

## WOMAN and HER WORK.

I had intended writing on the subject of working girls and their trials this week in any case, and now the clever letter signed "Rachel," which appeared side by side with my own column last week, will make it a singularly appropriate theme and one which will help me to vindicate myself from an accusation of which I am sure "Rachel" will see the injustice, when she thinks the matter over a little.

Well, "Rachel," if you really are a dressmaker I think you have mistaken your vocation in life, because any girl who can write a column and a half of such bright, interesting and well expressed matter has no right to herself down to the drudgery of cutting, fitting and wearing out her clever brain with the monotonous click! click! of the sewing machine; she should be earning her bread not with the needle but with the pen, and I consider that if my little sketch—which was drawn from nature—of the dressmaker and her customer, did no other good, it has fulfilled quite a useful mission in calling forth so spirited and sensible a response.

But, clever as your letter was, Rachel, it lacked one essential element—accuracy, and that one fault spoiled your argument. As soon as you have read this, I want you to take last week's PROGRESS and that of August 26th, read my dressmaker story first, and then your own letter, and if you find one word in the former to justify your charge of showing sewing girls up in a wrong light, I will forfeit a month's salary, and hand it cheerfully over to you. I think you will discover that the sewing girl is mentioned but once, and then very casually in the last paragraph. Never, since I began my literary work, have I given the working girl cause to regard me in any light but that of her warmest friend, and when possible, her earnest helper. I am a working woman myself, and have been accustomed for years to earn my own bread and butter—not to mention roast lamb, new potatoes and pudding, so I think it is only natural that I should always be found ranged on the side of labor, instead of capital, though I have no personal quarrel with capital, and a very good feeling prevails between us, it we consider the publisher of PROGRESS to represent capital, while I uphold the labor interest. If you read my article with anything like care, you saw this sentence almost at the beginning.

If this wicked biped is anxious to prove the superiority of his own sex above the other, he has only to point to the different policy pursued by the two sexes towards those who manufacture their clothes for them. But the trouble is that the poor dear man is not aware of any difference because he has not the slightest idea of his wife's method of dealing with her dressmaker, and he fancies that the transactions between the two are based upon the same thoroughly understood business principles as exist between himself and his tailor, and yet you closed your letter with a plea that—

ladies should learn, as I believe they are fast learning, to be practical and business-like. Let them know what they want, give their orders in a plain straightforward way, and be satisfied when they are carried out. This done, a most astonishing change will take place in the relations between the women who wear pretty dresses and their less fortunate sisters who make them.

Now, Rachel, either my pen was unusually dull, and failed to make the point of my argument plain, or else you managed in a most ingenious manner to miss that point which was the very one you urged yourself, the very unbusinesslike methods adopted by the average woman towards her dressmaker. If I showed anyone up in an unfavorable light, surely it was the employer not the dressmaker, and least of all the sewing girl. And I must say I think I showed true generosity in using myself for an illustration, holding myself up to ridicule as a terrible example; because I was the lady who got so snubbed, and believe me, I am much better qualified to judge of the proper manner in which to approach the majestic lady who snubbed me than you can possibly be, because I know her, and you don't. If I had failed to be conciliatory and approached her without the proper introduction of outside topics before proceeding to business my case would have been pronounced hopeless at once, and I asked for the little girl because I was really interested in her; if I had not been I should never have remembered that she was ill, but unfortunately I know nothing about children, or their ailments, I never had even a small nephew or niece, and I only knew that the child was slightly ill with something which was not at all serious as long as it "came out." I had a hard time with measles myself, until they came out, and I naturally concluded Mrs. Jones' little girl was suffering from measles. So I hope I have ceased to "stand condemned by my own action" and that you and "the other girls" will consent to let your indignation be appeased and restore me to my position of—as you so kindly and prettily express it, your "patron saint."

