

Woman and Her Work

I wonder if it is really true that the natural attitude of woman towards each other is one of antagonism? That every woman regards every other woman in the light of a possible rival, and when two of our sex meet for the first time they instinctively measure each other with a hostile eye, just as two warriors about to engage in mortal combat might take in each other's points, and wonder grimly which was destined to be the survivor? I used to combat the opinion valiantly whenever I heard it expressed, but of late years I have learned to listen silently and wonder if there is not something in it.

I am afraid that the older one grows the more one learns to dread the criticisms of her own sex. The look of cold scrutiny, sometimes of supercilious appraisal which have so often met us on our first introduction to some woman, have taught the most trusting of us an unpleasant lesson and aroused in our minds a well-founded doubt as to the generosity of woman in which we would fain retain our belief. I know there are scores, and scores of warm-hearted kindly women in the world who are just as courteous to a woman whom they meet for the first time, as they would be to a man, but experience has taught me that they are more the exception than the rule.

Perhaps this curious antagonism is less noticeable amongst older women, whose contact with the world has broadened them to some extent, and rubbed off the angles which always seem to be so prominent a part of our make up in youth; but it is really painful to watch one young girl "sizing up" another, on the occasion of their first meeting, and to note the defensive, almost defiant manner of the other, who is perfectly aware of the measuring process that is going on and quite ready to pay the measurer back in her own coin.

Watch the woman into whose chosen seat at church some strange woman intrudes, or who is reluctantly obliged to share her seat in a crowded railway car, with one of her own sex, and see the manner in which she accepts the inevitable! If it is in church, she locks up indignantly edges along the seat just far enough to afford the newcomer six inches of room, and then leaning stiffly across her, with an almost inaudible apology, collects her prayer and hymn books, her fan and handkerchief from the rack in front, and settles herself primly to enjoy the service. It the scene of the encounter is a railway car the symptoms of disapproval are much more marked. The one in possession at first refuses to see that the other traveller is unprovided with a seat, and when the fact is forced upon her that the conductor is showing a lady into the seat beside hers as the only vacant one in the car, she looks up with a sharp "This seat is engaged" and is deaf to the conductor's polite assurance that he is sorry to trouble her, but this lady cannot be expected to stand. She is still more deaf to the timid apologies of the interloper and besides flatly refusing to move her hand bag to the floor, or allow the newcomer more than a third of the seat, or a chance to place her hand satchel anywhere but in the aisle of the car, she usually manages to make the rest of the trip so unpleasant for her fellow traveller that the latter bitterly regrets not having stood in the aisle, or perched on the end of a seat rather than endure such humiliation.

Now men are different; the average man who is not a ruffian is given to meeting every approaching stranger of his own sex in a spirit of good comradeship, and I firmly believe that is one reason why men are so frequently made the victims of confidence men, and why the female swindler invariably selects men for her victims, and leaves her own sex severely alone, the task of getting on a friendly footing with another woman is too much for even the most experienced adventuress to undertake, and

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besides it is too slow a process to pay for the trouble.

A man enters a strange church, and if it is tolerably well filled, some other man is sure to see him, beckon him over pleasantly into his seat, sweep his hat and overcoat out of the way, remove his books, and slide cheerfully into a corner, to give the stranger ample room. It the newcomer is unprovided with a prayer book, the other generally notices the fact and hunts up one for him with all the cheerfulness in life. In the railway car it is very much the same, the man makes room for the newcomer, tells him it is a fine day, and the train is bestly slow; hands him the papers he has finished reading, and generally treats him like a man and a brother, and they are soon perfectly at home in each other's society. Alack, and alas! Two women would have travelled to San Francisco without exchanging anything but haughty glances. I wonder if I have stumbled by accident upon another evidence of man's superiority, and if I am going to get myself into trouble thereby?

Imagine corsets made of rube! The very thought gives one a warm, stuffy feeling, and I should imagine the corsets themselves would induce apoplexy in anyone who was otherwise than slender. But, all the same the very newest thing in corsets is made of suede. The lady who first wore corsets had hers made of steel; they opened at the side, and she got into them by means of a rude hinge at the opposite side. How they were fastened is still a mystery to me, perhaps it by a lock and key, but there was certainly no "give" about them, and if she wanted to take an extra long breath she simply repressed the desire until such time as she could remove her corsets. Since then we have been strapping up our bodies in various combinations of steel, whalebone and heavy materials of either cotton or silk, as our purses permitted, but it seems to have remained for the end of the century women to design and wear a corset made of leather. Some women are said to like the new corset, while others can see no good in it at all. It really has good points all the same, and it should be a treasure for stout women because it does not stretch, or get out of shape easily even when worn by a very stout woman, but on the other hand it is an excessively warm garment, and there is no denying that it gives the figure a very stiff, set look. No thin woman would dream of wearing it, though it comes in very attractive guise, in shades of soft tan, blue, red, and green, and it is ornamented with lace, ribbon and embroidery, but its stiffness is sure to accentuate the angularity of a thin figure, and destroy any natural gracefulness the wearer may possess. All the corsets seem to be gayer than formerly the better qualities being made in pale blue, pale pink and yellow, embroidered with designs in silk of a darker shade. Some are even made of bright plaid and striped silks.

