

OF INTEREST TO WOMEN.

THERE is an ancient tradition which tells of a glass of such wonderful fineness and delicacy that simply to breathe upon it would shatter it. Of such delicate purity is the reputation of woman. A breath, a word, an insinuation is sufficient to tarnish the lustre of the fairest gem which ever adorned the beautiful form of woman. The combined wealth of all the kingdoms, republics and principalities of the world could not purchase for woman another jewel which would become her a millionth part so well; nor, is this matchless gem within the gift of wealth or power. It is not simply the prerogative of women of lofty station only, it is the birthright of every woman who ever lived or who ever will live. It is that of which St. Paul said, "You carry a treasure about with you, but you carry that treasure in an earthen vessel." Woman has no gift over which should be kept such jealous watch and word; for, so lovely, so invaluable is this bright jewel that if it be once lost no power on earth or in heaven can restore it. The Bible tells us that Jesus healed lepers and restored the dead to life; but in no single instance does it tell us that He restored to a woman her lost virtue. His great heart pitied such women, but even He could not again make them what they were.

In the women of their own immediate families, men value virtue more than all other endowments of face, form or mind. Loss of virtue is the one ground which British law recognizes as just cause for divorce. Loss of virtue ostracises a woman from the society of her kind, makes her an outcast from home, a prey to remorse, a vile thing to be jeered at by men and shunned by women.

In some rare cases women carelessly throw away their virtue, but in most cases of lost virtue it is due to theft on the part of some moral vulture bearing the shape and resemblance of manhood; and this stupendous theft, the foulest crime which one being is capable of perpetrating upon another, the only theft utterly beyond restitution is legalized by the laws of every Christian land, without exception. Yes, the laws of every land protect these moral vultures in their pursuit and robbery and ruin of sweet, innocent, ignorant female children! For corroboration of this assertion as regards Victoria, read the "age of consent law," in force right here in British Columbia, which gives no protection to our girls once they have arrived at the mature (?) age of "fourteen." Men saturated with filthy crime, reeking with knowledge of evil may deliberately and openly pursue, betray and desert little girls of fourteen (or other teens), and to

these poor, deluded, ruined victims, the law says "There is no redress for you, you have arrived at the age of consent. The man who betrayed you is the object of my protection; go you and sink yourself in some den of infamy, or seek the compassionate protection of some refuge provided by charitable women; or, if your silly brain is not sufficiently strong to pilot you through this moral Charybdis, there are insane asylums provided by me for creatures such as you; go, shut within those dreary walls the fair young life which has been shorn of its beauty just at the threshold of womanhood. I have no concern with you, you are but one of many thousands. I must see that your despoiler walks forth in freedom to re-enact the same tragedy with some other unsuspecting, foolishly fond young girl."

I have heard that consent laws are always made in secret session, behind closed doors, as if those who made such shameful laws were not proud of their own work. Whether this be true or not, the men who made them deserve the contempt and scorn of all women, as do the men who keep them in force.

If women could know beforehand the fearful consequences of dishonor, would any woman of sound mind choose it in preference to death? I think not. Yet, if the man who dishonors a little girl were mercifully to give that girl death, the law would go in hot pursuit of the coward who could murder a woman. With the murderer of woman's soul the law has nothing to do. Death to a girl is so much more desirable than loss of honor that it really seems as if it would be humane to reverse the law in the two cases.

Until a girl reaches the age of twenty-one she owes allegiance, under the law, to her parents; but at that age the law emancipates her and makes her a responsible being. Now, if the parents of a fourteen-year-old girl should die, leaving said girl heiress to vast landed estates, or to great manufacturing concerns, or even to a few paltry hundreds of dollars, it would be regarded as the grossest absurdity to expect that girl to manage her own property unwarded and unprotected. The law would step in, kindly assume control and watch faithfully over her estates or properties until the girl should marry or attain her majority. No law recognizes a girl of fourteen as having sufficient worldly knowledge to control her business affairs, and yet, it expressly implies that she is sufficiently wise to be absolute guardian and protector of that quality which is more to her than all the wealth of all the earth. Why should the "age of consent" be made seven years younger than the age of majority? No body of

men has the moral right to keep in force a law which renders it safe for one of their kind to ruthlessly ravish young girls of virtue and honor. For repeal of these laws women of every class and creed and nation should wage a mighty and unceasing warfare. To do this it is not necessary to have the ballot; already brave women are in the van of this great moral reform battle, help them on by fighting the good fight in your own homes, by the moral suasion you can bring to bear on fathers, husbands, brothers and sons. At your own fireside instil into your boys the principle which will cause them to help provide for your girls the protection of the strong arm of the law, at least until your girls shall have attained their majority.

The seduction of a young girl should cause every woman's heart to bleed with sympathy, every woman's voice to be raised in righteous protest against such foul infamy; but, sorry am I to say, this is not universally the case. There are many—too many—women, mothers even, who combine with the law in protecting men from the punishment and odium which should attend their despicable actions. Mothers, who would be shocked beyond measure at the mere thought of clasping in friendship the hand of a fallen woman, will not only clasp in friendship the hand of that fallen woman's despoiler, but will knowingly and willingly open to him the sanctity of their homes and introduce him to their pure, young daughters. There are many girls even, who, fully cognizant of such a man's evil deeds, are yet willing to marry him.

Away with the age of consent law! It is a shame to Christianity, a shame to civilization, a shame to Canada.

CATHARINE D.

An eminent authority, Professor Paul Montazretza, says the Spanish women are the most beautiful in the world. Beauty is birthright of the dusky eyed daughters of Spain, and the big cities and the country towns there are full of feminine charmers. Of all the countries of the world Spain is the one where hair has remained the great glory of woman. It is a different vegetable in Spain from what it is in any other country—soft, gloriously beautiful, and from the days of Velasquez to Goya down to the present moment the Spanish woman has brought it low on her face and has put a flower in it with consummate grace. The types of Spanish beauty remain unchanged. From the lofty duchess who smiled on Sancho Panza, the Carmen and the Rosina of Seville, that type so beloved by the writer of operas, down to the cigarette girl and the favorite of the bullfighter, all Spanish women are beautiful once in their lives. Many of them of the patrician class remain very beautiful, and the hair is always superb. What men they have had to paint them! Perhaps if a high forehead is permissible anywhere it is in one of Murillo's Madonnas.