



At the Sign of the Maple

A DEPARTMENT MAINLY FOR WOMEN

An Outworn Cult

A LONG-DUE protest has been made, at last. Mr. Frederic Harrison, philosopher and essayist, has created much interest by his recent article on a certain cult which he calls by a long and uncouth name and which really means the cult of the ugly or unpleasant. For the last decade or more artists and novelists have been exploiting the unpleasant and distressing, until we have taken to aeroplanes and flown away from so much that is harrowing. Mr. Thomas Hardy is usually admitted to be the greatest modern English novelist and he is sombre to an afflicting degree. It is all the "demnition bow-wows" in most of the Hardy stories and yet we are all afraid to say that we do not like them, lest the critics should call us uncultured and raise deprecating eye-brows. Then there is Mr. Shaw, who writes about more disagreeable persons in less time than any other disciple of the displeasing.

Of course, I shall be reminded that all these depressing heroes and uncouth heroines are merely a healthy reaction from the Early Victorian women—the Dora Copperfields and Amelia Sedleys of tender memory. After a course in the George Bernard Shaw type of woman, one is fain to fly to the deadliest Dora of them all for relief. The "advanced" young woman of the Shaw drama is the most revolting of the species and we can only hope that Mr. Shaw will some day be confronted by a lady resembling his imaginary heroines.

Then some one takes you to an art exhibition, where you survey yards and yards of canvas, depicting ugly and depressing human countenances; and when you venture on a protest, you are informed by a shocked and superior acquaintance: "Oh, of course they're not pretty. That wouldn't be art." Then you become an out-and-out Philistine and retort: "What is art, anyway? Does it consist in mud and misery?" And the superior one sighs and murmurs commiseratingly: "Perhaps you don't understand. This is what the artist sees." You complete the list of your iniquities by declaring—"Well, I shouldn't care to have his eyes."

Mr. Harrison has sent a refreshing breeze into the studios, the libraries and the conservatories. Surely we have had enough of Strauss music, Shaw dramas, and Nietzsche's negations. Life is not always pretty, but it is hardly so bad as the modern philosophers would have us believe. It may be weak-minded to prefer the "Spring Song" to the "Danse Macabre," but most of us have a deep sympathy with the Shakespearean philosopher who said: "I had rather have a fool to make me merry than experience to make me sad."

Ugliness and unpleasantness have had their sway long enough, and it is time for the feminine world to demand a return to something more sightly and joyous. If we prefer sunshiny pictures like Sir John Millais' "Bubbles" to depictions of "The Vampire," by all means let us have the courage of our preferences and openly advocate the pretty.

The Matter of Decoration.

THE spell of the East is over the world of fashion still, and we are to have reminders of the Durbar in the spring months in the form of turbans and Oriental drapings and decorations. Beads continue to adorn gowns and girdles and to be the chief material of dainty hand-bags, such as our grandmothers used to carry. They may be a barbaric fashion, but we rather enjoy them, even in this sophisticated century, and cheerfully study their latest and most intricate designs. They appeal to woman's innate love of adornment and we rejoice in necklaces, amethyst, amber or jade, with the hope that they will not too soon be "out of style."

Speaking of adornment, one realizes how painfully prosaic and sad-coloured is the garb of the

modern man when one reads Thackeray's description of the attire of a young commercial traveller in the days when Queen Victoria was young.

"With his long, curling flaxen hair, flowing under a sealskin cap with a gold tassel, with a blue-and-gold satin handkerchief, a crimson velvet waistcoat, a light green cut-away coat, a pair of barred, brick-dust-coloured pantaloons, and a neat mackintosh, he presented, altogether, as elegant and *distingue* an appearance as any one could desire."

Vegetables and Vagaries.

WHAT imposing words are employed nowadays to describe the various systems of healing which are going to do us good and make us young, healthy and happy! There is psycho-therapy, for instance, a perfect terror of an abstract noun,

A Biography in Bonnets.

BY MINNA IRVING.

THEY lie within a cedar chest,

The bonnets that she wore

From rosy dimpled infancy

To eighty years or more;

The baby cap of lawn and lace

With soft embroidered crown,

The quilted hood she wore to school,

Of silk and eider-down.

