

WOMAN and HER WORK.

The girl who allows herself to be ejected into a long engagement stands one chance in ten of being married to that particular man. He comes, admires and thinks best to secure her, although he is not in a position to ask. Some men are selfish creatures. After a year in the "Seventh Heaven" life begins to be prosaic again, and their love floats along a placid sea. After several years of waiting, when the girl has begun to lose her youth and beauty, the tide turns in their favor, the harbor is in sight and all seems well. But here comes a smooth sailing little craft directly across their bows. There is a crash. The lover clings to the newly found ship and leaves the other to sink or be tossed upon the beach alone. The moral is obvious.—Leisure Hours.

I have been requested to hold forth, for a brief season this week, girls, on the subject of long engagements, and as I am fully aware that I shall be treading upon very delicate ground—nothing less, in fact, than the toes of many estimable people who will disagree with me from the very word go—and just because they disagree with my opinions will be certain I am wrong. I take up my theme with considerable trepidation, but I have adopted the above clipping from "Leisure Hours" as a text, and as one speaking from experience, I take the liberty of differing from the writer on all essential points but one.

There is only one sad thing about a long engagement and that is the fact that it so seldom "comes to anything," as the saying is. I have known many instances myself, of long engagements ending in the happiest of marriages, and one, an almost ideal marriage followed an engagement of ten years the wife having been but thirteen when her precocious boy lover, two years older, asked her to be his veriest own, and secured her promise to wait for him. The compact entered into by these two irresponsible children, as most people would consider them, was kept with singular fidelity, and, what is more singular still, I do not believe either of them ever swerved for a moment, either in the letter, or the spirit, from their loyalty to each other. They were separated for years, except for a few weeks each summer, they both went into society a great deal, both were skilled musicians and beautiful dancers, yet I do not believe either was ever known to have even a flirtation with anyone else, they seemed like a staid little married couple utterly set apart from all thoughts of love or marriage, except for each other. When the young lover was able to support a wife in comfort they got married in a quiet matter of fact way, and kept on being two lovers just the same; they are two lovers still, and often say that they cannot remember the time when they were not either married, or engaged. But alas! I know that this is an isolated case, and for one long courtship which turns out so happily, there are indeed ten endings in disenchantment, and final estrangement; where each discovered on closer acquaintance that the glamor of young love had prevented them from seeing clearly and the perfect being he or she, had so worshipped was but an ordinary human being after all, with defects which came out in strong relief against the background of absolute perfection, with which each one had persisted in investing the other. It is nobody's fault. None of us are angels. We should not be living on this beautiful sin-stained old earth if we were; and oh, it is such weary work trying to live up to the impossible ideal some one has formed of us! So hard to be what he thinks we are, and, in his loving folly tries to convince us against our better judgment that we are not only here, but always have been. We all try to do it, though, at first. It is not deceit, only an honest, humble wish to be better for love's dear sake; but oh dear, what a strain it is, and what a failure generally! Some day the effort grows too great, human nature asserts itself, and the too human angel comes to the ground with a thud. Angelina is feeling a little out of sorts, her little brother would call it out of temper, and in an evil moment her own dear Charlie decides to run in for a moment, directly after breakfast, and see his idol before he goes to the office. Angelina intends to dust the parlor, and wash the bric-a-brac that morning, so her hair twisted up under a dusting cap, and she has on an old dress, and a big apron. Not much to be annoyed at, perhaps, and under ordinary circumstances, Angelina would not mind in the least, but today she does mind, and gives Charlie such a cool, not to say grumpy welcome, that all the self conceit in his manly breast rises up in arms, and he feels it necessary for the proper maintenance of his dignity requires him to show his chosen one that his tenderest affections are not to be trifled with. And so begins

".....the little rift within the lute That by and by will make the music mute, And ever widening slowly silence all."

Disenchantment is not long in doing its work once the thin edge of the wedge is inserted, and by the by, two loving hearts that beat as one, are very distinctly two. A promising match is broken off, and the friends of the young couple shake their heads, and say:—"I told you how it would be, another illustration of the folly of long engagements; if those two had been married at once, instead of waiting, they would have been as happy as the day is long."

