

Woman and Her Work

"Have the young women forgotten the art of blushing? A great many men declare that they have. If the men are right the girls had better recall how to bring the bewitching glow to their cheeks and brow once more, for word comes from Paris that it is all the style there again for women to blush readily, and when Paris blushes it would never do for New York not to blush too. It is no excuse at all that Parisian women have more cause to blush than New Yorkers. To blush is the style, and blush you must. When was there a time when fashion did not hold dominion over guilty and innocent alike? Already schools of deportment in Paris have set up departments of blushing. It is said that the classes in these departments are very full, so eager are women to practice and learn the art. How did it all start? Parents and guardians demanded it. They contend that girls are so knowing nowadays, so go-ahead, that they have become commonplace, and that before they can become charming, interesting, fascinating, alluring again they must take on some of the adorable classic grace and simplicity of the year 1850, the true golden year of Ste. Mouseline.

"An apt pupil in the blushing department of one of the best known Parisian schools of deportment says that it is easy to droop the eyes and affect bashfulness, though you feel as bold as a lion, but that it is like pulling eye teeth to blush at will. It is too bad if blushing is really a lost art. Still, it seems as if it would be a hard matter for a girl to cultivate the spirit of camaraderie among her men friends, as is now the style, and still blush, and it would be still harder for the bicycle girl or the golf girl, or the basketball girl in her 'rationals,' to call the rosy flush of modesty or confusion or timidity, or whatever you will, to her ruddy, healthy cheek. Perhaps, however, perseverance and a sacrifice in the matter of face powder may work wonders, and blushing may become a fad. This young Parisian says:

"There is a certain grace about it, even when it is an acquired art, and not an inspiration."

Have young women forgotten the art of blushing? asks the writer gravely. Well I can only say for my own part I wish most sincerely at least one of them could forget it when she wished to do so, and she would be saved many uncomfortable moments. It may be inconvenient sometimes to be unable to blush, but it is simply awful to be unable to prevent your self from doing so. Many an awkward situation might be safely tided over if the blushing habit could only be controlled or rather regulated. How delightful it would be to pass through one of those trying moments when one longs to sink through the floor, with cool cheeks and an unembarrassed manner instead of feeling a wave of crimson start from the vicinity of one's toes, and rise steadily until it culminates in a sort of tidal billow which breaks as it reaches the face, and leaves the victim the color of a boiled lobster! And what a satisfaction it would seem to be able to pass the lover with whom one had quarrelled not only with an unmoved countenance but, better still, with unchanged color. The blushing habit is constitutional with most people, and it is a peculiarity they are usually so anxious to get rid of that one of the commonest queries one meets with in correspondence columns is—"How can I cure myself of a terrible habit of blushing? I suffer agonies from my inability to control it and would give anything if I could hear of some method of conquering such an embarrassing meekness." Many are the different remedies that I have seen suggested, all highly recommended, but all equally inefficacious and little did I imagine that I should ever hear of special departments being added to the Parisian schools, for the instruction of pupils in the art of blushing, I believed in the innocence of my heart that the crying need of the hour

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was for some institution which should make the radical cure of the blushing habit a specialty, and that such a school would be crowded with eager pupils; but to find that the fin de siecle maiden regards blushing as one of the lost arts, and finds it necessary to learn something about it, has proved such a shock to my nervous system that I am still feeling a good deal shaken.

What can be the cause of this alarming state of affairs? Is it possible that the New Woman can be responsible for it, and that in her efforts to get away from all the distinguishing marks of her sex she has succeeded in imitating man so closely as to eliminate the weakness of blushing from her list of feminine weaknesses? Whatever the solution may be, she has evidently learned to regret the lost accomplishment, and is now as anxious to acquire it again, as she once was to forget it. If she is successful in reducing it to a science, and blushing or not, at will, even though the effort of producing a becoming flush may be almost as severe as the drawing of an eye tooth, I am quite sure she will not regret the time and trouble spent on her education in that direction; and let us hope that as long as the gay French capital continues to set the fashions for the rest of the world, and is willing to keep up departments for instruction in the difficult accomplishment of blushing at the proper time, in its female seminaries, the fascinating "art of blushing" will never become quite obsolete.

How often it happens that we are called upon to exclaim, with all our hearts—"Save me from my friends, and I will look after my enemies myself."—"The well meant interference, or rather meddling, of a too zealous friend frequently results in a good deal more mischief for us, than the efforts of our most malignant enemies. The poor little girl who figures in the following instance of kindly intended meddling, had a very narrow escape from realizing just the extent of harm, that we can suffer at the hands of those who think they are doing us the greatest service. It seems difficult to draw the line in such cases, but one would think, that the women who undertake the very responsible position of inspectors for the societies watching over the interest of minors, would try to make themselves acquainted to some extent, with the circumstances of those they wish to befriend and thus make sure that they are not doing them an irreparable injury in depriving them on the strength of a mere technicality of bread, and condemning them to enforced idleness which can only mean starvation for them; when the work in which they are engaged is neither beyond their strength or ability, and means for them and their families all the difference between absolute misery, and comparative comfort. They should indeed bear in mind the excellent, if trite axiom, that 'circumstances alter cases.'

