

TO TAX THE MAIDENS.

UNLESS THEY HAVE ANGLED FOR MEN THEY MUST PAY.

What a Writer in the Toronto Mail and Empire Thinks of Women in General—He Finds Fault With the Fair Sex With Bitter Acrimony.

"Mr. Donovan, the Michigan legislator who brought in a bill taxing unmarried men, now proposes to lay an impost on old maids, exempting therefrom, however, those who have made diligent efforts to be married, and have failed: at least that is what I read in the Tribune of New York City. The provisions of this statute may make it necessary to define the efforts which the mature maiden is required to put forth, and what, in this direction constitutes diligence. Whatever be the standard fixed, few of them would be likely to fall below it if they are animated with the conjugal spirit of sisterhood elsewhere. It would be sheer oppression to tax them for not having husbands when they had angled for them with all the bait in their possession, and not got a nibble."

Thus The Flaneur, in the Toronto Mail and Empire. Now apart from the very genuine admiration I have always felt for the Flaneur's literary acquirements and brilliant journalistic ability. I cannot help thinking him rather a cowered and disgruntled old lady who is inclined to take a severe view of poor humanity, and who standing upon the eminence to which his varied talents have raised him, is apt to look down upon the struggling mass of men and women—especially women—beneath him, and scolds loudly about their shortcomings. For some reason or other this slightly old-fashioned gentleman has a very marked aversion to our sex, and he never loses an opportunity of letting us know what he thinks of us. Of course he denies the soft impeachment which some indignant lady correspondent accuses him of discriminating against us, and assures his readers that he entertains the most profound reverence for the whole sex, but no one who reads his columns as regularly as I do, can long remain in doubt as to what his real sentiments are on the subject of lovely women. Indeed the bitter acrimony with which he refers to us, would lead one to suppose that he had been jilted at some time of his life, and had never been able to forgive the sex, for the evil deed committed by one woman years and years ago. It is said that whenever the great Napoleon heard of any trouble between two men, whether it was a duel or a plain murder without seconds or other aristocratic accessories, he never asked "What's the row about?" but merely remarked "Cherchez la femme?" And as the little Corporal was exceedingly fond of the ladies himself he must have known what he was talking about, and had excellent reasons of his own for holding the charming sex responsible for a good deal of trouble in this world.

But The Flaneur is not sufficiently fond of, to know much about woman and her ways, and yet he persists in following Napoleon's example, and blaming us for everything that goes wrong in the world. He blames women for leading useless extravagant lives, and he blames girls for going out into the world to work, crowding men out of situations, and lowering wages. He also blames girls for staying at home and being a burden to their unfortunate fathers who are dragged down to poverty and misery by their increasing demands upon his purse, and love of folly and amusement. Then again he blames them for their selfishness in wanting to leave the home and be independent. It has long been a cherished theory with this most dissatisfied old person that there is more misery, poverty and crime caused in the world by woman's extravagance in dress than by man's love of liquor and that dress is a far greater evil than intemperance. It may be, for aught I know; the Flaneur is much older than I am, I fancy, and must have based his opinion upon his own experience, in order to speak so positively on the subject. But when I think of the numerous cases that have come under my own limited observation where a whole family's misery has been caused by one man's love of strong drink and that the same experience has failed to furnish one instance where on a woman's part love of dress caused a man's failure and downfall, I am forced to the conclusion that the Flaneur's experience like many of his views on other subjects, is of a very narrow description. I have heard the same story before, too! I have heard men who had never known what it was to willingly deny themselves anything, but whose wives had never possessed a really decent dress since their wedding outfits were worn out, and whose children were covered, but never dressed, discourse by the hour on female extravagance and love of dress and the evils for which it was responsible though where they gained their knowledge of the subject it would have

puzzled them to explain. So perhaps it is only natural that I should find the brilliant literary gentleman I have quoted rather tiresome.

Just now he is so agitated over the action of a crank in the Michigan legislature who is trying to gain notoriety by bringing in a series of extraordinary bills for the supposed promotion of matrimony and population, as to grow quite eloquent over the improbability of any "mature maiden" being single through her own inclination, or neglecting to put forth diligent efforts to get married. One would really imagine that Flaneur himself had been angled for, to read his fervid sentences, and that he was such a deuce of a clever fellow you know, that he had never even nibbled at the bait; he does speak so feelingly of the conjugal spirit which animates the sex, in the regions with which he is familiar, outside of Michigan.