I well know that the life of a dressmaker must be filled with annoyances, and hardships because women are proverbially hard to deal with, and very exacting towards each other. I have often observed the extraordinarily sad taste some women show, in selecting their dresses, and then blaming the result upon the dressmaker, and I have met mean women who will take up a

busy woman's time in finding out the secrets of the profession, and then go calmly away and make practical use of the information themselves; but are not such cases comparatively rare, and, taking the whole subject together, is there not a good deal to be said on the side of the customer, if you can put yourself in her place for a moment, and look at the matter dispassionately? I daresay that "Miss Knox" is an exception; but can you honestly say that you have never noticed the "freezing hauteur" adopted by some dressmakers—not "sewing girls"—towards an innocent person whose only offense is that she is a new customer, and quite unknown to the dressmaker in question, who seems to regard the stranger's wish to enter the charmed circle of her clients, as a sort of impertinence? If you have not, I have, and even though I am willing to admit it is all our own fault, and that we have brought it upon ourselves by our foolish policy towards those who work for us, our notorious lack of punctuality in settling bills, for one thing, and our habit of bowing down before our dressmaker, and almost forcing her to tyrannize over us, for another: yet you must confess that whatever the cause, the result is not pleasant, and we shall all have cause to rejoice when a change does take place in our relations.

Now "Rachel" I hope we are friends again; all dressmakers have cause to thank you for your warm and ample defence of them, and I only wish every class of working girls had as eloquent an advocate to uphold their cause. Unfortunately they have not though, and so I must bid you adieu, and attend to the claims of some others, whom I have already kept waiting too long.

If one can place any dependence upon predictions, even when they emanate from high authorities in the world of fashion, several cherished fashions, which have endeared themselves to us not only by long custom but by their utility and convenience will vanish in a short time. One of these is the dear, trim, jaunty, tailor made gown which has been with us for nearly five years, and the many good and serviceable qualities of which should ensure its popularity for an indefinite length of time, with all sensible women. Following in the wake of the tailor made costume the plain and heavy fabrics which have accompanied it, during its entire career, and most dire loss of all, the tailor made girl, the dear robust athletic damsel who rows and fishes, skates and snow-shoes and even shoots, not to mention playing tennis in the summer from blush of morn till dewy eve; this choicest product of the century is to leave us also, "so the folks say." And in return—such a poor return—we are to give such welcome as we can to such relics of the dark ages as the Elizabethan ruff, the too fascinating patch, the reticule, the shawl, the ancient sprigged muslin beloved by our grandmothers, and the chignon of later and giddier days. Just fancy such a combination, girls! Try to picture yourselves arrayed in a gown of sprigged muslin, a white crepe shawl, a reticule hanging from one arm, black lace mitts on your hands, a huge stiff ruff around your neck, a chignon on the top of your head, patches on your cheeks, and sandalled shoes of russet leather on your feet, because black shoes are another fashion, the doom of which has been pronounced, and to complete the picture you must have flounces, and an overskirt on your dress; since overskirts will soon set in with great virulence according to the oracle quoted above! Verily, the girl who dresses in the height of fashion, when all these modes prevail, will be a sort of composite picture representing the prevailing fashions of the last three centuries.

But what a blessed reflection it is, that one cannot place the least dependence upon the advance agents of madame La Mode's great show, they are just as liable to be mistaken as the rest of us: Witness the crinoline scare in the early spring, and the wide skirt mania which followed it, and—"Where are those dreamers now?" they seem to have retired from the fray, and are heard of no more.

The most dire prediction of all is the return of the languishing fragile maiden of the early nineteenth century who languished all the time, fainting at the very slightest provocation and only came too to go into violent hysterics. This is really terrible, just the one strain more than we can bear, give us all the other fashions of past ages, even to the mits, but let the Jane Austen, and Miss Berry heroine remain dead as long as possible.

Meanwhile, accordion plaited crepons, and trim Eton mits continue to be worn by the summer girl, who acts in the living present, and troubles herself not about the possible monstrosities of tomorrow's fashion. Accordion plaited fabrics seem to be growing in popularity, and I think one reason is that they fit so closely, adapting themselves to every figure, and never showing a wrinkle. Sometimes these crepons are very oddly trimmed, both pale mauve, and dark green being trimmed with black satin, or jet, and sometimes with both. A very delicate shade of lettuce green trimmed with jet sounds very strange, but is really lovely; while mauve, with jet trimmings on yoke, and skirt is prettier still.