But to my mind, this view, although it is the common one, is very foolish! Surely if two people find out after a few years of

intimate association, that they are utterly unsuited to each other, what a blessed boon the long engagement has been since it gave them time to make the discovery before it was too late, and saved them long misery, for two persons who cannot stand the strain of the frequent companionship a long engagement entails, would certainly fail to come triumphantly through the ordeal of years of married life, with its joys and sorrows, its trials and vexations.

Surely it is better a thousand times to suffer the comparatively slight sorrow of a broken engagement, and the cruel suspicion of having been jilted, which is usually the girl's portion, than to realize too late that she has married the wrong man, and must bear the consequences of her mistake till death sets her free. And how many men and women, after having been engaged for years discover that they have not the requisite qualities for making each other happy, part, in all friendliness, and then each find with another the perfect happiness they sought in vain at first? A great many I am sure, and they had reason to bless the circumstances which made their engagement long enough for both to find out their own minds.

As to the selfishness a man shows in wishing to secure the girl of his heart, even though he may not be in a position to marry very soon; there I disagree once more with "Leisure Hours," because I think a man has a perfect right to tell a girl of his love, and give her the choice between a few years of waiting, made bright by love and hope, or the unattached freedom of the disengaged girl, whose future is all unsettled, and to whom it is possible real, true, disinterested love, may never come again. And I also think I know my sex sufficiently well to be certain that the girl who really loves a man would far prefer that he should speak, and give her the option of taking or leaving him, rather than repress his feelings like the impossibly noble hero of a novel, and stand calmly and stolidly by, while his rival, who is not half as well calculated to make her happy, secures the prize. If two young people love each other well enough to marry, their love should be strong enough to stand the test of a few years waiting, and I do not believe for a moment that there is danger of the man falling in love with some new comer. If the two are honestly in love, and suited to each other they will only grow nearer and dearer, as the years pass; while, should they not be suited, my experience has seen that it is almost invariably the girl, and not the man, who is the first to find it out. I know the man generally gets the credit of being the one, but I know enough of men to be very sure that they are far more constant than they are supposed to be, and even when they lack that essential element of a truly noble character, the average man is far too lazy to make the requisite effort, to disturb an established order of things unless he is acting under the spur of an unusually strong emotion. He usually prefers to engage in a violent but objectless flirtation with the new comer when his rightful owner is not near by, and after enjoying himself for a reasonable time, he ends by marrying the rightful owner before mentioned, if she will allow him to do so, and living reasonably happily ever after.

Have I said enough in favor of long engagements or too much, I wonder? I could say a great deal more, were it not that I am afraid of boring my readers and making a nuisance of myself generally by keeping the girls away from the pleasant pastures of fashions and cookery, but I have an excuse for lingering tenderly over the subject because, quite between ourselves, I was engaged for a very long time myself.

Speaking of engagements, reminds me of an article I read not long ago in an American paper, the writer of which propounds the startling theory that the stronger sex have enjoyed a monopoly of the delicate business of courting and popping the question and that it is now high time something was done towards securing equal rights in the matter of choosing partners and proposing marriage. She—I am sure it is a she—points out the fact that we are steadily marching onward towards equality, "intellectual, industrial and political," with the other sex, and she thinks it extraordinary that, considering the great number of societies organized for promulgating these doctrines, some steps are not made towards obtaining equality in the matter of proposing, especially since one out of every ten of the world's working women supports her husband, "and probably a much larger per cent of the moneyed woman of the world endow with all their worldly goods the husband who wins them." Well really, when one comes to think about it seriously, there is a good deal to be said on the subject! Why should we aspire to being doctors, lawyers, professors, and even parsons, and prove to the satisfaction of all concerned that we are able to fill all these important positions as well as our lords and masters, and yet be powerless to shape our own destinies on the all important point of marriage? What is the use of proving ourselves capable of going out into the world and meeting our

superior officer man on equal ground, wresting some of life's best prizes out of his grasp, and winning our way step by step, at his side, if we are to stand still in one important respect, and—figuratively speaking—sit at home waiting until lordly man chooses to throw his royal handkerchief to us, and then meekly bend down and pick it up. Why should not we have the power of choosing also? Our own gracious Queen asked Prince Albert to be hers, and why should not her loyal subjects follow her example, we must have wonderful skill in choosing suitable husbands, since my contemporary points out the fact which is historically correct I believe, that no woman's wooing from that of Queen Victoria down, has ever ended in divorce or disaster.

