



HOME DEPARTMENT

By JANEY CANUCK

LETTERS FROM AN AUNT TO HER WIDOWED NIECE

MY DEAR MARGARET,—Indeed, *ma petite*, you have been living in weeds far too long, and 'tis high time you moved into clover.

Are you not tired of being a “relict?” 'Tis a most offensive term—almost identical and certainly synonymous with “relic.”

You will remember that I, myself, was a widow for three awful years, and so speak of that whereof I am not ignorant.

Strange, too, isn't it, how other women dislike young widows? But people are so nasty: they never will think or say what we want them. This is particularly so if a widow puffs her hair, and wears a modish gown. And should she be indiscreet enough to don “tempestuous petticoats” of silk, then may the kindly fates protect her name and fame.

Even very good people will sometimes ruffle their feathers when a pretty widow enters the company. I asked our Rector about it, and the dear fellow owned himself quite at a loss to account for such irrationality. He said it was truly remarkable, when, in the Bible, *le bon Dieu* was always partial to widows, and laid nearly all the intrigues and naughtiness at the door of married women. Eve, Sarah, Sapphira, Herodias, and Jezebel, were wives, while Ruth and Naomi were widows.

Now, this explanation on the part of the Rector was really very clever, for it was only a prelude to an address wherein he expressed his entire willingness to give the lie to public sentiment by marrying me himself.

And my answer would have been in the affirmative, for I really love every man who

says beautiful things to me, but—I had it just now, the reason, but it has escaped me.

He declared that the widow was just so many years superior to the maiden as she had been years married, that is, if she is not over forty.

Ah! now I recall what it was that made me hesitate—his ease of utterance. His proposal was too correct, too elegantly phrased. He called me his “soul-mate” with as much unction as if he were reading *Pearson on the Creed*.

I could easily have fallen in love with his strong mind, handsome face, and ripe graces of scholarship, but somehow or other, I have an idea that a man should not be able to express his love in well-turned, elegantly phrased sentences. Once the sudden tides of passion are touched in his inmost being, a man's words will be tipped with fire. And a woman will understand, for the flames will reach out and will move her blood like a bugle-call.

But how my silly pen rambles off! I really meant to give you some much-needed advice about this lover of yours, and here I have simply been proving myself to be well over the meridian, for it is only when a woman is at least forty-five, that she opens her heart without reserve on her *affaires d'amour*.

Don't you see, my dear Margaret, that the position you are assuming in this matter is entirely unreasonable. The fact that your first husband treated you badly is not a sufficiently weighty reason to prohibit your taking another hand in the matrimonial gamble. Cupid may cut the cards better this time. All men are not bad. Indeed, there are *some* really half-nice ones, but you just happened to get one who was wholly bad.