



SEE THAT HUMP ?

If this hump-backed style of riding
Is to always hold its sway,
Better fifty years of walking
Than a cycle of to-day.

Chicago Inter-Ocean.

"WHEN IS WOMAN AT HER BEST ?"

II. NEGATIVE.

BUT it is not only what woman does and what she is, that commands our admiration and compels our praise, there is a long list of what we may call her *negative* virtues, when we think of what she does *not* do, and of what she is *not*, we appreciate her all the more.

For instance, she does not intrude irrelevant remarks and absurdly inquisitive questions into her conversations. She never wonders where anybody has been at this time of night? never cares, indeed, about the time of night or day either; never wonders whether somebody called at the butcher's (butcher's indeed!) never asks if that letter has been posted yet, or is still in somebody's great coat pocket? and she never announces in a voice of calm despair that the landlord has been and says that unless the rent is paid before Saturday he will send the bailiff in.

And then her hopes; whatever they are, they are buried in her delightful little bosom. She never thinks of hurling them like missiles at people who come in tired and weary on rainy days. No; she never hopes that they have wiped their feet, or insists that they will put on dry socks. No one ever heard her hope to goodness that you haven't invited those Smiths to dinner, when there isn't a thing in the house, or hope to gracious that it will be wet on Saturday and the Tomlinson's won't be able to come; while there still seems to be vibrating somewhere in the air, "Oh, I *do* hope it will be fine and that you'll be sure to come."

Neither can anyone imagine her pursuing a sad visaged man along a passage, down the steps, and out to the gate, keeping up a fusillade of hopes at his devoted head; hopes, that he'll be sure to order the meat,—a boiling piece, mind,—and not all bone, and send it early, and that he won't forget Sarah's shoes, or she won't be able to go out this evening, and tell the iceman to call, and pay the tinsmith's bill, or he'll be calling again, and bring Charlie's book, and don't be late; no, who can imagine her doing all this as we gaze at her clear, honest, trusting eyes, and as she sucks her mite of a thumb *pour passer le temps*, this placid summer day?

"*Non Angli sed angeli*," remarked the tawny Romans when they first saw what English complexions and blue eyes were like; but how much more pertinent is the saying when applied to the English or Canadian damsel of the witching age of eight or nine months; for what can for a moment compare with the almost translucent skin, the delicate yet healthy tints that have no rivals in the realm of nature; for neither roses, nor lilies, nor pearls, nor diamonds, can really bear comparison with woman physically at her best, at nine month's old; and the two little teeth shining in the coral guns, ah! take your pearls elsewhere, they are

not wanted here; as well compare the hard, stony glitter of the diamond with the soft lustre of her eyes, as the product of the cold blooded oyster with those living gems that girls and women rave over, and that men appreciate quite as much but not so noisily.

For mark, among the other virtues and sweet influences of woman at her best is the negative one of not feeling jealous herself, or giving rise to jealousy. None adore her more than her own sex; they esteem it a privilege to carry her about, and an honor and delight to kiss her. Her little open-mouthed kiss so freely given is a delight to girls and a precious boon to women. It is true, untutored boys object, and men of many cares manage to worry along without it, but who at all times properly appreciates his blessings? "Matchless for the complexion," says a celebrated sweet singer of somebody or other's soap, but our sweet singer (who, by the way, never gives testimonials at so much a line while she is at her best mentally and physically), requires no artificial aid. It is only at a later stage, when she has passed her vernal prime, that her toilet table is to be found covered with ingenious but not ingenuous devices for heightening her charms and lowering her truthful simplicity.

To those (if, after reading the above, such there be), who still remain unconvinced that nine months is the perfect age for woman, I would say, observe her when, this happy period passed, she begins to wane, to decline and fall, as it were, like the noted Roman Empire as pointed out by the illustrious Gibbon, and compare the later stages of her career with that placid and peaceful time ere yet she had learned to scold! First among the destructive influences comes discontent, combined with ambition. No longer content to lie and calmly contemplate the ceiling or whatever may be in front of her, she wants to crawl about in everybody's way. Then she climbs up by chairs, which tumble over with her, then upstairs and rolls back and down again. Urged on by those who should know better, she tries to walk, and declines and falls again, and at length succeeding, she is more in the way than ever, though not so much as she will be. She catches at objects that are not suitable for catching at, and more falls take place; table cloths and china, flower pots and water jugs; and peace folds her tent like the Arabs and noisily steals away.

Then there comes an interval of deceitful quiet, during what may be called the doll age, when fictitious personages vicariously undergo the troubles before meted out to her elders. But during this apparent calm, the dreadful ideas of dress and fashion are being instilled, accompanied by notions of caste and class pride, when the poor old ragged doll becomes the handmaid and servant of the new and shining one bought at Xmas. Sometimes this period is



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"A PIECE DE RESISTANCE."