

Woman and Her Work

Someone, I do not know who, or what authority he had for the statement, has placed himself on record with the assertion that "any woman can win the affection she does not want; the secret therefore of universal charm is universal indifference." My private opinion is that he had recently been refused by the idol of his dreams and wrote his opinion in the first flush of that feeling which I have been told is universal, under such circumstances—that a girl never looks so pretty in a man's eyes as just after she has refused him. I suppose the unattainable will always have a charm above all others for human beings, and it is on that principle that the love he can have without asking is so apt to seem not worth the taking.

It is always so easy to be charming to the man one does not care about provided he is pleasant and does not force his attentions upon us; we are never awkward or embarrassed in his presence, and are so apt to show him our best side, through our very indifference and unconsciousness that it is little wonder that the poor fellow, falls in love with us, while the man whose love we would perhaps give almost our lives to win, finds us silent and uninteresting just because we were so anxious for his good opinion and at the same time so terrified lest he should discover some sign of that anxiety, that we seemed stiff and constrained in his presence and only let him see our dullest and most uninteresting side. I have seen so many girls who were all sparkle and charm with a man friend to whom they were perfectly indifferent and whose affection for themselves they never suspected, while with the man they really cared for they were awkward and stiff to a degree. It may be that our standard is merely higher when we care for a man, and the very effort to reach it, to appear at our very best, or even a little better than we really are, makes us constrained, and therefore unnatural in manner when in his society.

It would be well for us no doubt if we could take the advice of our experienced friend, and adopt the course of unusual indifference, but like most gratuitous advice it is scarcely practicable. As long as the world exists and men and women have hearts, universal indifference will be an impossible condition, and girls will go on liking one man better than another for no apparent reason in the world except that he is often utterly insensible, and giving the cold shoulder to the one, who adores them, and is in every way desirable.

I can sympathize with the poor girls, too, for somehow, such is the perversity of us all, there is nothing in the world more utterly provoking than the love of the man you don't want. It is not only a constant reproach to you, but also seriously detrimental, as it tends to keep the man you do like away from you; men have a rigid code of honor in these matters and when one sees that another's affections are centred in a certain girl, he is almost certain to keep rigidly out of that girl's way, no matter how much he may admire her, in order to give "the other fellow" fair play. And thus many a match is nipped in the bud that might have really "come to something" as the old ladies say, had not some girl been unlucky enough to win a love she did not want. I don't know what we are going to do about it, girls, unless we can adopt some method of mental culture which shall train our minds to dominate our hearts entirely and render them impervious to all emotion, even as the higher methods of physical culture are supposed to give our bodies immunity from disease, wrinkles, and ugliness, and almost, from old age. If we ever attain such a degree of superiority we may hope to reach universal indifference, but somehow I am afraid we won't have half as good a time as we have now, or be as happy—Wasn't it Shelby who said—"All love is sweet, given, or returned. Common as light is love, and its familiar voice wears no ring."

They who inspire it most, are fortunate. But they who feel it most are happier still. It might be that even the security of an absolute and impregnable indifference with its accompanying charm or irresistible fascination, would fail to compensate us for what we should lose in the blessed capacity for loving.

Strange to say fashion seems determined to vindicate herself from the charge of fickleness so often brought against her, by proving her constancy in one respect, and that is the persistency with which she clings to the blouse bodice. Over and over again have the leaders of fashion endeavoured to overthrow it, but each time it has arisen serenely and taken a fresh lease of popu-

larity. Last autumn it really did look as if the days of the blouse were numbered; we were assured that it would continue to be worn throughout the winter because those who had handsome silk blouses would not lay them aside, but that another season would surely see the very last of it. Now another season is here and instead of showing any signs of rapid decline, the blouse is a feature of nearly all the newest gowns, and evidently occupies a firmer position than ever. It came so quietly that no one ever suspected its return and was here before we knew it or had time to make any protest, even if we had desired to do so.

