

WOMAN and HER WORK.

One of the French writers of the day, M. Augustin Filon, has been paying a visit to London lately, for the express purpose of studying the English character, with special reference to the character of the English woman of the period. I do not know how long he stayed, nor how much of his time was devoted to the charming study in hand, but I fancy he must have been fired with an ambition to rival his brilliant fellow countryman Max O'Rell, and write a second edition of "John Bull's Daughters." The outcome of his visit so far, is a very curious little volume, in which he gives the world the partial result of his observations.

He tells us, in the first place, that Great Britain is just now being upset from top to bottom by a mighty upheaval of the social system, a curious phenomenon which, for each of a better term he calls the "defeminisation," or "masculinisation" of the Englishwomen. I do hope that no puzzled correspondent will write and ask the correct pronunciation of those two words, because I am sure I do not know it myself, but what M. Augustin Filon means in plain English was, that the English woman of today is doing her very best to change her sex, and be a bold bad man. What the consequences of this movement on the part of the once shy retiring English damsel may be, M. Filon thinks it would be difficult to prophecy, but he cannot regard it without a certain amount of uneasiness.

I scarcely see myself, what ground there can possibly be for uneasiness on M. Filon's part, as there is evidently little danger of the new movement with the hard name spreading into his country, as he is careful to observe that an Englishwoman, unlike a Frenchwoman has always the courage to carry out her inclinations, desires and tastes, and to cherish sentiments which are directly opposed to those held and expressed by those around her—in short to find out a new path for herself, and follow it, regardless of public or domestic opinion.

I had always imagined that English girls and women were so far the reverse of being progressive and independent that conventionalism might be considered their besetting sin, and a lack of originality almost a natural virtue. I did not know they had changed, but doubtless M. Filon knows best, and he goes on to say that the physical training of the young Englishman has developed a kind of natural intrepidity, which will explain the aplomb noticeable amongst them, but until recently Englishwomen were essentially reserved, and today one seeks in vain for the type of the English girl of yore. The Ethiopian has changed his skin, and the leopard his spots, and the lovely shy, modest shrinking English girl who used to be the very type and model of "femininity" is no longer to be found. She has transformed herself by some process known only to her, and is losing her sex more and more. She has managed to preserve "a certain attenuation of language," but that is about all, and she dresses herself up in such a masculine manner that she looks more like a young man than a young woman.

The logical result of this contumacious conduct on the part of the young English woman has been, according to M. Filon, a considerable decrease in her charms, and in consequence of it, the number of pretty girls to be found in London shows a lamentable falling off.

Now I cannot for the life of me see how it is that the modern English girl's habit of dressing in a masculine fashion for the last few years should have affected her looks so soon. M. Filon does not tell us that amongst her other efforts towards changing her sex she has taken to shaving, or had her hair cropped, so she must look pretty much the same, I should think, and I can only surmise that M. Filon did not visit London during the season and all the pretty girls were out of town.

But perhaps the most discouraging statement which the French critic makes is his opinion that Englishmen are marrying less, and so the fair daughters of Albion are freed to reckon only on their own exertions in the struggle for life.

Looking at the question from another point of view, Mr. Filon is quite certain that what is now going on with regard to Englishwomen—that is to say, her effort to change her sex, I suppose, is a manifest confirmation of the fundamental theories of Darwin. The English race is transforming and modifying itself in accordance with the new wants which have sprung up. I suppose he means the survival of the fittest, but once more I fail to see the exact application of his logic. I may be unusually stupid today and the fault be entirely my own but my principal object in reviewing Mr. Filon's book at such length, was not so much to refute his assertion that English damsels are losing their charm, as to warn our own dear Canadian girls against following their example, and "doing their best to change their sex." If the habit has had such a bad effect on the matrimonial market of Great Britain, and Englishmen are gradually giving up the old fashioned custom of marrying in consequence of it, only "defeminisation" may possibly have the same effect on Canadian men, and our

great Dominion become depopulated in a few centuries.

