

brightly careless. She knows nothing of her next door neighbor. She may be the most unhappy woman on earth and may be taking part in a life-tragedy sufficient to darken the brightest existence. But in the next home all is sunshine, and not even a shadow is cast across the threshold. How could there be? The mistress of the house knows nothing whatever of the despair on one side of her, and the martyrdom on the other.

But in the country, woman is seldom unaffectedly happy and gay. She is—if loving or sympathetic and it is of such I am speaking—daily, hourly closely in contact with the troubles, the sickness, the excitements, the blisses, of a dozen or more families. Can you wonder that her eyes are filled with tears for other's woes? That her heart is saddened or gladdened with their sufferings or joys? She knows where there is food and clothing needed, and where the more precious boon of sympathy will be welcome. She carries the burdens of half the women in the town and is it strange that life seems much too sad a thing to her, that she should be light-hearted?

Human sympathy is awakened and human pity and human love over-master the heart when one goes in and out among the poor, there is so much in every one's life which is poor, so many people mentally starved and suffering that it does not seem as if there were any really happy people anywhere. Certainly there is much more chance for selfish happiness in the city than in the country.

Margie Robertson

Literature.

"The world of books is still the world I write."—MRS. BROWNING.

The following charming bit of *vers de societe* is taken from the new volume of poems entitled, "Potiphar's Wife," by Sir Edwin Arnold, author of "The Light of Asia," and "The Light of the World," etc. It reminds one of Belzoni's "Address to an Egyptian Mummy," from The Rejected Addresses of Horace and James Smith, though the present poem is more full of delightful conceit.

(ED. LADIES PICTORIAL WEEKLY.)

To A Pair of Egyptian Slippers.

Tiny slippers of gold and green,
Tied with a mouldering golden cord!
What pretty feet they must have been
When Caesar Augustus was Egypt's lord!
Somebody graceful and fair you were!
Not many girls could dance in these!
When did your shoemaker make you, dear,
Such a nice pair of Egyptian "Threes?"
Where were you measured? In Sais, or On,
Memphis, or Thebes, or Pelusium?
Fitting them fealty your brown toes upon,
Lacing them deftly with finger and thumb
I seem to see you!—So long ago,
Twenty-one centuries, less or more!
And here are your sandals; yet none of us know
What name, or fortune, or face you bore.

Your lips would have laughed, with a rosy scorn,
If the merchant, or slave-girl, had mockingly said,
"The feet will pass, but the shoes they have worn
Two thousand years onward Time's road shall tread,
And still be footgear as good as new!"
To think that calf-skin, gilded and stitched,
Should Rome and the Pharaohs outlive—and you
Be gone, like a dream, from the world you bewitched?
Not that we mourn you! 'Twere too absurd!
You have been such a very long while away!
Your dry spiced dust would not value one word
Of the soft regrets that my verse could say.
Sorrow and pleasure, and Love and Hate,
If you ever felt them, have vapourized hence
To this odour—so subtle and delicate—
Of myrrh, and cassia, and frankincense.

Of course they embalmed you! Yet not so sweet
Were aloe and nard, as the youthful glow
Which Amenti stole when the small dark feet
Wearied of treading our world below,
Look! it was flood-time in valley of Nile,
Or a very wet day in the Delta, dear!
When your slippers tripped lightly their latest mile—
The mud on the soles renders that fact clear.
You knew Cleopatra, no doubt! You saw
Antony's galleys from Actium come.
But there! if questions could answers draw
From life so many a long age dumb,
I would not tease you with history,
Nor vex your heart for the men which were;
The one point to learn that would fascinate me
Is, where and what are you to-day, my dear?

You died, believing in Horus and Pasht,
Isis, Osiris, and priestly love;
And found, of course, such theories smashed
By actual fact on the heavenly shore.
What next did you do? Did you transmigrate?
Have we seen you since, all modern and fresh?
Your charming soul—so I calculate—
Mislaid its mummy, and sought new flesh.
Were you she whom I met at dinner last week,
With eyes and hair of the Ptolemy black,
Who still of this find in the Fayoum would speak,
And to Pharaohs and scarabs still carry us back?
A scent of lotus about her hung,
And she had such a far-away wistful air
As of somebody born when the earth was young;
And she wore of gilt slippers a lovely pair.

Perchance you were married? These might have been
Part of your trousseau—the wedding-shoes;
And you laid them aside with the garments green,
And painted clay Gods which a bride would use;

And may be to-day, by Nile's bright waters
Damsels of Egypt in gowns of blue—
Great-great-great-very great-grand daughters
Owe their shapely insteps to you!
But vainly I beat at the bars of the past,
Little green slippers with golden strings!
For all you can tell is that leather will last
When loves, and delightings, and beautiful things
Have vanished, forgotten—No! not quite that!
I catch some gleam of the grace you wore
When you finished with life's daily pit-a-pat,
And left your shoes at death's bedroom door.