Jacks, kings, queens, and aces. It was tiresome for young limbs, sitting all day guiding them into the box; but when Tina got cramped in one position she could move her stool around to the other side and lean over the other way. The \$2.50 that she carried home every Saturday was a boon to the household.

The new hand in the playing card factory was proud and pleased at being a bread winner and quite content to guide the broad sheets of cardboard as they came from the press, and see to it that the orange colored Jacks and scarlet robed kings and queens tell fair and square into the receptacle meant for them. She had been at work nearly two months, when one day a neatly gowned woman made her appearance; a visitor where visitors were infrequent, for the factory was in an out-of-the-way part of town.

The visitor watched the unceasing out-pour of spotted cardboard and noted the slender little hands that manipulated it. She had stood and watched the other girls at the different machines, and her face and manner were so prepossessing that when she asked: 'How old are you, my dear?' in a kindly interested way, Tina answered promptly, pleased at the interest she excited.

A short time after the woman had moved away the card guider was called to the foreman's desk, the messenger who had brought the summons taking her vacant seat on the little stool, and preceding to look after the tumbling cards.

"Here is the money due you," Tina was informed by the foreman. "You need not come any more. We did not know you were under age."

Poor little unfortunate! Bewildered and dazed, she got herself into her shabby jacket and started home, with a lump in her throat and a feeling that unmerited misfortune had befallen her.

The pleasant faced woman and the owner of the factory were talking together in the doorway as she essayed to pass. Something

in her appearance attracted the visitor's interest.

"You are going home?" she asked. The girl nodded. She could not speak just then.

"Did you know you were under age?"

An undecided motion of the head and the not over clean hands went up to the face and hid it from view. The lady looked perplexed.

"Do you like your work?" she asked.

The answer to this was prompt, though inaudible. Later it came out that she did not know what 'they' would do if she could not work.

"How many children has your mother?"

"Four more."

"Older or younger than you?"

"Younger. The baby's a boy."

"Is your father living?"

"On the Island. His head is bad. Mother gets sick some days."

The inspector's thoughts went back to the time when she copied painstakingly in a copybook, 'Circumstances alter cases.'

"Don't go yet," she said to the girl, touching her encouragingly. Then, to the owner of the factory, "Will you keep her if the case is over-looked? I see that she is much more mature than I thought. It is only a matter of three months, and it is hard that she should suffer. This the worst season of the year, too."

"We will pay no fine, Madam," said the owner icily. "Had we known the girl was under age we would not have taken her on. We can get all the help we want legitimately. You see the work she is doing. It is neither difficult nor unwholesome. I am told that sometimes on cold days there is no fire in her home. Here she is comfortable. I have nothing to say in the matter. For her, personally, I should regard it advisable for her to work."

"Let her stay," urged the woman, "and I will go and see the family and see what can be done. I am sure it is wise to make exceptions."

"You may go back to your place," said the owner, after a moment's hesitation, and in a flash Tina's jacket was off and she was posted by her jacks and kings and queens again, watching them tumble out into the box and piloting them straight and square. She was thoughtful the rest of the afternoon. She had faced a very uncomfortable situation.

The silk waists to wear with cloth skirts are as pretty, and as elaborate as ever. They are made of every variety of silk from the expensive Liberty silk and the crisp taffeta, to the cheapest grade of washing silk, that is really half linen. If one can at all afford it, it is best to select material of a good quality, since the making usually costs more than the material itself, and a cheap silk can really be worn only a very few times before the seams burst out, the elbows give way, and it becomes the very worst of wrecks; while a good taffeta or soft silk, will stand a whole season's wear and still look respectable enough for "second best."

One of the simplest, but most stylish models for a silk waist has the usual plain full back, tiny box plaits all across the front, the regulation shirt sleeve and a tucked collar band with a four-in-hand tie of the same silk. If a more dressy model is preferred, use fewer box plaits, arrange them in groups, and place three narrow double puffed frills of chiffon down each space. Groups of tucks crossing each other in large diamond squares all over the bodice, are the latest fancy, but they are by no means easy to arrange, and require the hand of a skilled dressmaker to make them successful. Such bodices have a plain narrow yoke collar edged with tiny knife plaited frills of silk, and a four-in-hand tie of the silk with plaited frills on the pointed ends, and their very plainness is counted their chief attraction. Another model has tucks running around the figure, and the revers, collar and cuffs are of velvet. Cream satin finely piped forms the bodice, the garment itself being in any of the pretty shades of glace silk which are sold especially for fancy waists; but for general wear under the tailor coat, the bodice made entirely of one color, and without any contrast in the trimming, is considered the best style.

