

OF INTEREST TO WOMEN.

A WRITER in the San Francisco Argonaut is of the opinion that men, as a rule, do not marry as readily when times are hard as when they are flush. Even the announcements of relief committees that the wants of married men are to be supplied before those of bachelors are considered, have failed to promote matrimony, except among the foreigners, who, when they heard that the city was employing married men at a dollar a day, rushed off and proposed to the first girls they met. It may be, as girls say, that it costs no more to support two than one; but when the one finds it difficult to secure support, he is naturally disinclined to make himself two. Marriage is always more or less of a gamble. A young couple marry on what barely supports them, hoping that when new expenses must be incurred their income will increase in proportion. In ordinary times, the calculation is reasonable. But when waves of depression sweep over the land, it is rash to assume that the rewards of labor are going to swell year by year; their tendency may be in the other direction. Times may be harder next year than they are this; and then what will become of the babies?

Whether the increasing independence of women is operating to lower the marriage rate is open to discussion. When a girl feels that she need not marry for a home, she is likely to make less energetic efforts to capture a mate than she would have done if the husband had personified bread and clothes. But, on the other hand, the new class of ambitious women who aspire at being something more than mere wives and mothers, are pretty sure to acquire a mental and moral development which renders them more attractive to men than the nursery dolls of the past. A bright, modest, intelligent girl, who is earning her living in the sphere in which accident has placed her, is far more likely to capture the admiration and love of a man than a chit who can only simper and be kissed. Against this effect of female independence must be offset the tendency of self-support to deter girls from marrying men who are not their ideals. Marriage to any man involves a wrench to a delicate, sensitive, shrinking girl; when the man is not only not an ideal, but was actually repellent at first, the girl passes through a severe struggle before she can accept him. In the old days, she succumbed to mamma's argument: "And pray what are you going to do when your father dies?" But now her answer comes pat: "I am going to support myself as I do now."

Writers in newspapers never tire of telling us that men are eschewing matrimony, because girls spend so much on their clothes, and because men are really no comfortable outside of matrimony that they do not see why they should enter the fold. Those who express these sentiments are not familiar with life. There is no more miserable being on earth than an old bachelor who has not some engrossing pursuit which may take the place of home, wife and children. Most old bachelors become curmudgeons, who are in every one's way, and in their own most of all. Everybody hates them and they hate everybody. They generally realize the

mistake they made, and never cease to grind their teeth when they think of it; they foresee that their ultimate destiny is to marry their cook, or to be tended in illness and old age by a hired servant who despises and robs them. Every man who crosses the dividing line between young manhood and middle age has some friend who points this out to him, and the kindly seed rarely falls on barren ground. The hint is the more likely to take effect as bachelors observe that the longer a man waits, the more limited his choice in the wife market. He who could at thirty have chosen from flower-gardens of girls—plump, blushing and young—is often compelled to put up, at forty, with a scraggy spinster with elbows. What could he expect? *Tarde venientibus ossa.*

Ingenious writers like Mrs. Mona Caird and Mrs. Sarah Grand find fault with marriage, and superficial thinkers fancy that the institution is on its last legs. But it is observed that both Mrs. Caird and Mrs. Grand are married women, living, so far as is known, happily with their husbands. So are the other lady philosophers who find fault with matrimony because, like other human institutions, it is not faultless. It is no trick to pick holes in any institution and to show where-in it fails to reach perfection. But the fault-finder has no claim to be heard until he is prepared with a substitute which can be warranted to work smoothly.

Overskirts have come, and have come to stay. Some will fight against them. Some dressmakers will work with might and main to modify and disguise them, but they are here in all their hideousness, and until a revolution comes they will simply continue to grow in size and in what some of the poorer seamstresses call "the draps." Wash goods are to be made up with ruffles and trimmings galore, and many of the new gingham are woven expressly for the purpose of trimmed overskirts. In one respect these goods are very nice. They come made in such a way that a woman who is not an experienced dressmaker can easily finish them, and as it is well known that the skilled dressmaker charges as much (in fact, more in proportion) to make these wash gowns as she does those of cloth or silk there is much rejoicing among women who have a limited allowance for dress.

A simple way of adding fulness to a skirt of last season's cut is to put a half circular piece of a quarter of a yard in depth at the bottom. If you haven't material enough, then black moire will in most cases make a pretty contrast. A narrow trimming of silk braid or jet on the edge and at the seam where the piece fits in the skirt makes a pretty finish. An odd sleeve which appeared on a black satin dress consisted of an immense puff below the shoulder, and into this was inserted some chine silk, with a cream ground daintily flowered.

If a room needs new toilet covers after the spring house cleaning, make them from white cotton point d'esprit laid over a color and edge each piece with a frill of the same, run with baby ribbons. A set seen recently was of white overpaleorange. Cut a piece of white muslin of cheesecloth the size of the top of the dresser and

other places for which you want the covers, lay over them a thin layer of cotton sprinkled with violet powder, then tack on a covering of colored sateen. Cut the piece of lace considerably larger than the linings and catch the extra fulness here and there to the lining, so that when finished the lace will lay up lightly and have a slightly crumpled look. Make a wide frill of the lace, turn in a wide hem, and over the hem and just above it sew on the baby ribbon. Set on the frill with a heading. Make a cover for your pin-cushion, if you use one, in the same way, but without any lining.

In jackets, the three things that are selling are a short reefer, 24 inches long, with French slope, with fronts a little longer. They are very wide, double-breasted, with three large buttons, the front hanging quite loose. Then there is the 26-inch, tight-fitting jacket, with a single row of three buttons, the body is cut in one piece, without hip seams. And, finally, there is the open front jacket, with jabot of lace in front, falling gracefully from a small velvet or moir collar. The length of this garment is 24 to 26 inches, and it is cut very full over the hips, but has no hip seams. As to the collar and material of these jackets, one prediction holds good: black color, plain cloths and material.

If sweethearts were sweethearts always,
Whether as maid or wife,
No drop would be half as pleasant
In the mingled drought of life.

But the sweetheart has smiles and blushes
When the wife has frowns and sighs,
And the wife's have a wrathful glitter
For the glow of the sweetheart's eyes.

If lovers were lovers always—
The same to sweetheart and wife,
Who would change—for a future of Eden,
The joys of this checkered life?

But husbands grow grave and silent,
And cares on the anxious brow
Oft replaces the sunshine that perished
With the words of the marriage vow.

Happy is he whose sweetheart
Is wife and sweetheart still—
Whose voice, as of old, can charm;
Whose kiss, as of old, can thrill;

Who has plucked the rose to find ever
Its beauty and fragrance increase,
As the flush of passion is mellowed
In love's unmeasured peace;

Who sees in the step a lightness;
Who finds in the form of grace;
Who reads an unaltered brightness
In the witchery of the face.

Undimmed and unchanged. Ah happy
Is he crowned with such a life!
Who drinks the wife pledging the sweetheart,
And toasts in the sweetheart the wife!

"My husband is so unsympathetic,"
wailed the young wife. "He does not
understand me at all."

"You are lucky," said the experienced
matron, who had buried no less than three
husbands. "That's half the charm in a
wife—her husband's inability to imagine
what she is going to do next."

The original Adam had this to his
credit: He did not attack the previous
character of Eve.