You were born in the Egypt which did not doubt:
You were never sad with our new-fashioned sorrows:
You were sure, when your play-days on earth ran out,
Of play-times to come, as we of our morrows!
Oh, wise little maid of the Delta! I lay
Your shoes in your mummy-chest back again,
And wish that that one game we might merrily play
At "Hunt the slipper"—to see it all plain!

SIR EDWIN ARNOLD.

Our English Letter.

(From our own Correspondent.)

LONDON, March 19 1891.

London is gradually waking up to life once more; we have had a few smart weddings, at Homes and dances, and are now on the whole looking forward to a brighter season than we expected some weeks since. Both privately and by public command Her Majesty has given it to be understood that it is her wish, as well as that of all members of the Royal Family, that the deep sorrow which has fallen upon them shall in no way further be allowed to affect the doings of Society; and it is with this view and also to further the interests of trade that the Queen has decided to hold two drawing rooms in May on her return from the continent. The Duchess of Edinburgh will undertake those duties which usually fall to the lot of the Princess of Wales. Princess May is reported to be much better for her change at Osborne, the Queen has been all kindness and sympathy, and has done everything in her power to cheer and enliven the poor girl. I am glad that the "Teck family" went abroad at once, thus Princess May was spared the pain of spending the day which was to have been her wedding day, Feb. 27th, in England. I have been reading a charming little article in one of our ladies' papers about the "Home Life at the White Lodge," the residence of the Duke and Duchess of Teck; would more of our English girls were like Princess May and more mothers like the Duchess of Teck. There is still a considerable amount of indecision regarding the best way of using the money subscribed for wedding presents to Prince Albert Victor, in my part of the world, Kensington. I believe it is almost decided that the money subscribed by the residents shall be spent on a replica of the portrait of Prince Albert Victor by Professor Herkomer, which is to be presented to Princess May.

It is not generally known that "Prince Eddie" possessed considerable talent as a sculptor, or rather designer for sculpture, thus inheriting the artistic talent of the Royal Family.

The Queen shows much talent as a painter, as do also the Empress Frederick and Princess Beatrice. Princess Louise's work both in painting and sculpture are, I am sure, as well known in Canada as in England. The Prince and Princess of Wales and family are still at Eastbourne. I hear the Queen has offered them the Royal yacht for a lengthened cruise to the Mediterranean; whether the offer is accepted or not, they will make a long stay on the continent this spring. It is rumoured that the Prince of Wales intends to give up his racing stud. I don't suppose any puritanical motive is the cause of this decision, but whatever the motive, the news will be gratifying to many who realize the dangers, evils and temptations which attend the racecourse, and we must all agree that there is no surer way of stamping out any social custom than to make it unfashionable. There are always so many people who must follow where royalty leads, that we hope this intention of the Prince if adhered to may be the cause of the sport of horse-racing losing some of its attractiveness. Talking of horse-racing has reminded me of the dreadful case which is now creating a good deal of excitement in our part of the world. I allude to the case of Mrs. Montagu who has been committed for trial at Londonderry on the charge of causing the death of her little daughter of three years old. As a punishment for some baby fault, this unnatural mother put the child in a dark wardrobe room tied her hands behind her with a stocking, and fastened the stocking with a piece of string to a ring in the wall, she then locked the door and went out for some hours carrying the key in her pocket; when she went to let the poor little creature out she found her dead; it is supposed the cause of death was asphyxia. It is not horrible? You will wonder how horse-racing could remind me of this; it is merely because this Mrs. Montagu is said to be the most intrepid horsewoman in Ireland, hence the connection in my mind. I have a strong prejudice against women who hunt. In my opinion they can never possess the gentleness, tender-heartedness and sensitiveness so invariably associated with the name of woman, and I can never imagine such women becoming true mothers. Certainly this Mrs. Montagu is much more fit to train horses than children; although in saying this I do not wish anyone to run away with the idea that I advocate cruelty to animals in any form. From the accounts I read in to-day's papers I am almost inclined to think that Mrs. Montagu cannot be quite in her right mind, for she is now also charged with cruelties to three of her young sons. We often shudder at accounts of the cruelties practised on children belonging to the lowest classes, but I think this is the first case I remember against an educated woman, and a lady moving in the highest society. I should like exceedingly to know what sort of man Mr. Montagu can be, surely he could not have countenanced such treatment of his children.