The leghorn of her early teens,

As fine as gossamer,

That hid her blushes when he first

Walked home from church with her;

The bridal hat of satin shirred,

Once topped with plumes of snow

That armies of the moth reduced

To powder long ago.

The matron's bonnet close and grey

With knots of rosebuds pale,

And last of all the widow's ruche

And length of sable veil.

All, all are here, of varied hues,

And fashions queer and quaint,

Except the one she wears to-day—

The halo of a saint.

—People's Journal.

which, so far as I can make out, means no more than cultivating self-control and not allowing your imagination to play the bully. The latest of these is legumino-therapy, which is really enough to frighten most of us into measles. It is merely the application of a vegetable diet to all the ills which flesh is heir to, with the happiest results. It seems that vegetables are various and have quite different effects on the human beings who devour them. Let no one imagine, however, that the eating of cabbage will result in peculiar or unusual stupidity.

Mr. Clifford Howard informs us that "green peas, for example, according to this new science, cause frivolity and should be withheld from young ladies with a congenital tendency to flirt. On the other hand, they are excellent for wall-flowers and pessimists, and should be given in generous helpings to bashful boys. Carrots develop good temper and amiability, and are particularly recommended for janitors, car conductors and ticket agents. The potato develops reason, as well as calmness and reflection; but care must be taken lest it induce apathy and indifference or that disinclination to work which is observable among boys who are fed daily on fried potatoes. String beans stimulate the poetic and artistic faculties. . . ."

So, we feel ever so much encouraged to become vegetarians and, by partaking of carefully-selected dishes, develop into artists, poets, actresses or hair-dressers. But last week there came the crushing news that legumino-therapy is all wrong—lettuce is positively dangerous, beets are bad, asparagus is fatal, while tomato salad is the first step towards the cemetery. Indeed, according to this latest advice, the paths of potatoes lead but to the grave. What are we going to do? There's nothing left but breakfast food and dessicated dates to satisfy human longings. In the meantime, let us observe the advice of Miss Carolyn Wells—"eat, drink and be merry—for to-morrow we diet."

In Our Happy Home.

THIS is an age of "little suppers down town" and dinners at the cafe. Such delights are more alluring in the pages of fashionable fiction than they are in reality. There is a flatness—an artificiality—about the restaurant repast which the most brilliant lights and the most elaborate service cannot make you forget. There is nothing like "home cooking," in the estimation of the sensible citizen, and there is no better time for indulging in an orgy of home viands than the hour of midnight. It may be bad for the digestion, but a piece of cold apple pie at the witching hour is more to be desired than steak and fried onions in the middle of the day.

Do you remember when you found a last and delicious piece of chocolate cake or a dish of cold pudding which had been carefully put away? Just because you should not do it, just because you are sure to be sorry the next day, you devour such stray delicacies with a zest which no orthodox meal at a righteous hour could arouse. We all cherish the memories of such raids, even if age or indigestion may now forbid them and consequently smile when we read a poem on "Midnight in the Pantry," in which a "late" husband describes his protracted feast:

"Oft I hear a call above me: 'Goodness gracious, come to bed!'
And I know that I've disturbed her by my over-eager tread,
But I've found a glass of jelly and some bread and butter, too,
And a bit of cold fried chicken, and I answer,
'When I'm through!'
Oh, there's no cafe that better serves my precious appetite
Than the pantry in our kitchen when I get home late at night."

This is a song from the inmost soul, which proves once more the wisdom of the advice given to an anxious young wife—"Feed the—gentleman!"

CANADIENNE.

The Making of the Home.

PROBABLY the most successful meeting yet held by the Women's Canadian Club of St. John, N.B., took place on the last Saturday of March. Mrs. Bowlker, president of the Women's Municipal League, of Boston, was the speaker. Her address on "Home Problems" showed a very intimate knowledge of the subject and delighted the audience.

Mrs. Bowlker has neither old-fashioned nor modern ideas. She took no stand on the suffrage question, but insisted that there is work which women alone may accomplish. She agreed with neither the old nor the new ideas of a mother and wife—both were extreme. She believed in the mother, the hostess, and the social worker, with the duties reasonably blended. But above all "maintain the home." The work of the Women's Municipal League of Boston was to make it possible for every woman to have a home and to make the city a community of homes. True homes would do a great work in eliminating the vice of the world.