Most dressmakers fit the new blouse down quite closely in the back, and make the front, full and bouffant; where a long-waisted appearance is desired, the front is drawn down entirely over the belt, where it hangs in a full pouch. It is made with a yoke, double breasted, or it is made open down the front over a gilet, or vest, and worn with a big white linen turn-over collar and a tie. It is trimmed across, and it is trimmed up and down according to the figure of the wearer, and the design of the skirt. Often it has a bolero jacket over it, and these are now made so much shorter than they were as to be sometimes little more than a yoke; another time it is graced with a figaro, which differs from the bolero in being made long enough to be worn with the narrow belts so generally fashionable now, the jacket should just reach the top of the belt. Thus it will be seen that the blouse comes in shapes and styles sufficiently various to afford a choice to everyone; there is no distinction made as to morning, afternoon, or evening dress, the blouse is proper for all. In evening models the yoke or figaro is made of lace, and the belt is frequently jewelled.

Does anyone want to know exactly how to make the very newest skirt, the "sun skirt"? Well it is not easy, and it is very expensive but as it is the latest thing such trifling drawbacks are not to be considered for a moment. The sun skirt is what is described by modistes as a recent "discovery" in the dressmaking art, and it certainly can claim the distinction of standing quite apart from any accordion or side-plaited skirt ever introduced before. To make it, sew together enough breadths of material to form a square twice the length that the skirt is to be when finished, and a few inches over. For example if your skirt measures forty two inches make it square one hundred inches each way. To give an idea of this principle on which the plaiting is done, take hold of the square by the centre and draw it through the thumb and finger of the other hand, if the material will admit of such close folding, and you will have an illustration in gathers of what the finished skirt is like, after it has passed through the plaiter's hands; for the plaits begin at nothing, and widen gradually. The plaiting is accomplished in some mysterious manner on a machine and after it is done the centre is cut out and the hem shaped and finished to suit the figure of the wearer. Of course only certain kinds of material are adapted for new skirts, stripes and fabrics which have an up and down being quite impracticable.

I am sure it will be good news to many girls whose means are limited, but who are contemplating matrimony all the same, to hear that marriage has gone out of fashion to such an extent that it is now considered the thing to make just as little fuss about it as possible. It would almost seem as if the prospective bride realized that she was about to do something on which society rather looks down and decided to attract as little attention to her old-fashioned ideas as possible. Therefore she no longer indulges in a trousseau if she wishes to be in good form, but quietly replenishes her wardrobe, much as any well-to-do woman should do every spring and autumn; gets "half a dozen of each" in new under clothes, gets a handsome silk costume made, freshens up her evening dresses, has all her best gowns well looked over, modernized as to sleeves and collars, and generally put in order just as she might do before starting for the seaside, or for a long visit, spends about what she usually does every spring for new blouses, gloves, shoes, and hats. And then last of all orders a travelling gown which consists of a jacket and skirt of plain cloth, just such

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as anyone who was not going to be married might order for street wear; and then she goes quietly off to the church and is married without any fuss whatever, proceeding from the church to the railway station and setting off on her wedding journey without any flourish of trumpets.

It is indeed a helpful thought for the girl who cannot afford either an elaborate trousseau or an expensive wedding that in being married as unostentatiously as possible she is really doing the swell thing, and at the same time keeping strictly within her means.

It will be good news for prospective bridegrooms also, since all men dislike the display and ostentation of a fashionable wedding and would infinitely prefer to carry their brides away quietly after a simple ceremony in the house, if that were possible, instead of submitting to the elaborate ceremonial, the tedious breakfast, and the departure amid showers of rice and gaping crowds which have so long surrounded the marriage ceremony amongst the upper classes with a prickly hedge of difficulties, especially for the groom. ASTRA.

ARE WOMEN LOVELY?

A German Baron Who Contends That They Are Not.

A German baron has taken it upon himself a reply to a book recently published with the title of "The Deterioration of Manly Beauty." This work is written by a woman, and the baron replies with a savage onslaught on [the] prevailing ideals of female loveliness, says an exchange. He calls his work "Defects of Woman's Beauty; an Anthropometrical and Aesthetic Study."

This dignified title hardly prepares the readers for the strong, unvarnished manner in which the baron treats his subject. He agrees with Schopenhauer in his denunciation of those misguided millions who find comeliness in the "undergrown, small-shouldered, big-hipped and short-legged sex." How much more grateful to the clear eye of art should be the noble proportions of the properly developed man, argues the baron.

By numerous measurements, which it is not necessary to give here, he proves to his own satisfaction that geometrically the female is a failure and that the male form is a success. Women themselves have shown since the days of Eve in the garden, the baron says, that they appreciate their inferiority in this respect.