Can this really be the writer who has so frequently in the past, deplored women's growing distaste for the yoke and burdens of matrimony, and her simple objection to wearing the glorious crown of motherhood? Surely not; there must be some mistake somewhere! The Flaneur of the past used to think there was only one sphere for woman, the home—and continually did cry because she declined now a days to confine herself to it exclusively but wanted to go out into the world and help man to earn the living. But behold here is the Flaneur of the present scolding away the same as usual only on the other side of the subject, and sneering in his own pretty way because lovely woman is "animate with the conjugal spirit" and will persist in angling for 'coy, and timid man, and trying to lull him into providing her with a home in which to shine, and exhibit all those domestic virtues which he has been lauding so extravagantly! Verily it is impossible to please this glib but carping critic! It was bad enough to have Mr. Donovan of Michigan whom all the unmarried women of the United States and Canada, were thinking of canonizing as their patron saint, turn and rend us as he has done with that extraordinary bill of his which would force us to pay a tax for the dear boon of liberty, or suffer the humiliation of proving that we have wooed and been rejected: but to have The Flaneur out of his vast experience tear aside the veil with which we have always modestly shrouded our efforts to secure partners for life, and let an unsympathetic public into our little secrets of hook and bait, is too cruel! Go to Flaneur, go to, your digestive organs are not in proper order I know, and unkind as you are to us I will show you an example of magnanimity by reminding you that a calm and even disposition should be cultivated by all dyspeptics, and all undue excitement over trifles carefully avoided. I think I can safely assure you that there is not the least danger of anyone even the most mature and lopeless of our sex, angling for you with any bait whatever, so you can sit down in your easy chair with an untroubled mind, and give so dyspepsia remedies a chance to effect a cure. Poor old dear, I really do feel sorry for you! My sympathies have always been with the hunted rather than the hunter, and it must be terrible to be pursued all one's life. No wonder you are a little sour! ASTRA.

FORGERY TOO PERFECT.

Foiled the Man Whose Name He Wrote, but got His Dates Mixed.

Ivan Ivanoff, one of the most skillful of Russian forgers, when sentenced to twenty years imprisonment in the mines of Siberia, nonchalantly remarked:

"I am the victim of poor technique. I know my business better than most men, but I am human, and to err is human. Had my forgery been perfect, I could not have been convicted, I am the victim of poor technique and a careless stroke of the pen."

Strange as may seem, an event has taken place recently in the United States which proves that Ivan Ivanoff was mistaken in his theory and that the absolute perfection of a forgery may prove the cause of a conviction. The story which contains the proof of this assertion is not a long one and is as follows:

About twenty years ago a young man named Richard Robinson who lived in the city of New York, bought 100 acres of land near Kansas City. The land was only worth three or four dollars an acre at that time and Robinson, getting into trouble, deeded the land to his lawyer in payment of his fee. The lawyer gave no attention to the property, and it was sold for taxes, and his title was good against all claimants except infant heirs. When the land became valuable, owing to the growth of Kansas City, an unscrupulous real estate dealer of St. Louis induced a young woman of that city to impersonate a daughter of

Robinson and to bring suit to recover the property. The girl was proved to be an impostor and the suit decided against her.

The case attracted wide attention, and the fact that the title to the land seemed somewhat in doubt caused a disbarred lawyer named Reed, once a resident of Chicago, to look into the matter carefully and finally to conceive a plan to obtain possession of the land through forgery. When everything had been prepared Reed brought suit of ejectment against the man who had possession of the property claiming that he had a deed to it from Robinson dated prior to the one given by Robinson to his lawyer, thus invalidating not only that title, but all subsequent titles which had been given.

The only way to break this claim was to prove that the deed alleged to be signed by Robinson was a forgery. After a long search Robinson was discovered by the attorney for the defence, living in an obscure town in Texas. He had passed through many wild experiences on the frontier and in a personal encounter had received a pistol ball in his right arm, which made amputation necessary. Subsequently he had served as county clerk in Missouri, and his signature was thus readily accessible to the forger. Robinson was brought to Kansas City by the defence, and his testimony was relied on to prove that the signature attached to the deed was a forgery.

When the case came to trial and the deed had been offered in evidence Robinson was placed on the stand. He examined the signature with the greatest care, and to the astonishment and chagrin of the defence he testified that the writing was his not a line or dot in the signature differing in the slightest degree from his usage. It seemed as though the wily Mr. Reed had gained his case, when the attorney for the defence, taking up the deed, glanced at it a moment, then dropping it upon the table he suddenly asked:

"Mr. Robinson, when did you lose your right arm?"