One of the few things said to be known positively about the fashions of the immediate future, is the prevalence of the flounce and ruffle, which is said by fashion authorities to be an assured fact. In short, though we thought he had a good many ruffles on our garments last year, the real reign of the flounce is only just about to begin. Even the skirt flounced from hem to waist is promised to us, and a pretty picture some of will be in it, too. There are to be pinked ruffles, ruffles trimmed with graduated rows of velvet ribbon; with lace and passamenterie; ruffles edged with rows of baby ribbon, and tiny ruffles of chiffon, as well as ruffles with plain hems, according to the material employed, but the flounce in some shape or form is inevitable. Of course, like most fashions, this one is designed solely for the benefit of the tall slender woman who can indulge in bell-ruffled skirts to her heart's content but how about the short plump ones who would simply resemble pincushions in such garments? Fortunately, however, there are always modifications of any fashion rendered possible, which will make it becoming

to almost anyone. But the ruffles are not by any means confined to the skirts, both bodice and sleeves being lavishly trimmed with ruffles, in many of the imported models. One, of dark heliotrope silk has three flounces wide enough to nearly cover the skirt, each one edged with passamenterie in a darker shade. Around the hips is a yoke of guipure lace pointing down on to the upper flounce. The bodice with plain back and bolero shaped front is of velvet in a darker shade of heliotrope, covered with Venetian lace, and edged with sable. Plaited heliotrope chiffon forms the vest, and the sleeves are covered for the entire length with tiny ruffles of silk.

Another very popular feature of dress trimming is cording, which was seen on a few of the summer gowns last year, but which is to flourish exceedingly when the thin dresses appear again. And meantime vests of chiffon, mull, and thin silk are shirred crosswise in fine cords, in groups of three, and bodices of thin material are corded horizontally to form a yoke, or up and down all around with an inch space between the cords. Old, and pretty skirt trimmings are made of cords ran into a bias fold of silk, and one variety in not more than two inches wide when finished; two cords the size of the small end of a pipe stem form the centre of the band and the edges of the silk are double frills. This trimming is set on the skirt of a gown of blue and black bayadere striped silk; it goes straight around the skirt two inches from the hem, and forms a very effective trimming.

Puffings are almost always certain to follow in the wake of cords, so we may confidently expect to see puffed bodices and sleeves amongst the muslin dresses for summer wear. Already puffing in a new shape is being shown in the large shops; it is made of chiffon in white and wine color, with a tiny white beading between. It is used for vests, and yokes. One of the new cloth gowns shows a bodice and sleeves entirely composed of shirtings which form puffs running around; and vests and yokes of puffing are frequently seen. Another pretty style for vests, is silk finely tucked crosswise in groups, with a tiny ruche of chiffon at each side of each cluster, and a pattern embroidered in fine steel beads between.

Satin ribbon, either in black or white, in inch width, and gathered on one edge, is very popular as a dress trimming, and when velvet baby ribbon in some contrasting color is sewed on the edge it gives quite a novel effect. It was first seen almost exclusively on children's party dresses, but more recently it has been adopted by "grown ups" and is prettily arranged in coiled designs.

The old rumor that the blouse has really had its day and all our gowns are to be tight fitting in future with the exception of a little redeeming fulness directly in front, comes with the first hint of spring fashions; but of course that would only mean that the edict had gone forth in Paris, even if it should prove to be true, and it would not entail a strict observance in either New York or St. John, so it is very likely we shall all wear blouses with our swellest summer gowns just as usual. All the same, the latest and most fashionably cut bodices clearly define the figure at the back and under the arms.

Posting Mr. Bradlaugh. It is always pleasant to see a dogmatist meet more than his match. Mr. Bradlaugh says the New York Commercial Advertiser was once engaged in a discussion with a dissenting minister. Bradlaugh insisted that the minister should answer a question by a simple 'Yes' or 'No' without any circumlocution, asserting that every question could be replied to in that manner. The reverend gentleman rose, and in a quiet



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a miner has in outfitting here. In the matter of clothing and dry goods particularly, he says neither Sattle nor Spokane can compete with Victoria. 'For instance,' said Mr. Fenety, to illustrate his remark, 'the best mackinaw suite can be bought in Victoria for \$7.50, whereas in Sattle they are asking \$10 to \$12 for the same kind of goods. In the matter of blankets we are saving 30 to 40 cents a pound by purchasing here. Of course, we are also saving the duty, which is a pretty big item, as many Americans are beginning to find out.' Mr. Fenety's party will go over the Spokane route and will prospect in the vicinity of the Hootalingqua river. They are taking in four horses and a year's supplies for each man.'