-straps crossing sandalwise over the instep, pale pink stockings clocked with gold; and carries a huge fan of white ostrich feathers, striped with pink and mounted upon exquisitely carved ivory sticks. Her handkerchief is of lace matching the fall.

Women in a Shoe Store.

A third of an inch gives a full size in length of shoe; a sixth furnishes the intermediate point between two sizes, the saving of which is desirable, if practicable; a small fraction of breadth goes a good way in securing comfort, and in girls of ball or instep an infinitesimal part of an inch is sometimes an ell of freedom; a quarter of an inch is a good deal of letting down or elevating at the heel, and the difference of a sixteenth is readily perceptible at the sole.

For these reasons sudden and extreme changes in the size or weight of shoes are injudicious. Even the "paper sole" (which ought never to be worn in any place), should be replaced by one only a little thicker at first. After the summer shoe the proper thing is one of medium weight before the winter article is in order, and even that doesn't now mean a thick, cumbersome shoe, as it once did.

Very few shoe salesmen have a stock of patience that will hold out beyond the trying on the sixth pair of shoes for a woman customer. The lacing or buttoning of this number is considerable labor of itself; then with each new one tried there is the usual amount of preliminary talk about the style, price, etc.

"Over there is a woman," says a dealer, "who has tried on nine pairs, and she feels worse than the clerk about it. She probably has a peculiarly shaped foot, and none of the shoes, thus far, feel comfortable to her. In such a case if the clerk shows weariness he loses his customer."

The alleged preference of women in quest of shoes to be waited upon by male rather than female clerks is probably due to the fact that the former can tell them more about shoes and leather than the latter. Many a pair of shoes is sold by the aid of a little judicious shoe lore, even if partly unintelligible to the buyer. In the matter of patience there isn't much difference between the sexes.—*Shoe and Leather Reporter*.



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Opinions of some Distinguished Guests on the "Myrtle Bank" Hotel.

From the Hon. Villiers Stuart, King's House, Jamaica.—Having been staying on several occasions at the Myrtle Bank Hotel, I have found it well appointed, and the Staff most obliging. The Hotel is well situated, the verandahs have the benefit of the sea-breeze and command very interesting views. We found the beds especially comfortable.

From Arthur Harvey, Esq., Toronto, Canada.—I have spent some weeks in Jamaica, every hour of which has been delightful, and much of the pleasure has been due to the excellent accommodations of the Myrtle Bank Hotel. The rooms, the cuisine, the service, and the civility received at your hands, call for this acknowledgment.

From the Hon. Thos. J. Clayton, Thornton, Penna.—We have spent ten days at Jamaica, making the Myrtle Bank Hotel our headquarters. We have found it the best Hotel on the island. We can recommend this Hotel to our countrymen as an agreeable resting place.

From John M. Oakley, of Pittsburg, Pa.—On leaving your hospitable house, the "Myrtle Bank," after two weeks' stay, we wish to say to our countrymen, through you, that we have found your location favored by the sea-breeze as cool as the mountain top. We shall advise all our friends visiting at Jamaica to stop at this Hotel.

From Rear-Admiral Seymour, R. N.—For the four weeks I have lived in your Hotel, I have been struck with the civility of the Staff to guests and visitors. I wish the undertaking every success. I advise any one visiting Kingston to stay at Myrtle Bank.

From Hon. T. A. and Lady Brassey.—The Hotel is about the best place I have seen in the Tropics. The broad verandahs and passages entirely open to the air make it deliciously cool. The bed rooms could not be more comfortable.

From Cleveland Moffett, Correspondent of the "New York Herald."—It gives me pleasure to state that during the ten days I have passed in your pleasant Hotel, I have been treated with the greatest courtesy and attention. No trouble spared in the interests of the guests. The Hotel is certainly well managed.

From John C. Klein (Sept. 3rd, 1891), Correspondent "New York World."—During the stay of myself and wife at Myrtle Bank we have received every attention. The accommodations are most excellent, the beds could not be better, and the table is first-class.

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