

Woman and Her Work

"You know we always pay for what we get"—said a friend who lives happily and even hilariously on a very narrow income "so when we haven't anything to pay with we just don't eat and you have no idea how it simplifies everything! When we do have the money we eat it up because we both like nice things immensely: so perhaps it is just as well we don't have it all the time!" There was a beautiful philosophy about this sentiment which appealed very strongly to me, and though I do not know that it would be exactly practicable if one came to apply it too strictly since it is a rule in polite society that all who confess and call themselves Christians shall eat at stated intervals whether they have any money or not. In the first case it is no one's affair but our own, and in the second, why some has to suffer for our impecuniosity, that is all, and if it is the butcher or the baker, why he is probably much better able to sustain a trifling loss in cash, than we are to sustain life on nothing! Besides, we fully intend to pay him—some time, when we can really afford it, and don't want the money for something else. So we save our consciences and go on victimizing our fellow creatures, till at last we have no conscience left, and though we should be most indignant at such an imputation being cast upon us, we degenerate into mere adventurers upon our fellow creatures in a most unblushing manner.

I do not believe there exists another such demoralizer as debt! It seems to lead to everything else, and change the self respecting man or woman into a creature devoid of every moral virtue, and absolutely lost to all sense of shame.

Three thousand years ago a wise man said that "the borrower is slave to the lender" and the conditions against which he warned mankind have not changed greatly since then. The borrower is still as much the slave of the lender as he was in those ancient days, and if his slavery is less apparent it is none the less galling, and the effects of such self imposed servitude are degrading in the extreme! There is no such thing as independence of character possible for a man who lives in constant dread that some long suffering creditor's patience will give out suddenly and legal thumb-screws be applied in order to make him pay his just debts. And the man who is always expecting to meet someone to whom he owes money insensibly adopts a cringing manner and a hesitating gait, he has lost his self respect and he scarcely cares to retain the respect of his fellow men. His life is spent in making promises and excuses, "putting off the duns" he calls it, and he would be surprised if anyone gave it the harsher term of swindling his neighbors. He probably suffers a good deal of inconvenience from his mode of life since no one can possibly enjoy being constantly baited and chased like an animal, but then he brings it upon himself and has no one else to blame. But unfortunately he is not the only one who suffers. Who does not know the wife of the man who is always in debt? Her worried expression, and the apologetic manner that frequent interviews with irate tradesmen who positively decline to wait any longer for their money, are familiar to all who know her. All hope and ambition seem to be crushed out of her nature, and nothing but a passive almost dogged endurance left. She is absolutely afraid to get herself a new dress or bonnet, lest the people to whom they are owing should make cruel remarks about her putting all her husband's earnings, on her back, instead of letting him pay his debts, and she feels almost as if she would like to put a label on the set of furs her brother sent her for Christmas, stating the fact and assuring all whom it might concern that none of her husband's money was squandered on them. I actually knew a woman once who went about shivering in a threadbare jacket when a beautiful new fur cloak was wasting its charms at home in her closet, and when I summoned up courage, knowing her very well, to ask her why she never wore her cloak, she answered with tears in her eyes that she simply couldn't; it was too handsome for her position in life, she could not possibly stop everyone she met on the street and tell them that it was a present, and she could not endure the thought of the remarks that would be made about her extravagance, by those to whom they owed money. So the cloak actually never saw daylight until the following winter.

It is not only the wife either, who is the sufferer for the children of a man who always owes money seldom grow up quite honest and straightforward; they become accustomed to deception all too early and

are adepts at giving evasive answers to unwelcome visitors long before they can do a sum in simple multiplication. They soon learn to distinguish the appearance of the man who has called to collect that little bill, and they can tell him that mamma is not in and papa out of town, with a readiness that is simply appalling, and which can scarcely fail to develop into craftiness and deceit as they grow older, and probably make untruthful and unreliable men and women of them. To the man who does not pay has much to answer for, and is deserving of heavy punishment.

