

## WOMEN AS DRUMMERS

"That's just my luck," said a commercial traveler in a little country hotel the other day, as he turned in disgust from the clerk's desk.

"What's the matter?" queried a friend.

"Matter? Why that fellow Clark got in here ahead of me and has engaged both of the sample rooms, and I'll have to show my goods in a bedroom."

"What does Clark want of two rooms?"

"Oh, one for his goods and the other for his wife."

"His wife! Why does his wife want a sample room?"

"She carries a separate line of goods, and they work the business together. Great scheme that;" and he mused reflectively. "There they come now," he added, and the friend turned in time to see an energetic looking man of middle age, with a bright, attractive little woman approaching. Later, an introduction was sought by the reporter.

"Yes, it is pleasant for each of us to be able to travel with the other," said Mrs. Clark. "My husband carries men's furnishing goods and I have notions for women, silk handkerchiefs and embroideries. We are going through this section of country for the first time and are working up a trade route. Just now is a dull time with both of us in business, so we decided to spend the time working up an extra trade route."

"Don't you find it hard work to keep up with your husband, day after day, traveling and working?"

"I did at first, but I have learned how to take things now. I don't worry and do useless things. Then John is very good about helping me out and waiting for me. Of course, sometimes I get heavy orders in a town and he gets light ones. Then, again, it will be the other way, so we help each other."

"How did you happen to get into this work?"

"Well, various things happened which pointed out the way. When my three little ones died, one after the other, and I was left alone, I began to miss John as I never had done before. (And the voice trembled a little.) He could not leave his business, for he had a good trade, and so if he couldn't get out of the work I could get in, in order to be near him. I have worked with my house for almost two years now; they seem to be satisfied, and I surely am. But I must go now," and she nodded, smiling.

"Can you do as much work with your wife along as if you were alone?" asked the inquirer of Mr. Clark. He stopped, thought a minute, and said: "I'll tell you. Soon after the babies died I took to drinking rather heavily. You know what a temptation drink is to a traveling man. Well, my wife saw it, and, noble little woman that she is, she determined to save me. So she worked around until she got a commission, and then she joined me, and we've been together ever since. She didn't tell me the real reason why she left home for life on the road till about a year and a half ago, after I had given up drink altogether. Yes, I once saved her from drowning—that was before we were



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married—and she's evened up things, you see. This last year we've made more than double the money that I ever made in one year alone, and I've been eight years on the road."—*Ex.*

## FRENCH CHAMPAGNE.

The vineyard district of France, from which is produced substantially the world's supply of champagne, is contained within an area of thirty miles square. Reims is its commercial and cathedral city. Driving through the country from Reims, the towers of the grand cathedral of Notre Dame loom up, defying space when every other evidence of the city is lost in the horizon. This incomparable type of Gothic construction stands forth like a mighty sentinel to all the surrounding country. The vineyard men seem to reverence it, and to glory in referring to Reims always, not as the commercial but as the cathedral city of the province of champagne.

The vine lands of this area produce the white, red and black grapes from which champagne is made, and yet these same roots planted beyond the confines of this district fail to produce grapes from which the high quality of wine, perfect in bouquet and flavor, can be obtained. Why the territory is so limited, why it may not be extended indefinitely are queries the agricultural chemist has left unanswered. Again, with all the care and attention given to the cultivation of the grape here, it is impossible, from year to year, to attain anything like uniformity in the quality of the harvest from the same vines. The season, with its variety of rain and wind, and sun, seems to be the potent factor. The fertilizers used on the soil and the care bestowed upon the vines are second to that mightier power.

In some years the harvest is so inferior that the wine made is either saved for blending with later vintages, or bottled and sent out under a label invented by, or bearing the name of some dealer who purchases the entire vintage. Even in the best years some portion of the harvest

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will fall so far below the required standard that its product can only be labelled and sold as cheap or rejected wine. There is no doubt, however, that the champagne house of France, after learning something of the nicety of the palate of their customers, cater accordingly.

The English taste is said to be the best, the most exacting, and to be satisfied only with the top of the vintages. In fact, there is no first-class hotel or restaurant in England which would pretend to print its champagne wine list without naming the year of the vintage. On this list one will never find the off year vintages—those in favor for the past ten years being 1880, 1884 and 1887. The vintage of the year 1880 is said to have been the best for many years, and it will be ready for market about the time of the opening of the Columbian Exposition. The average host in England offers to his guest not only a choice vintage, but his champagne fully ten years old, while the average host in this country is governed in his selection, solely by the label on the bottle. In short, dining as a fine art has reached some of our clubs and some of our homes, but the busy citizen of this country, as a rule, leaves the details of his state or social dinners entirely to his caterer.—Floyd B. Wilson, in December *Lippincott's*.