To be warned in time, girls, guard against defeminisation as you would against smallpox, or the Gull Cure, abjure bicycle costumes when they lean towards the bloomer variety, wear skirts nine yards wide if you want to, and above all things be feminine, anything, anything, but a Darwinian survival, because the untutored mind will persist in confusing everything Darwinian with the missing link!

A late English fashion writer speaks of the draped skirt as one of the new innovations from Paris which is a boon to tall slender women. She mentions several varieties, one of which is draped at the left side to display a petticoat of a different material, and another which opens over a panel of braiding, while a third is left open at the side and turned back in triangular folds.

A pretty fashion for trimming light summer dresses, will be to outline the seams of the many gored skirts with either narrow lace insertion, or else ladder embroidery through which baby ribbons may be run. This will be suitable for the French gingham, lawns and percales which will be so fashionable during the coming summer.

I believe the spring jackets are all to be quite short, many of them with half fitting fronts and very full skirts.

The ever present rever has not lost its popularity by any means, but sometimes it assumes a new shape by being draped, instead of standing out in sharp points, that is to say the revers are folded three or four times into a cluster of plaits, and look less stiff than formerly.

Of course there are new styles galore in millinery, and some of the new fancy straws will look a little startling until we get used to them when they will be lovely, of course. Rough straws come in colors which are decided, to say the least: for example cerise and heliotrope or old rose and green are favorite combinations, trimmed with reversible ribbons, and shaded ostrich tips in colors to match the straw. A large lovely "picture hat" has a crown of parma violets, a standing spray of violets and hedge roses, and a rose cluster, and a violet velvet bow beneath the brim. A toque of rough pink straw is trimmed with jotted lace arranged as a fluted albatross bow, twisted loops of moire ribbon, a cluster of crush roses, and some jet pins.

Some of the hats which have flower garnitures are accompanied by collarettes composed of the same flowers, with a tab, or loop of yellow lace at each side of the throat. One very handsome specimen was of violet velvet pansies, and another of crimson snap-dragons. A double trill of black lace was made to go around the throat, and the flowers were arranged between, with a jabot of yellow lace in front.

A Paris hat, which was very French, and very stylish indeed, is of fancy pink straw, with the brim cut away in the back and replaced by a cluster of roses shaded from crimson to pink. The under brim was of knite plaited black lace, and a bow of shaded pink glaze silk was in front of the crown. Jet ornaments finished the trimmings.

Black and tan, is another combination, a crown of fine black straw being set upon a tan colored brim, and the trimming a skillful combination of the two colors. Reversible ribbons are in high favor, and are employed for albatross bows, rosettes, loops and high tan plaiting. They are shown in great variety, and in exquisite combinations of color.

For the Summer Wardrobe.

A summer wardrobe will not be complete without a Marie Antoinette fichu. They are made of white muslin with fine close polka dots of pale pink or blue, and have deep double ruffles of muslin and three-inch yellow lace. They are worn on wool or cotton gowns, passed about the shoulders in soft folds, low down, making a yoke effect in the back, brought straight over the shoulders, and held on each side of the bust by knots of butter-colored ribbon. From these bows the fichu is carried to the waist line and tied in a loose knot, with ends falling way down in the front of the gown.

Varieties of Novels.

The following extract is from the advance sheets of "Annals of the Court of Oberon," by Hunter Duvar, the gifted Prince Edward Island litterateur. "On one wet, disagreeable day which confined us all to the haunt, it occurred to me that I would write a novel. The task is easy, and, from the proverbially facile nature of publishers, the profits to authors are large. I felt myself qualified for the undertaking. Before I accepted my present position of Annalist I lived in the capacity of nephew with a relative, and in return did odd jobs about his place. The gentleman was by profession a dealer in waste-paper, and in the course of his business had amassed a