Here is a lovely dress, worn at an American seaside resort. It was of pale mauve crepon accordion plaited, and the skirt was made with three plaited flounces, which reached to the waist; each flounce was cut out in small points at the edge. The bodice was of taffeta in the same shade, and gathered in at the waist under a belt of jeweled passanterie, the "jewels" being amethysts. Two accordion plaited ruffles fell over the sleeves and a bertha of the same,

gave the desired triple effect. Bonnet, gloves, even the parasol, were of mauve, and the costume was a most fresh and dainty one.

Green, in every shade is most popular! Indeed you need not aspire to the title of a fashionable woman, unless you have at least one green gown in your wardrobe. Of course it need not be all green, and it may be either the color of a tender young lettuce leaf, or the darkest bottle that ever concealed a choice brand of Holland's gin, so long as it is undisputably green. Imagine a white batiste closely striped with brightest lily green, trimmed on the skirt with three full ruffles of white lace in graduated widths, placed their own width apart, and each headed with a full roll of silk muslin, in the bright green, caught down every few inches with a fine pearl buckle. The bodice was plain and fitted closely, while from under the arms a wide belt of the green, slanted down to a point in front and was drawn together with a large pearl buckle. Over the full batiste sleeves which were made in double puffs fell a deep ruffle of the lace, headed at the shoulder with a roll and buckles, precisely the same as the skirt only on a smaller scale. With this dress was worn a small toque of green silk muslin with standing loops and butterfly wings of white lace, and tan colored gloves.

The inventive powers of the fashion makers must be taxed to their utmost in order to devise new designs in skirt trimming, because people will get tired of horizontal bands and the everlasting flounce and ubiquitous ruche; but the latest variation in trimming is certainly original, if not exactly pretty. It consists of a ruche which first traverses the foot of the skirt, going entirely around and after it meets at the left side, it begins to wind around the skirt, and continue in spiral coils, until it reaches the waist, where it ends beneath the belt. The dress in which it was shown was of green crepon, and as the ruche was of green in a darker shade shot with red, the effect was, to say the least, very snake-like.

The skirt trimming is slowly but surely creeping upward, and so marked is the movement, that while the foot of the dress is sometimes destitute of trimming, the upper part is lavishly decorated just below the hips. On some of the newest Paris dresses paniers have appeared, and pretty as they are, they would almost seem to herald the return of the chignon, which seems as natural an accompaniment to a panier, as green peas are to spring lamb.

A correspondent, whose name I find it impossible to make out, asks my advice about a slight red mark just across the bridge of her nose, left from wearing spectacles, and I am sorry I cannot help her much. The only thing I can recommend is vaseline cold cream gently rubbed on the spot every night. The blood has probably settled in the spot where the pressure from the bridge of the glasses came, and gentle massage will be more likely to disperse it than anything else. Bathing with quite hot water would also tend to relieve the small blood vessels, which may have become clogged. I hope this advice may be of some service to my correspondent, and at least it cannot do any harm. I am glad she enjoys our columns so much.

In giving the recipes for home-made wines last week the following were accidentally omitted:

### Ginger Wine.

To each gallon of cold water add two pounds of loaf sugar and two ounces of bruised ginger; boil them for an hour, put the liquor into a jar or crock, to cool. When tepid add the peel and juice of six lemons, and a slice of toast covered with yeast. Cover it closely, and when it begins to ferment put it into a small cask. Let it ferment two or three weeks. Before putting in bung, put in half a pound of raisins.

### Parsnip Wine.

It does not sound as if it would be very nice, but I believe it really is, and I know that both parsnip and cowslip wines are standard beverages with old English housewives.

Take fifteen pounds of parsnips, pare, slice, and boil them until quite soft in five gallons of water; drain thoroughly, and press the pulp through a fine sieve; return the liquor into the boiler, and add three pounds of lump sugar to each gallon. Boil the whole for forty minutes, and when it is tepid, cover a slice of toast with yeast and lay into it; keep the mixture in a warm place and when it begins to ferment put it into a cask taking out the toast; it should be racked or drained off into another cask in the autumn, and bottled six months after.

I think these will all be found excellent substitutes for the genuine article, with the added advantages of being much cheaper, and free from the stigma of alcohol, which is such a drawback to many people.

ASTRA.



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### Changing the Shape of the Nose.