Of course it would seem a little strange at first, and I fancy the dear boys would be terribly coy; but matters would adjust themselves in time and it would all seem perfectly correct. Just imagine the novel delight of calling to see a dear masculine angel some evening knowing full well that he was expecting you, with a flushed cheek and beating heart; that he was seated on the parlor sofa with a bright fire in the grate, and the gas turned down, pressing his hand to his throbbing breast, and listening with bated breath for your well known footstep! Picture the meeting when he rushed to the door, to open it for you himself, and fancy taking his strong hand in yours and telling him that you loved him better than life itself and could not be happy without him; that your income was assured and comfortable and no reasonable wish of his should ever remain ungratified! Imagine his blushing consent, his stammering avowal that he returned your affection and then try if you can to picture yourself leading him tenderly by the hand to his papa's study, and asking the old gentleman's consent. Can you imagine it? I scarcely can myself, but when I think of it all, I am almost tempted to regret the course matters have taken all these years, and to wish Geoffrey had been less precipitate and allowed me to try the experiment in my own person.

ASTRA.

SELF-POSSESSED AND UNASSUMING

Was Mrs. Burton Harrison as Seen at a Woman's Club.

Mrs. Burton Harrison seems to be a woman favored of the gods, rejoicing in that trinity of richness, brains, beauty, and social place. She is a plump, sweet-faced woman, with fair hair, looking much younger than one expects, and showing no trace of the burden or anxiety of literary work in her serene, unlined face. Seen recently at a woman's club she was self-possessed but unassuming, the faultless simplicity of her gown in marked contrast with the gorgeous bedizenment of the women about her. For the women of note, particularly those still only in the borderland of the charmed country where laurel crowns grow on hedges and gold guineas pave the highways, are as prone to overdress as were their prototypes too much inclined to severity of attire in the days when the title of bluestocking was originated. One can forgive a woman of ability for wearing her own hair and parting it, her own waist where the Lord made it, and for clinging to simple gowns and bonnets. But it is hard to reconcile trains with too many diamonds, too many furbelows, too extreme modes, and too much of everything at the wrong time and place. "It is not fair," some one said as the women with anxious faces, crazy-looking bonnets, and perfectly demoralized veils crowded about the serene, smiling woman who had done what they were trying so laboriously to do. "Mrs. Harrison has it all—home, husband, talent, beauty, friends—everything that is dear to women. At least her tricks of telling graceful tales might have been given to the woman who has missed the rest." Among the tributes to her talent which Mrs. Har-

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reason values most highly for its sincerity is the praise of a Western rancher who named his dog "Puck," after the girl in her story, "Crow's Nest," and told a friend of hers travelling through the region that the magazine containing the story had "been all around the range." "But it always comes back," he added, "for I've threatened to shoot the boy that keeps it."

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In each wing of an ostrich twenty-six white plumes grow to maturity every eight months. Seventy-five short feathers besides are plucked for tips from each wing. Sixty-five of the tail feathers have commercial value. The female ostrich lays seventy eggs a year. Think of it, you women who are making a dozen corset covers for 24 cents and furnishing your own thread. Think, you wives who ask your husbands for a quarter once a week only to be questioned what you did with the quarter you had week before last. What an investment an ostrich would be! All the feathers you like to wear yourself and nearly 300 a year besides from a single bird. The goose with the golden egg industry is quite distanced by this bird of the desert which dines contentedly on shingle nails and thrives on broken china.

Her Merry Smile.
Her merry smile—with what a glee Its radiance fills my heart to see! The mists of doubt swift scurrying fly, And from the black and troubled sky Grief's cool-racks sweep,— Ah, thus to be Forever in the thrall of the Enchanting spell of witchery — She casts—with grace so keenly—by — Her merry smile!

But ah, alas! For woe is mine, She is a dame with family— But hath a maid with such bright eye It cheers this heart—and that is why I haste, each Sabbath eve, to see — Her merry smile!

—K. M. Chase Tapley in N. Y. Racket.

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