large collection of modern fiction, which he had saved from the pulpmakers, and which I read with avidity. The various schools of composition were therefore familiar to me. As a novel is, or ought to be, a premeditated work of art, I proceeded in my design secundum artem, according to art, by making a list of the leading styles that have brought fame and fortune to their writers. Of these were—the Goody-Goody, not applicable to real life; the Adventurous, "played out" (so to speak) in boys' papers; purely Historic, never a success; the Religious? the Notable Numskull, adapted only to the serious elderly; the Atheistic, difficult to prevent being at once dull and blasphemous, and mostly written by college girls; the Political was not to be thought of; the Nigger, oppressively prevalent among boot-blacks and newsboys, but among them only; the Detective, so simplified by overdoing that any schoolboy can follow the scent with his nose, and unwind the clue as it from a reel; the Gynarchian—Eureka! I have found it. I need seek no farther. The Chivalric tone has had its day; funny men have utterly extinguished wit in the humorous; the Natural has ceased to exist since syndicates revived Grub Street; but Gynarchy, or Government by Woman, including Gush, is exactly suited to the tone of the time, and in every way adapted to the taste and range of the average typewriter."

Sublime but Evasive.

The late Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes once told, at a dinner party, how he had undertaken to solve the mystery of a servant that when unconsciously is consciously approached as during the inhalation of anaesthetics, when the mind is on the confines of two worlds—there arose sublime and wonderful, but fugacious, thoughts in the soul. These thoughts, he concluded, it they could only be caught and written down, might give a key to the very secrets of the universe; and he determined to catch and transcribe them if possible. So placing himself in his armchair, with pen, ink and paper at hand, he inhaled the vapor of chloroform. As drowsiness stole over him, and just as unconsciousness impending those sublime and marvellous thoughts arose, and, by a vigorous effort, he seized his pen and wrote he knew not what, for, before he had finished, he fell back unconscious. When he awoke, with trembling anxiety he turned to the sheet of paper, on which he could read, in scrawling characters but quite legible, the secret of the universe, written in the words: "A strong smell of turpentine pervades the whole."

Where Rain Never Falls.

There is, perhaps, no more curious place on the Pacific seaboard than Iquique. It stands in a region where rain has never been known to fall, and where, as was remarked by Darwin when he visited Iquique in 1835, the inhabitants live like people on board ship. These numbers about 14,000, nearly all connected with the staple industry of the port, due to the development of the nitrate industry on the adjacent pampas. The rain gauges at Lima, close to the Pacific, record absolutely no rainfall. There are several parts of the earth where rain never falls. Such are the Sahara Desert of Africa, and considerable tracts of Arabia, Syria, Persia, Tibet, and Mongolia in the Old World, while in South America the rainless districts comprise narrow strips on the shores of Peru, Bolivia, and Chili and on the coasts of Mexico and Guatemala.

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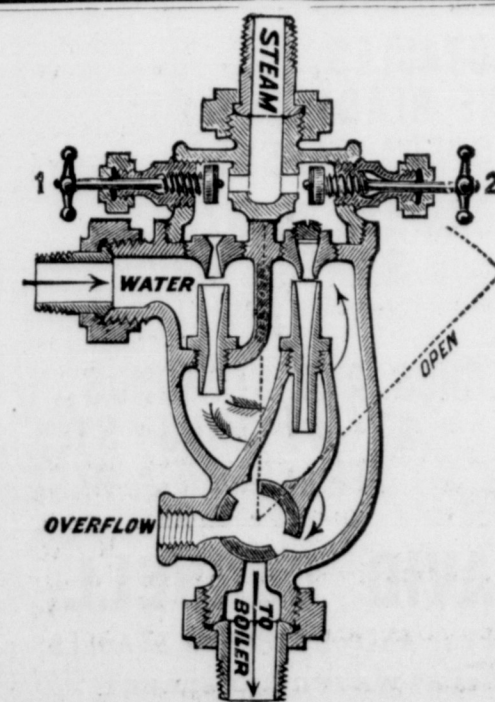
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Express from Halifax..... 10.30
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D. FOTTINGER,
General Manager.

Railway Office,
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