

energy and intelligence whereby they were conspicuously distinguished, develop a useful, respectable class of domestic servants. In providing an outlet for so much stagnant feculency, not only must large districts be reclaimed and rendered available to better uses, but the released forces would flow in healthful streams through the new channels, and thus both parties be gainers. In redeeming this waste material, Canada would nobly fulfil her obligation due to the Mother Country, which the fair lecturer had taken upon herself the honour to represent."

Although the notice omitted mention of the fact, amongst the audience sat Mrs. Smith.

It had been announced that a key to the solution of the domestic problem would be presented by the talented lecturer.

That was the very key Mrs. Smith was continually looking for. She thought she had almost discovered it herself when she reduced the rule of three, a house and table-maids and a cook, to the single common factor—a general servant. The instructive myth of the ten little niggers ought to have taught anyone properly grounded in nursery lore, the melancholy result of *reductio ad nil*; but familiarity only breeds a profounder and more awful fear of this one little nigger working all alone. "She got married and then—there was none."

It happened that Mrs. Smith was seeking to fill just such a vacuum, otherwise being of a slightly sceptical turn mentally, and in a very weary frame physically, she could hardly have been induced to countenance the lady lecturer whose wisdom seemed too versatile to be valuable.

She went inclined to scoff, but remained to listen. The idea seemed worth adoption. Mr. Smith, of course, must hear nothing bearing the remotest allusion to "swarming humanity" and "rankling centres of vice and disease." Men are apt to spring unexpected fastidiousness upon their wives' little experiments. Mrs. Smith resolved not to tell her husband where the proposed new girl came from. He would be sure to scent Whitechapel atrocities, anarchism, and all sorts of horrors in advance. No. As the lecturer had said, "here was an enterprise in which women must work alone and prove their value to the community." And Mrs. Smith's dignity increased so much on the way home that upon Mr. Smith's starting from his nap beneath the newspaper to enquire "Well, and were you entertained?" she answered stiffly: "One is not a child to be everlastingly amused," and then, with rather more than the energy that, as a general thing, conspicuously distinguished her, began to move about as if beginning a new day's work. This woke Mr. Smith effectually. He looked surprised at the tart reply, and remarked: "You are overdoing it, my dear. Let me give you a little something. Don't set the table over night—take a little rest, do."

Fate was more opportune than usual, and tumbled into Mrs. Smith's hands the particular lump of English clay which she was to mould into a vessel of homely grace and utility.

The new importation stood in the pantry carefully disregarding the cupboards which Mrs. Smith was carefully showing her.

"I hope you understand how to wash dishes," said the lady.

"Oh, yessum—coursium."

"Because," pursued Mrs. Smith, "I am rather particular about it. I find it necessary to teach every girl that comes."

"Yessum?" superciliously.

"Yes. Now mind you have your suds nice and hot. Wash the silver first, then the glass, which must be rinsed in cold water; after that the china, and the knives in a jug last; now, remember, in a jug—so that the ivory handles shall not lie in the water. If you dry your knives immediately they will need far less polishing."

"Oh, yessum," in a bored tone.

A few further directions and Mrs. Smith turned to leave the scraggy, tallow-skinned young woman to dish the dinner her mistress had cooked.

"Oh, by the way," she said, looking back, "what is your name? I did not quite catch it at the Immigration Office."

"Miss 'Awkins, 'um."

"We are not in the habit of giving our servants the title of Miss," observed Mrs. Smith, mildly. "What is your Christian name?"

Miss Hawkins laughed slightly, lolled her head on one side. "My Christen nime is Maud," she announced. Mrs. Smith rather fancied "Mary Ann" would come more naturally to Miss Hawkins' family circle.

It took more time to set dinner on the table than had been occupied in its entire preparation, but Mrs. Smith made allowances diligently. She let this industry languish, however, when the gravy presented a shield of grease to the spoon, and the vegetables appeared scorched and messed over the side of the dishes, followed by the pudding, a boiled batter, cut piecemeal from the mould, and lying in a shapeless mass under splattered sauce. Why itemize! We all know exactly what it was like.

