

WOMAN and HER WORK.

Christmas has gone and now it will be twelve long months before we shall be going through the cheerful bustle of preparation for the dear old winter festival. which brings so much work and so much worry, in its train, but which somehow always manages to bring the very best that is in human nature to the surface, and to sink what is mean, and poor, and narrow, into a merciful oblivion. Did you ever read that wonderful verse of Tennyson's girls? Of course you did, but I mean did you ever think over it, and realize its full beauty and truth, the verse in "Locksley Hall" where he speaks of love and its ennobling effect on all natures!

"Love took up the harp of life, and smote on all the chords with might; Smote the chord of self, that trembling pass'd in music, out of sight."

Well, to me Christmas is something like love, it seems to smite nearly all the selfishness out of our hearts, and make us all better men and women, for the time at least, and even if the improvement is not permanent, it must be beneficial for our moral nature to have an occasional cleaning up and polishing just as the semi-annual housecleaning brightens and rejuvenates the carpets and furniture of our houses, each spring and autumn.

Of all seasons in the year Christmas is the most utterly free from all suggestions of selfishness! It is not in one sense, nearly so important a religious festival as Easter, but at the same time whoever contemplated the approach of Easter Sunday without taking an immense amount of thought for raiment? It is impossible to separate the thought of the great spring feast of the Christian year, from the subject of clothes. They will go hand in hand, and this union of ideas is not by any means confined to our sex, because it is almost as common to hear a man speak of getting a new spring suit for Easter, as to hear a woman planning for her Easter bonnet. Some unwritten statute seems to have set Eastertide apart, as the proper time for the human animal to shed its winter coat, and get into new garments, and the law is faithfully adhered to.

But with Christmas it is all different! everybody works, and plans and toils, cheerfully, without thinking of self at all; in fact no one seems to have time to give that smallest of all members, Number One, any consideration. Our work, and our care are entirely for others, and for a brief season even the least admirable of us, lead an ideal life.

The children begin to save their pennies for weeks before Christmas, so they may have the pleasure of giving father and mother something they have really bought themselves out of their own money instead of waiting for the usual anti-Christmas donation which they are in the habit of receiving "to buy presents with." The mothers and sisters deny themselves many little luxuries and even necessities in order to buy some coveted toy or trinket for each other, or for some dearly loved friend, and as for the lovers who sacrifice they will make for each other. Many a little maiden who has a big heart and a light purse, will go without a pair of warm overshoes in order to save the two dollars they would cost, and use it to get the slippers she had been working for dear Tom, nicely made up; while very likely dear Tom is at the same time denying himself a new winter overcoat in order to get her the sealskin muff, or little gold watch he once heard her express a wish for.

I know it is the fashion to suppose that husbands always storm when their wives express a wish for a new bonnet, and that wives revenge themselves for this parsimony on the part of their lords by going through their pockets in the still hours of night while the husbandman sleeps. But I tell a different story! I have known men who denied themselves things which were actually necessary to their comfort, in order to give their wives a sealskin cape at Christmas, and I have known wives by the score, who made some excuse for wearing last year's dress and spent the money a new one would cost on a pair of fur gloves for their husband's Christmas present.

It is a joyous season, and everybody who has the least excuse for being happy, generally manages to show a smiling face on Christmas day, but how little do any of us dream of the amount of self denial, and self sacrifice that very happiness represents! We have made others happy, at the expense of our own gratification in many instances and the bread we cast upon the water has not only returned to us, but returned tenfold, in peace and contentment.

I don't know why I should think so, but somehow Christmas has always seemed to me a sort of foretaste of the millennium; a time when all differences are reconciled, all old scores erased, old quarrels healed, and even Satan himself seems to take a rest from his evil ways and sleep, if not for a thousand years, at least for a few days, and to let decent people alone, instead of filling their heads with all sorts of wickedness which they would never have thought of, had they been left to their own devices.

I wonder if I am a day too late for the fair in writing about Christmas just after it has passed? I don't think so, because it

would be quite impossible to fully realize the feelings which come with that blessed day, before the day has arrived, and therefore not very easy to describe them.

When Progress is next issued it will bear the date of 1894, and the new king will have entered into his kingdom. so perhaps it would be only polite to say a few words about that gentleman whose acquaintance we have not yet made, and who may have it in his power to make things very pleasant, or very much the reverse, for us. I don't like thinking about the New Year, I am always so much afraid of it that I would like to put off the meeting as long as possible, it is like stepping out from a warm, brightly lighted room into a cold, dark, and unfamiliar country which may be either bright and beautiful, or filled with hidden dangers, and terrors, but into which we must pass, whether we will, or not.

I love old friends, and all old familiar things to which I have grown used, and I must confess that while Christmas has always been associated in my mind with all that is best and happiest in this life, the last days of the old year are always filled with sadness, and a curious feeling, of dim apprehension, such as one feels before a thunder storm. On second thoughts I will let the infant year take care of himself, hoping that he will treat me as well as his dear old predecessor did, and try to give him a reasonably hearty welcome when he arrives. Meantime I will content myself with wishing all my readers the very happiest of New Year's.

ASTRA.

ADVICE TO STAGE-STUCK WOMEN.

Some Plain Words from Clement Scott About Life Behind the Scenes.