"About fifteen years ago," was the reply. "Is your signature on this deed written with your right or left hand?"

"With my left hand."

"Did you ever employ your left hand in writing before you lost your right arm?"

"Never."

"That is all," said the attorney. "Call Mr. Reed to the stand."

The plaintiff took the stand and the attorney handed him the deed. "You swear that this deed was made to you by Mr. Robinson?"

"I do, and he has identified his signature," replied Reed triumphantly.

"On what date was that paper given?"

"It is dated April 10, 1876."

"That was six years before he lost his right arm, and yet this deed is signed with his left hand. How do you account for that?"

The witness was silent, he turned pale and then attempted to escape from the court room. He was arrested and held on the charge of forgery. His technique had been perfect—so perfect, indeed, as to deceive the man whose signature he had forged—but he had made the mistake of imitating the left-handed writing of Robinson, and had dated the deed six years prior to the loss of the right arm.

Of course, the suit was decided in favor of the defendant, and at present Reed is serving a twenty-year sentence in the penitentiary for forgery; his late paralleling that of Ivan Ivanoff, not through lack of "technique," but rather because of his perfection in that matter.

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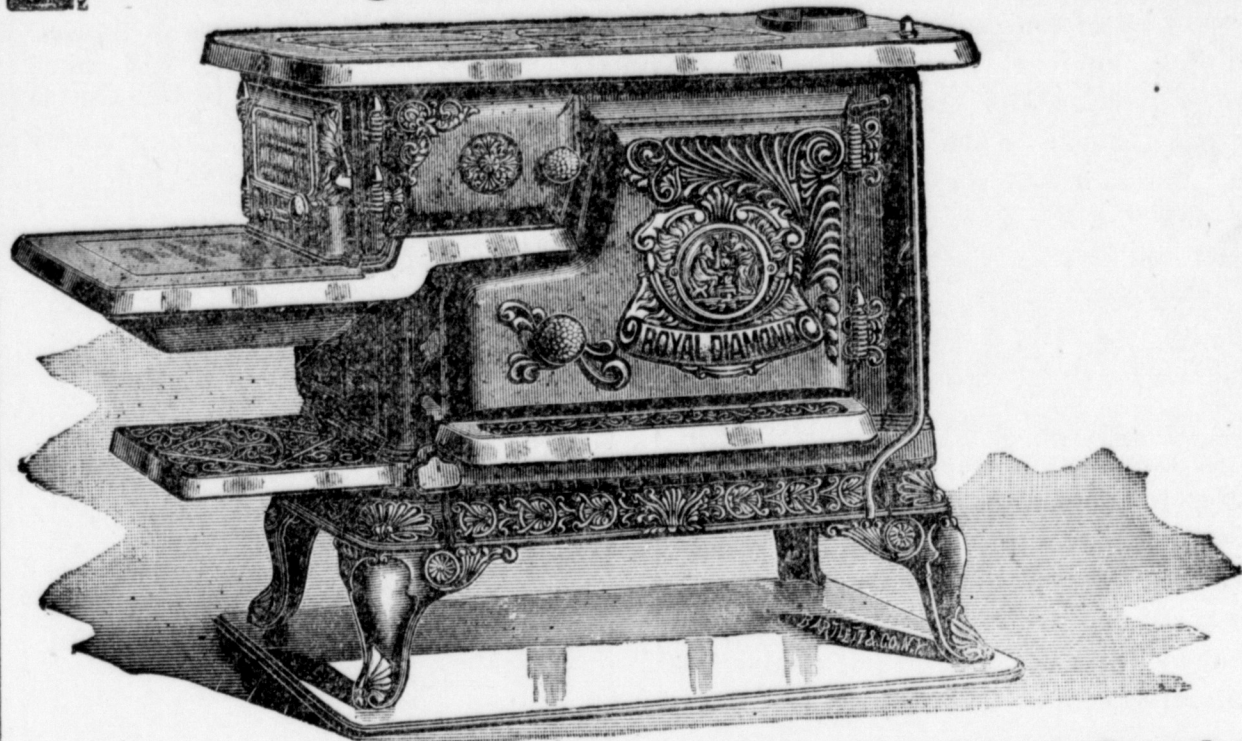
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