With the laudable intention of giving a stimulus to the terribly depressed state of affairs in London and England generally, Society will this spring largely patronize English silk and woolen dress materials, and many are the lovely new shades in grey and violet which have already been produced by our leading manufacturers; by the way, these colors will predominate for all articles of dress this season. Princess gowns are becoming very popular here, and very pretty and stylish they are too, when worn by the right people. But what a mistake it is that women all over the world will often so carefully and unreasonably follow the prevailing fashion, without the least thought as to whether the fashion in question is suited to their own particular style. Imagine a woman, short, of ample proportions and wide waist, attired in a princess gown. I am becoming accustomed to the sac jackets now, but I cannot say I like them; they have somewhat of an untidy appearance and should certainly only be worn by the fortunate possessors of tall, thin figures. The capes are to be much shorter this spring only a few inches below the waist and in shape almost like the old circular Wellingtons. They have turned down collars, and some I have seen are made with two or more capes and small, straight collars; we are tired of the high, medici collars now, and think them somewhat vulgar, fickle Fashion! That old favorite, feather trimming, is again very much to the fore, especially for evening gowns. And this reminds me to speak a few words in favor of our excellent Society for the Protection of Birds. Its members pledge themselves "to refrain from wearing the feathers of any bird not killed for the purposes of food, the ostrich only excepted." The Society is doing a good work and I hope some of its little pamphlets may find their way into many lands, for surely it must be ignorance which makes women wilfully encourage cruelty to birds. In one of these pamphlets a plea is made for humming birds. Who would think of wearing the plumage of one of these lovely little creatures, did they know how they are actually tortured to death. I read how they are skinned alive, Oh! the pity of it—that the plumage may lose none of its wonderful brilliancy, and this in the mating season too! I am sure the secretary of the Society, Miss Poland, 29 Warwick R'd, Maida Hill, London, would be very delighted to receive the names of new members from over the sea. The Duchess of Portland is one of the patronesses of the Society.

You remember Oscar Wilde of aesthetic fame? There is a great talk just now about a new play of his "Lady Windemere's Fan." Opinions vary as to the merits of the piece, but there is no question as to the author's cleverness and originality. The play is entirely Oscar Wilde. The plot is interesting but untrue to life; the dialogue saves the piece, for it is brilliant to a degree, everyone talks cleverly and there are many sentences which I found worth remembering and thinking over, as for example: "We all live in the gutter, but some of us look up to the stars." From a dramatic point of view, the play is not a good one, but it will be the fashion, because its author is. I am looking forward to seeing Henry VIII at the Lyceum; up to the present, something has always happened to prevent my going when I had arranged to do so. Mr. Irving knows better than any other manager how to mount a piece and this time he has quite surpassed himself.

You will be sorry to hear that the Baroness Burdett Coutts has been seriously ill lately from the effects of a severe chill. Considering her advanced age, she is 78, her friends were extremely anxious on her account, she is progressing favorably now and will shortly go abroad. Our illustrated papers this week contain many pictures of General Booth's return to England; quite an exciting time the "Salvation Army has had, but I fancy all this fuss about the General's arrival may tend to alienate the sympathy he aroused by his "Darkest England" scheme. Of course these processions and demonstrations are the means, or rather advertisements, by which the "Army" lives, yet thinking people must see that a great proportion of the money subscribed for the General's scheme is sunk in these processions, etc., and never reach those for whom it was intended.

I was much amused the other day by an article in one of our weeklies on the different occupations followed by women; amongst others I noticed the account of an American woman who has started in business as a fashionable undertaker. But I think the most extraordinary idea of gaining a livelihood is that of a Parisian woman. She calls herself a "dinner taster," and goes to different houses to taste the dishes intended for dinner. She suggests improvements and gives the cook new recipes. She has already many patrons and finds the occupation sufficiently remunerative. I wonder how long it will be ere we shall have "Dinner tasters" in England. Another occupation conceived by an American woman and out of which she makes a comfortable living is the preparation of a pudding. She supplies it to order, but does not betray the secret of the making, and this pudding is so excellent that she does a large trade.

I am sending this week an extract from a local paper which may prove useful as well as interesting to intending brides.

BRIDAL FANCIES.

Married in white, you have chosen all right;
Married in gray, you will go far away;
Married in black, you will wish yourself back;
Married in red, you will wish yourself dead;
Married in green, ashamed to be seen;
Married in blue, he will always be true;
Married in pearl, you will live in a whirl;
Married in yellow, ashamed of your fellow;
Married in brown, you will live out of town;
Married in pink, your spirit will sink.

Was anyone ever married in black? I wonder.

ANNIE VAUGHAN.