I do not mean for one moment the struggling man whose cares and responsibilities have been too much for him, and who either from sickness or some other misfortune has gradually fallen behind, until he finds it impossible to retrieve the ground he has lost, and almost sinks in despair. Such a man has my most profound sympathy, and if a fund is ever raised for helping such unfortunates, I will subscribe to it to the utmost limit of my ability. But I mean the man who has a habit of getting what he wants, and trusting to luck to pay for it. It is so easy to get into debt, and so hard to get out of it. It is like a quicksand in that respect, and it would be well for us if we dreaded the one as much as the other. The person who deliberately buys a thing without being reasonably sure that he can pay for it at the appointed time, is much the same as a thief, and I am not sure he should not be treated as such.

We don't often talk about our underclothes when discussing questions of dress and fashion; and yet these garments are just as indispensable as the smartest of tailor made costumes, or the dearest of silk blouse waists. We take it for granted that everyone is well supplied with them, and fashion writers are not greatly given to speaking about them, whether from motives of modesty, or not, I am unable to say. I scarcely like the idea of striking out on such entirely different lines from the rest of the guild, but yet there has been such a resolution in the matter of underclothing during the past year, that I feel compelled to keep my readers posted on such an important subject, so that they may be up to date.

Speaking of the under petticoat as a necessary part of feminine apparel, Mr. George Samson of Dickens farm, once remarked that though it was not a garment to be mentioned in public we knew it was there, all the same! Mr. Samson would have been sadly out in his reckoning had he lived thirty years later because it isn't there at all, now a days. In fact it has gone out of existence except among old fashioned people who still cling to the traditions of their youth; and the decline and fall of the petticoat might well supply a theme for some more gifted pen than mine. The work of the dress reformer has not been without results, and one of the very best of these has been the almost entire banishment of the petticoat, and the consequent relief of womankind from a great burden especially in wet weather.

Of course, for evening wear and with light summer dresses, nothing has been found so far, to take the place of the well starched, and elaborately tucked and flounced white skirt. Dressmakers and fashion authorities assure us that the petticoat has been swept out of existence. But I think one sight of a society belle arrayed in a thin organdie or batiste dress, silk lined, and worn directly over the fashionable silk knickerbockers, with no intervening petticoat to relieve the eye, and support the skirt would soon convince the above authorities that however independent of the petticoat we might be in spring, autumn and winter, it was likely to hold its own in summer for many a day to come.

But apart from the necessities of the summer wardrobe, the ambition of every well regulated and fashionable matron and maid seems to be to have all her garments, except just her dress skirt, cling as closely to the figure as possible, thus giving her as much freedom of motion and as little weight to carry, as possible. The winter toilette of the woman of fashion consists of a vest and tights of silk stockinette, or a weave of fine wool and silk mixed. Next to these come the corset to which are attached slender single elastic cords, to hold up the stockings. When my lady is dressing for indoors she next steps into a pair of very full easily fitting bloomers which are gathered into a deep yoke fitting smoothly over the corset, and then hang full and baggy over the knees where they are fastened with bands and buttons. If a corset cover is worn at all, it is a very skeletonized affair and quite innocent of the skirts, which usually extend below the waist line, and crumple up into wrinkles under the dress. The corset cover is very often made of either woven silk or lisle thread, very much like the undervest.

If it is an out-door costume is being

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donned instead of the silk bloomers, come a pair of woolen knickerbockers made in every respect like a man's golf trousers, except that they are hung on a yoke; they are not very full, and hook smooth and flat on the hip, buttoning around the knees where they bag slightly. A pair of leggings usually of sueds in either gray, brown, or black, or else high bicycle shoes button up over the calf of the leg; then comes the dress skirt, and the woman is dressed for warmth, comfort and cleanliness as she has never been dressed since the world began. No more wet muddy skirts to flap against her heels, and ankles, giving her death of cold, and ruining her boots at the same time. She has just the one skirt to look after, and that is the skirt of her dress, so she can hold it up easily, and keep it clean without much effort; her boots last twice as long, and require much less cleaning, and above all she is perfectly warm, just as warm as her husband or brother, and almost as free in her motions. Many of the tweed trousers which are bought readymade, have pockets in which women can keep money and jewelry when travelling, and—whisper it low—for women who feel the cold very much or are delicate the large establishments show trousers which are lightly padded with eider down, and look for all the world like especially dainty football or hockey trousers. For women who are subject to rheumatism there are knickerbockers of red flannel, though why red flannel should be any better for rheumatism than gray or blue, is something I never could understand.