Never before in the history of the unemployed has the stage door been besieged by so many applicants from all professions and grades in life as this season, when so many girls hitherto supported by fathers and brothers, are obliged to seek employment, and when professional women and craftsmen cannot find opportunities for self-support in their own chosen fields of work. Trained nurses and professional cooks, teachers of long service, together with the helpless untrained daughters of wealth, come together to the agencies and theatres, seeking histrionic honor without considering the fact that they have neither histrionic talents, beauty, nor youth to recommend them to favor in an already over-crowded profession. Mr. Clement Scott's experiences with the intelligent maidens of Gorton and Newton, reverend mothers of convents and parochial schools, with shop girls, curates' daughters, milliners' apprentices, and the inevitable English governess, seem pertinent, therefore, to be given to the stage-struck aspirants in America just at this time.

"If you ask me," Mr. Scott writes, "I would recommend the stage as a profession and a career for the ambitious amateur, I should reply most decidedly no. By amateur, I mean a girl whose parents have nothing and never had anything to do with the stage. The children of actors and actresses are exceptions. They may be left safely to follow their own inclinations, which, in nine cases out of ten, directs them to the stage. They have lived in the atmosphere of the theatre all their lives. They have been as Robertson says, 'nursed on rose pink and cradled in properties.' They never came to any harm. They have had the dramatic measles and whooping cough; they have been vaccinated out of the rouge pot; they have to learn nothing when they come to years of discretion; they are always wide awake. Make the girls students or governesses, or marry them to rich men; give them independence. They will come back to the stage like ducks to water. Make the boys barristers, or soldiers, or doctors; depend upon it they will come back to the stage door like prodigals."

"But with such as those I am not dealing: I am dealing with the amateurs. First, then, the stage is overworked with novices. Actresses of great experience and of admitted talent are at this moment breaking their hearts for want of employment. Remember what a cruel profession it is. The very instant a girl loses her good looks, or that with ripened experience comes advancing age, the actress is virtually put on the shelf. The greedy public prefers beauty to intellect. The lovely brainless woman gets a better chance than one who is brimming over with talent, but, alas, is getting passe. If you want to see the struggles and despair of the actress out of work go any day into one of the dramatic agencies and observe for yourself what their bitterness and disappointment is. A procession of the unemployed actresses of London would reach from St. Paul's to Charing Cross."

There is beside, no profession in which a girl is exposed to such insidious and hidden dangers as that of the stage. The modesty that is the brightest jewel in a woman's crown must be severely tested in this fire. To begin with a girl who has been brought up in refinement must experience a bit of a shock when she is compelled to share a dressing room every night not with one chosen girl companion, but with several of whose habits and language she must be unfamiliar. Of course, this is a shock to modesty, but of necessity the shock becomes less every day. The young actress must grin and bear it. She becomes dull and hardened poor child. It is all very well to say that the idle and frivolous conversation that she hears goes in at one ear and out at the other. But it neither goes in nor comes out without imperilling modesty and innocence. The young actress cannot afford to be a prude. Her royal path to progress and success is not smoothed by reticence and self-respect. She would not get on by making a fool of

herself. She must not be offended if the leading man raps at her dressing room door and says 'Are you visible?' 'No!' 'Well, put something on, for I want to talk to you about business.' All this, no doubt, is very harmless; but if the girl has no more than this to contend against she is very lucky.

"The man who has lost caste is the great danger in the path of the girl who has lost the initial sense of modesty. No girl, however stage struck, will find her ideal of a noble life behind the curtain of a theatre."

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Intercolonial Railway.
On and after MONDAY, the 11th SEPT. 1893, the trains of this Railway will run daily (Sunday excepted) as follows:
WILL LEAVE ST. JOHN:
Express for Campbellton, Pictou, and Halifax..... 7.00
Express for Barrington, (when clear) Shelburne, Lockport, Liverpool and Lunenburg..... 13.50
Express for Sussex..... 16.30
Express for Point du Chene, Quebec, and Montreal..... 16.55
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Express from Sussex..... 8.25
Express from Montreal and Quebec, (Monday excepted)..... 10.30
Express from Moncton (daily)..... 10.30
Express from Halifax, Pictou and Campbellton..... 18.40
Express from Halifax and Sydney..... 22.30
The trains of the Intercolonial Railway are heated by steam from the locomotive, and those between Halifax and Montreal, via Lewis, are lighted by electricity.
All trains are run by Eastern Standard Time.
D. POTTINGER, General Manager.
Railway Office, Moncton N. B., 8th Sept., 1893.

YARMOUTH & ANNAPOLIS R.Y.
FALL ARRANGEMENT.
On and after Monday, 2nd Oct., 1893, trains will run daily (Sunday excepted) as follows:
LEAVE YARMOUTH—Express daily at 8.10 a. m.; Passengers and Freight Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 1.45 p. m.; arrive at Annapolis at 7.00 p. m. Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at 1.45 p. m. Arrive at Weymouth at 4.32 p. m.
LEAVE ANNAPOLIS—Express daily at 12.55 p. m.; arrive at Yarmouth 4.55 p. m.; Passengers and Freight Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at 5.00 a. m.; arrive at Yarmouth 11.15 a. m.
LEAVE WEYMOUTH—Passengers and Freight Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 8.16 a. m. Arrive at Yarmouth at 11.15 a. m.
CONNECTIONS—At Annapolis with trains of the Windsor and Annapolis Railway. At Digby with City of Monticello for St. John every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. At Yarmouth with steamers of Yarmouth Steamship Co. for Boston every Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday evenings; and from Boston every Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday mornings. With Stage daily (Sunday excepted) to and from Barrington, Shelburne and Liverpool. Through tickets may be obtained at 126 Hollis St., Halifax, and the principal Stations on the Windsor and Annapolis Railway.
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