

When such a conversation as this was prolonged for five hours, it was little wonder that my lord's valet and my lady's maid received orders to pack valises and trunks, or that next day Esher Hall was in a happy tumult of preparation.

Love comes better late than never, and Lady Kate always told herself that she never could have been so happy in those sweet, old gardens with her lover as she was with her husband. Probably they were both as perfectly satisfied as it is possible for human love to be; for, greatly to the amazement of the fashionable world, they not only spent the whole summer alone in their country home, but actually, when they came back to London, had the courage to appear, in the very height of the season, in the same box at the opera.


"Really, Kate," said Miss Selina, "I never was so astonished. The gentleman on your left—"

"Is always at my right now, dear. He will never be in the opposite again."

"How delightful!"

"For us? Oh, yes. Charming."

Courtship.

 COURTSHIP, like most other matters relating to love and matrimony, may be said to present abundant scope for eccentric and original development. It is a course of proceeding which is regulated by no fixed principles or general formulae. The symptoms are as variable as the weather; neither precepts nor examples are of much avail, because the policy which may in one case prove eminently successful, may in another result in the most lamentable failure. There is no definitive rule, even on such a fundamental point as whether the initiative and active negotiations shall devolve upon the lady or the gentleman. There are fortunate individuals of both sexes whose fate, we confess, fills us with envy.

According to popular tradition, it is the special prerogative of the fair sex to be wooed and won; but this is not by any means an invariable rule. It has many exceptions and some who profess to speak from personal experience as well as extensive observation, go so far as to declare that in the majority of instances it is really the ladies who do the courting, though the initiative and other formal steps may ostensibly lie with the enamored swain. A good deal might no doubt be said in support of this theory. Women have far more tact in the management of such affairs than men, who invariably evince a remarkable propensity for "putting their foot in it." The subject, moreover, is one in which the ladies are supposed to be more nearly concerned. As Byron says:

Man's love is of man's life a thing apart,
'Tis woman's whole existence.

While a man may have a hundred different objects and ambitions in life, and may leave his matrimonial fate in great part to chance, there is seldom any object which bulks so largely in a girl's prospects as that of being well matched, and, as the phrase goes, "comfortably settled" as partner in a good matrimonial firm. It need, therefore be no matter of surprise that our fair sisters should so often be found angling in the waters of the social world for what their luck may bring them in the shape of a husband; and there is considerable common sense, as well as piquant humor, in what the heroine of a popular new comedy has to say to her girl-friend as to the responsibility which devolves on a dutiful young

lady of paving the way and "leading up" to a declaration and proposal.

We remember listening to a remarkable address on this subject by an oratorical Quakeress, who seemed strongly disposed to assign to man the place of the wooed, rather than that of the wooer. "My friends," she observed, "there are three things I very much wonder at. The first is, that children should be so foolish as to throw up stones, clubs and brickbats into fruit trees, to knock down fruit; if they would let it alone it would fall itself. The second is, that men should be so foolish, and even so wicked, as to go to war and kill each other; if let alone, they would die of themselves. And the third and last thing I wonder at is, that young men should be so unwise as to go after the young women; if they would stay at home, the young women would run after them."

Notwithstanding this lucid train of reasoning, it is to be hoped young men will not do anything so ungallant and ungentelemanly as to stay at home and neglect what has all along been their peculiar privilege. A man may be so highly favored by fortune that his rank, wealth, genius, or personal qualities enable him to outshine all rivals, and to regard wooing and winning as for him almost synonymous terms; but to allow any such considerations to influence his conduct in a matter of this kind, would not only be an evidence of the worst possible taste, but would be a flagrant outrage on all the laws of chivalry. On the other hand, a man may be so bashful and awkward in the matter as to require so much encouragement, that all the courting may very fairly be said to come from the other side. But in both cases—apart from psychological subtleties and too-curious matter-of-fact observations—the man's proper and natural place, in our view at all events, is that of a humble and respectful suppliant at the shrine of beauty, grace and virtue.

The pleasures of courtship are very great, but they will become as ashes to the palate if they end in final rejection. As a trans-Atlantic poet pathetically remarks:

'Tis sweet to love; but, ah! how bitter
To love a gal, and then not git her!

It is often extremely difficult to know exactly how to achieve success in love. We cannot all be great, or beautiful, or even supremely good; but next to realizing all these conditions in one's self, it is important to believe, or, at all events, to make the young lady believe not only that she herself is beautiful and good, but that she possesses those qualities in sufficient plenitude to make up for your manifold deficiencies. Even in this direction, however, there is danger; and the lover will do well to bear in mind the experience of an abandoned suitor, who, when asked why he had been rejected, replied: "Alas, I flattered her till she became too proud to speak to me."

Touching this same subject of flattery, a lady was asked on one occasion why plain girls often get married sooner than handsome ones; to which she replied, that it was owing mainly to the tact of the plain girls, and the vanity and want of tact on the part of the men. "How do you make that out?" asked a gentleman. "In this way," answered the lady; "the plain girls flatter the men, and so please their vanity; while the handsome ones wait to be flattered by the men, who haven't the tact to do it." There have been cases, however, in which the situation presented here has been reversed, and plain, even ugly, men, have succeeded in making themselves so agreeable to young ladies as to become their accepted