Hem stitching between the groups of tucks is a new feature in the trimming of silk waists, and another is the plain neck band which is already in evidence as a prospective mode.

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are so becoming, must go sooner or later, as all the most convenient and becoming fashions do, and the very newest gowns show very meagre decorations at the back of the collar band, and nothing at all in front. It is a fashion which will die hard, however like the fane waist, and the day is probably far distant when the perfectly plain collar band will reign supreme. The frills are almost a necessity to the thin woman, and most becoming to the matron, so these two will make a brave struggle to retain them as long as possible, and they are sufficiently numerous as a class to have some little influence on the fashions. It seems strange that fashion should be able to influence the outline of woman's form as well as the manner in which her garment shall be modelled, but it is a fact all the same! Just at the moment we have clinging-skirts and close sleeves, accompanied by the low bust, narrow back, and long waist which shows off such a style of dress to the best advantage, and the impression of length which such a figure gives is accentuated by the blouse effect seen in most of the bodices. Perhaps by the time spring is here, we shall have the trim tailor made figure again, and the blouse be a thing of the past. A special aim of the present fashion is to make the figure appear very slim just below the waist in order that the full blouse may be the conspicuous point of the gown. It also tends to make the form perfectly shapely from the arm pits nearly to the foot of the skirt, but that is a little detail which Dame Fashion seems to have resolved when she designed her models for this season, so of course we must put up with it.

The very latest cut in shirts is the deep circular flounce which widens into one with the back breadth, and is stitched on to the apron shaped top, in front and at the sides. Braids, or bands of some kind of trimming usually cover the seam.

Jackets fronts in bolero form are still in good style despite all rumors to the contrary, and some very swell French gowns are made with the little bolero cut very short under the arms, and not always continued across the back. The chief difference between this, and last season's models is in the pouched effect which falls below the jacket.

ASTRA.

A SUBSTITUTE FOR PRINCIPLES.

Politeness is Made to Take the Place of Political Principles.

In France, at the present day, the great majority of the people are ardent republicans in opinion, but they are also great admirers of the sort of courtesy which is associated with the ancient regime—the old time gentility.

There lately died in that country a certain Monsieur Daunassans, who was a fine representative, in his manners and opinions of the old school. His elaborate courtesy was of the elegant, 'palavering,' antique sort, and it kept his head above water in times when other old-school fellows went to the bottom. It was not many years ago that Monsieur Daunassans was perfect of a department and stationed at an important provincial town. Just at that time a very Radical ministry came into power—an ultra Republican government which announced its intention to turn all Conservative and 'Reactionist' functionaries out of office. The Minister of the Interior was a particularly violent Radical, with no bowels of compassion for any who were suspected of monarchical opinions.

One of the first functionaries selected for sacrifice was Monsieur Daunassans. It happened, however, that his conservative opinions were not so strenuously held as to incline him against holding office under a Radical administration. When he was summoned to Paris for dismissal, he went to the cabinet of the minister with his hat in his hand and his most complaisant expression on his face.

"You are represented to me, sir," said the minister, "as hostile to our Republican institutions."

Monsieur Daunassans bowed very low, in the most graceful style of ancient gentility. "I think, monsieur le ministre," he began "that I may possibly prove myself worthy of your excellency's confidence. If I may be permitted to enter into certain details,

it will be, I fancy, within my power to demonstrate to your excellency—"

It was the first time that the new minister had ever been called 'your excellency.' He was a man who had sprung from the common people, and the phrase, coming from a man who seemed to know how to use it, was very pleasant to his ears. His manner softened perceptibly. Daunassans went on with a long and flattering speech, in which he had very little to say about his own politics, but in which the words 'your excellency' occurred a great many times. After about three-quarters of an hour he came out of the minister's cabinet. He had been indeed removed from his pre-ter-ture, but he had been promoted to a better one! The minister's Radical friends were furious. They went to him and said: "What! You have promoted this man? Why, he is the most abominable of Reactionists!"

"Well," answered the minister, as if recalled to himself, "perhaps he's a Reactionist, but I tell you he's a mighty well-bred man!"

All of which goes to show—that the French have already found out to their sorrow—that it is hard to make a republic without Republicans.

A Mean Insinuation.

"I wonder who ever thought of making a cake knife with a scalloped edge like that," remarked Mrs. New-wed, holding up her late purchase for her husband to see.

"It was one of those accidental inventions," replied Mr. New-wed, meekly, "The fellow who made it used an ordinary knife to cut some of his wife's first pound cake. When he got through it looked like that."

Before and After.

She was the apple of my eye —
No thought of mine desisted her;
But now we're married, and, oh, fie!
She's turned to sour hard-older.

The mosquito a vicious creature? exclaimed a traveller in the United States. "Not at all! He'll eat right out of your hand."

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