When summer comes the woman of fashion exchanges her woolen or silk tights for similar ones of lisle thread, and the silk bloomers are worn all the time, instead of merely indoors. They are shown in shades of silk, and are usually made of the new ribbon serge that washes and wears like Irish linen, and comes in dark green, dark blue, and red.

The result of this wonderful innovation is a wonderful reduction in the price of petticoats, and the handsomest silk skirts are being sold at bargain prices.

In fact the trouser habit bids fair to spread and grow exceedingly, now that it has taken root in the land. The fine lady wears them because they are the newest thing out, and she can have them made as expensively as she likes, the working girl wears them because she can buy them quite cheaply if she knows the right place to go, and they do not wear out as quickly as petticoats, besides being so much warmer and easier to walk in. The college girl wears them because they are so little trouble, and cost so little for washing compared with skirts. While the athletic woman wears them with joy and thankfulness because of the freedom they give her limbs; indeed it is well known that all the women who are daily attendants at the golf links, wear garments exactly like their male opponents, except that they are covered with a skirt in the woman's case.

So altogether it looks very much as if the once sacred petticoat was really doomed to become obsolete and have its place taken by the convenient, if unpoetical trouser. Here is a charming costume quite worthy of description. The material was silk of a delicate silver grey striped with lines of pink, and barred across with a darker shade of gray. The skirt was quite plain,



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but the bodice had a gump of pale blue chiffon with a full ruche of lace at the throat. A lace fichu was drawn about the shoulders in berth fashion, below the guimpe, and knotted on the bosom, a pointed belt of grey velvet confined the full blouse front, and the sleeves of the same silk came just to the elbows, and were finished with frills of lace. ASTRA.

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TIPPING GENERAL SHERIDAN.

How he Heard Two Persons Discussing Himself.

The Washington Star prints a story which General Sheridan used to tell at his own expense, and which, according to the Star, he intended to incorporate in his autobiography. It relates to the time, toward the end of his life, when he was in Washington as the head of the army.

In the guide-books of Washington there is a description of the office of the general, or, as it is known, the headquarters of the army in the War Department. It is stated in this connection that the office is generally open to the public, and that visitors to the city are welcome to inspect it, at least during office hours.

Once General Sheridan was very busy preparing or revising some official reports. He had kept the messengers generally stationed at the outer door of his office running around at a rather lively rate to his various subordinates, and for the moment there was no one at the door, when in marched a couple of visitors, a respectable-looking man and a lady, armed with a guide-book. The general did not welcome the intrusion, but they did not know it, for he kept steadily at work.

They examined the pictures on the walls, and especially a marble bust of the general which had just been placed in position.

"So that is General Phil Sheridan?" said the man to his wife. "Well, no one would ever think that man was such a fighter. To me he looks a little top-heavy—has too much head for his body."

Other remarks followed, all of which the general heard, and the effect of them was to divert his attention from his work.

"How is old Sheridan?" asked the visitor, indicating for the first time that he noticed anyone in the room. General Sheridan gave him the information, and thinking that the best way to get rid of his visitors would be to explain to them hurriedly the things of interest in the room, he proceeded to do so. He warmed up somewhat on some of them, and his descriptions and explanations of the portraits, war scenes [and Indian curios and blankets were extremely interesting.

The visitors were appreciative, and as they turned to leave the room the man quietly slipped a twenty-five-cent piece into the general's hand, with a word of thanks

for the information he had given them. General Sheridan used to say that this was the first "tip" he had ever received.

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