Julia Marlow is said to have changed the shape of her nose, it being originally of a cast only suited to a comedy actress, to a size and shape eminently fitted to the tragic parts she so well portrays. Whether she accomplished the act by constant stroking and pinching, as some sanguine persons declare can be done, or whether she resorted to the mechanical aids now used by physiognomists is unknown. The nose shaper is a great boon to the possessor of hopelessly flat, snubbed, or upturned nose, which may to a degree at least, be trained in the way it should go. Whatever the shape of the nose, it can never be beautiful if there is any hint of redness about it. This is often caused by ligatures about the body, or tight shoes, when it can of course be easily remedied by the woman who is sensible enough to realize that she will be far more beautiful with a normal waist and a clear complexion whose nose tints are in their proper place. The folly of tight shoes is beyond words, since a size smaller or larger is practically imperceptible to the observer, while to the wearer it means the difference between comfort and torture, to say nothing of the permanent ruin of the symmetry and lightness of the feet.

### Chicago's Police Board of Women.

Again has Chicago distinguished herself by taking the lead in a reform greatly needed in every large city—namely, the establishment of a "Woman's Advisory Board of Police," consisting of ten women who have charge of all quarters for women and children, as well as of all the station-house matrons. The recognition of the need of police matrons was in itself a seven-leagued stride in the right direction, and the appointment of this advisory board is better yet. A pathetic and haunting story by Elizabeth Stuart Phelps gives an unforgettable glimpse of women of all stages of abandonment, wretchedness and physical suffering in a police station without the ministrations of one of their own sex. The woman of whom the story is told leaves the station for another world, but many an unhappy creature leaves such a place, her coarse nature made coarser, and what little instinct for good she may have had made less by the harsh treatment or the "guying" she received at the hands of men who are totally unfitted for such a position.

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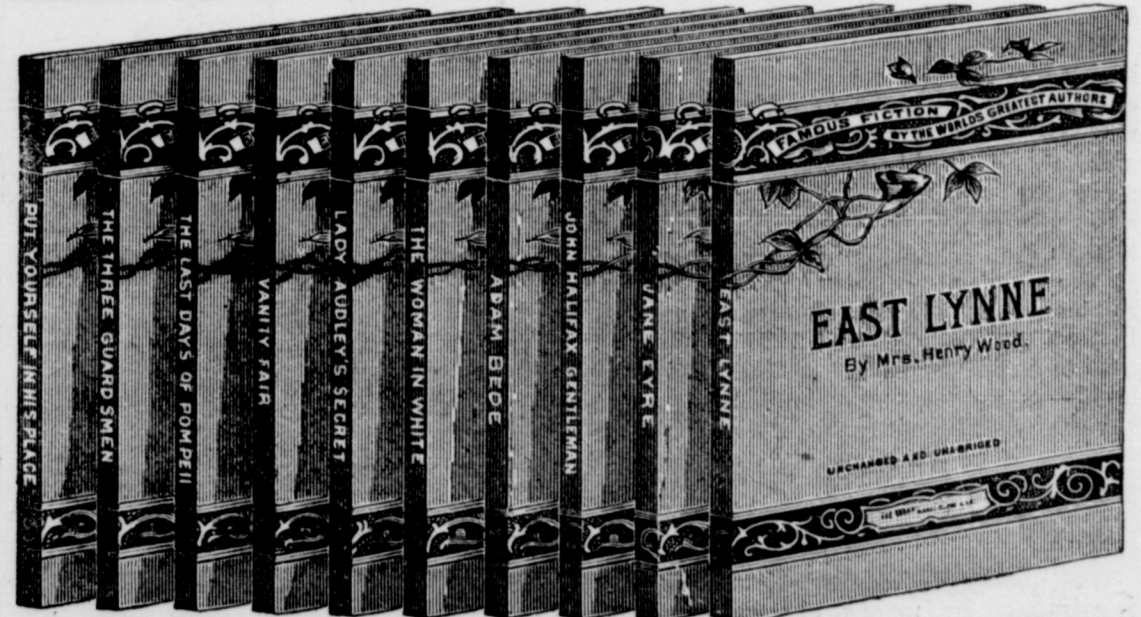
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