After dinner—din. Crash! bang! splash!

Mr. Smith set his teeth together, writhed in his easy chair as if it had been an instrument of the inquisition. Finally he put his paper down on his knee and glared at space.

Mrs. Smith knew the symptoms. She rose resignedly, and made for the seat of war.

"Try not to make so much clatter," she suggested, and took the opportunity to look into the process of dish washing. To her horror, silver, glass, greasy dishes, knives, handles and all, were jumbled into the dish pan together. Worse than this—the scraps floated on the chilly water. Mrs. Smith curbed her wrath, and explained the futility of trying to cleanse things in weak soup, and showed how pitching spoons and forks down from a height scratched the plate. In the midst of her patient instructions, Mr. Smith was heard to stumble in the hall on his way from the drawing room to the more distant morning room upstairs, where he might be out of sound of Bow Bells.

"Why on earth is the gas not lit here?" he thundered.

"Please 'um, I'd a lit that gassum, honly I couldn't find a taper."

"Why, there are the matches in front of you, Maud."

"Oh. In Englandum we alwus uses a taperum."

"Well, here we use a match and a little common sense," returned Mrs. Smith, irritated by the tone of impudence perceptible under all the polite pretence of Maud's dog latin.

After the advent of Maud, Mrs. Smith could not complain of a lack of interest in life. It is the mission of tragic events, we

are told, to supply life with interest. Life with Maud was a tragic farce. All time was occupied correcting her mistakes, repairing mischief and waylaying plans.

At the most inopportune moments the ways and methods of the quiet household would be overturned. Maud always justified herself for some such innovation by announcing after the fact that she was just "miking a new rewel." On one occasion, when careful preparations for a little dinner had been completed, Mrs. S. came in to give a last glance at the table just in time to find that Maud had inverted plates and glasses at every place and spread the table napkins over the backs of the chairs.

"What does this mean, Maud?" asked her mistress indignantly.

"Pleasum, I just mide a new rewel. That was the style at the 'Ome ware I stopped once for a wile. I thought you'd like to 'ave things in propah English style, so I just mide a new rewel."

Mrs. S. broke in on the refrain. "You will be good enough to leave me to make rules in my own house. Understand this is not a reformatory."

But if it were not one in name, it came near being one in fact; grappling with reformatory problems and rewarded by about the usual success.

Mrs. Smith found daily new depths of ignorance, irrepressible contumacy, and condite vices in her handmaiden.

Arrangements for contraband supplies, including "Bee-ah for my me-ools," were intercepted; a horde of followers disbanded; surreptitious rambles by moonlight, after the house was locked for the night, were guarded against, but reform remained as far off as ever.

And Mrs. Smith, who had always shared pleasures and worries alike generously with her husband, was bearing the burden of her sociological experiment alone, so that at times she almost felt as if this reserve placed her on an equal with her peccant servant.

One day discovering Maud, who was supposed to be cleaning the front steps, just returning with a molasses bottle full of something, Mrs. S. asked sternly, "What have you there?" Maud, with unshaken cheek, replied airily, "Honly harnica for a bruise on my arm." It was arnica, and although the girl had had the impudence to charge a quart of it to her mistress' account, and finding that the high-shouldered black bottle did not contain a substitute for the prohibited beer, Mrs. S.'s relief was such that upon after reflection, she feared she must be losing her own sense of right and wrong.

Last scene of all in this sad, eventful history. Mrs. Smith was doing an afternoon's calling. The weather looked a little doubtful, so instead of putting on her nicest outfit, second best was decided upon. Her husband could not have told the difference; but between the two in Mrs. Smith's mind lay a gulf of sentiment and regard only to be bridged by a pontoon of innumerable new articles, from a Paris bonnet to a Burt shoe.

Contrary to her apprehensions it did not rain, but the wind and dust were so great she could not but congratulate herself on having spared her silks and laces from exposure.

The most particular people (by which, dear reader, we usually mean not those we love best, but those whom it is most desirable to impress with the length of our capi-