They have concealed their limbs in flowing garments, reaching sometimes to the knee, sometimes to the ankles, sometimes to the feet, but always far enough to hide the defects in their proportions. They now not only conceal their proportions to a large extent, he says, but they always seek to alter them, moving their waist up or down with stays, squeezing in their natural

figures here and building them out there, and not scorning hoopskirts, bustles and crinolines in order to make themselves look as little as possible like nature made them.

The ballet girl would seem to confound part of the baron's argument, but he does not yield to this apparent defiance of his logic.

The baron seems to feel that, after he has put forth his most forcible arguments and has exhausted his most discriminating criticisms, he is still enlisted in a losing fight, for he adds, plaintively:

"But most of the men of our times have ceased to perceive the defects of female beauty. Women have deceived and misled her admirers so many generations with her smooth, long gowns that only a few, educated by research and by constant practice in measuring the proportions of the female form fully clothed, have gained that clear, unbiased view which enables them to appreciate how skillfully woman has carried out the delusion as to her figure."—Chicago News.

HOW ENGLISH GIRLS STUDY.

Vigorous Outdoor Sports Responsible for Retentive Memory.

The English students' power of concentration is remarkable. They respect perfectly the study hours of their friends, and will tolerate no interruption of their own. The English excel, when tried by two of Prof. Kraepelin's tests of mental capacity—amount of work done in a given time and power of concentration. Wherein lies their advantage? They will tell us that their strong and necessary ally is vigorous outdoor sport. The English girl has of course, known from childhood the habit of outdoor life. At college she plays hockey or hand polo, cricket fives and the games with which we are more familiar for at least two hours a day, and often for a longer time. Two hours is a minimum of time spent in exercise. At frequent intervals, usually at the end of each week, she seeks recreation from past and preparation for future effort by spending many hours in the open air; in boating on the river, it may be, or in taking a tramp of 30 miles or so. During vacation she not infrequently makes walking tours of longer or shorter duration.

If an English girl finds that her mind is inactive and unresponsive she recognizes this as an indication that she needs recreation. She drops her books and puts her brain in fit condition for study by some vigorous play. Under like conditions the American student, not recognizing nature's signal, mentally scourges herself for dullness, and urges her jaded mind on to over-exertion. I once heard an English girl assert that she could dawdle all day, but could not study for more than two hours at a time.—Popular Science Monthly.

CURIOUS CLOCKS.

Interesting Specimens of Timepieces Which Have Been Made.

The origin of the clock is unknown, but such timepieces were known in Italy as early as the tenth century. Some think they were first invented by the Saracens. From that time many elaborate and whimsical designs were constructed and those which were skillfully and wonderfully made brought fabulous prices. An old Italian soldier, who served prior to 1689, constructed one of the most curious of these. By its mechanism the figure of a tortoise was made to drop into a plate of water, having the hours marked on its rim. The figure would float around and stop at the proper hour, telling the time like a learned pig. A lizard also was made in the same timekeeper to ascend a pillar on which the hours were marked and point out the same thing by creeping along an hour-marked cornice. The figure of a golden cock that flapped its wings twice with the approach of the hours and crowed twice was also a popular favorite for ancient timekeepers.

Of the various specimens that might be given of the early designs of the clockmakers' art not the least interesting are the several types of lamp clocks. One of these was of a kind quite common in the seventeenth century, and consisted of a lamp burner placed at the base of a glass oil receptacle mounted vertically upon a suitable standard. The oil reservoir had attached to it a scale, facing the burner and showing the hours, beginning at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, at which time the lamp

was to be lighted in the winter, and ended at 7 o'clock in the morning. The lamp being lighted the gradually descending level of oil, as combustion proceeded, marked the hours. Another device—of later origin dating back to the beginning of the present century—utilized the same principle. It consisted of two communicating oil chambers, superposed by a clock dial. In one of the chambers was placed a night lamp to illuminate this dial, and in the other was suspended a float cord which passed around a small pulley. The latter was mounted on a horizontal axis ending in the centre of the dial. The float, of course, descended as the oil was consumed, and carried the index hand along with it, thus marking the hours precisely as in the case already cited. At their best, these timepieces could have had only an indifferent degree of accuracy, yet they probably served their purpose well, and certainly are interesting at the present time as illustrating some of the expedients adopted by mechanicians of an earlier period.—Commercial Advertiser.

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