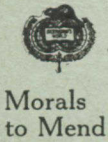




## Jean Blewett's Own Page



### Morals to Mend

ONLY THE CHOSEN FEW have the gift of picking a friend for his virtues; more of us have the gift of picking him to pieces for his lack of them. I do not know how many of you are aware that a "Self-Improvement Society" was started in Toronto some years ago. It had a constitution and it had rules, one of which was that no member could correct or comment upon certain faults in others until he or she had overcome like faults in himself or herself.

Its existence was brief. That "faults in himself or herself" was the stumbling block in the way of the society's progress. There is no spice in spying on and rounding up our own shortcomings. We are always trying to improve others. This is particularly true of women. Partly because we are mostly real reformers, and partly through pure meddlesomeness, we love to engage in an orgie of alteration in others. It is the pharisaical streak in us. A little of this sort of thing may be a virtue, but a little goes a long way. The people who go about looking for "morals to mend" are going to get leave to mend their own morals and manners before long. This habit of sitting in judgment seems to grow on people, to be stronger and more general, but it may be that it is only more noticeable. Come to think of it, the greatest Preacher the world has ever known had to speak with no uncertain sound on this very matter nearly two thousand years ago. The mote and the beam are long-lived.



### Bridal Roses and Veils

IS THERE ANYTHING as nice as a girl, a clear-eyed, young-hearted girl? Unspoiled, unselfish, she seems made to give happiness to every one. Nobody knows what she and her wise little ways, her coaxing, cozening words and looks mean to Father. She is the only person in the world whom he allows to boss him openly and in the eyes of all. He does not mind her doing it; nay, he delights in it. Proud of her, fond of her, foolish over her—this is Father. There never was such a girl—and she is his, all his own. Like her Mother, very like her Mother at her age. Yes, come to think of it—but why think of it? Girls used to marry too young, much too young. Twenty! A girl is a mere child nowadays at twenty. He must caution Mother not to mention that she was a trifle under that age when he drove her over to the Manse in his new top buggy and married her. It might put notions into his little girl's head, and he doesn't want notions put there. She is his, and he refuses utterly and unconditionally to share even her thoughts with any other male person. The protective jealousy of parenthood is a pathetic thing, a futile thing as well. Father has been proud no end of the fact that he and his Sylvia, married young and in haste and have not begun to grow old, or to think of repenting; but now he is fain to suppress the story—it might put notions into his daughter's head. Notions! As though far-seeing Mother Nature had not attended to that in the beginning!



### "Wood, Married and A"

AT FIRST FATHER is openly scornful of the young man who comes a-wooing; then vindictive; then fearful—Girl actually seems to like him. Later he is appraised of the fact that this audacious, conceited, commonplace chap, not fit to tie Girl's shoes, wants to carry her off; and of the astounding one that she is a party to the plot. For awhile he has a lovely, joyous girl, an engaged girl, a doubly-dutiful girl, who pets him, humours him, watches over him wistfully, spends his money in French lingerie and in articles for the linen chest. Almost before he knows it comes June and the wedding day, and a radiant, grown-up girl with a train and a veil. He gives her away without faltering—she seems oddly unfamiliar—and thinks himself quite hard-hearted until she comes, a tearful, slim slip of a girl in her going-away suit to kiss him good-bye. Then his fortitude fails. The best thing in life is being wrested from him and he cannot put out a hand to stop the outrage. They are off; and in the stir he steals up to his den in the attic, only to find that she has used it for a dressing-room. A white slipper lies on the floor, just where she kicked it off; her kerchief, in his chair. Heaven be kind to all poor fathers who lose their girls! By the agony of his groan, you would think he was done with joy

for all time. But is he? Not a bit of it! This was two years ago, and to-day he is prouder and happier than ever before. Girl is home on a visit, and his grandson and namesake is being christened. Also he has been awarded an honorary degree from a noted university, but this fact sinks to insignificance beside the grandson. An old friend 'phoning him congratulations on the degree is astonished to hear in reply, "Thanks! Come up and see him. They say he looks like his grand-daddy, but I don't flatter myself I was ever so handsome as this young cherub. Do come up! Come to think of it, he does favour me a little. You'll say so when you see him."



### The Boy of the House

A BOY OF TEN OR TWELVE presents many problems to the man and woman he lives with; for, after all, a boy's home life narrows down to the fact that there is a man and woman, and that he lives with them. He hasn't much reasoning power, as yet, because there is no call for it. He has his instincts, strong ones at that. One of these is to do as he pleases. He loves his own way, and has methods peculiarly his own for getting it. Hence the continual enquiry from perplexed mothers: "How can I go about it to make my boy mind without any show of temper on his part?"

We should suggest that there be no show of temper on the mother's part, either. Temperament has something to do with the cheerfulness or sullenness which marks a boy's (or girl's) surrender of his will to a stronger one; but we may be reasonably certain that if he be a boy of spirit—and he is a poor sort of boy otherwise—he will resent secretly being "made to mind."

The secret of happy, heart-whole obedience is to get him deep in your confidence, win him over to your way of thinking, make him want to mind.

"What!" exclaims some disciplinarian. "Is it not well to teach the young that they must obey, whether they wish to or not?"

To be sure it is well; but to teach them to love to obey is better. The rod, beneficial as the wise man declares it to be, will never accomplish this.



### The Old Order Changeth

A LAD MAY BE DETERRED from doing evil by fear of punishment, but he cannot be made good by it. Goodness is born of the desire to be good, just as right doing is a natural sequence of right thinking.

Last summer a friend of ours, who is prouder of her twin boys than of anything in the world, had a visit from an uncle.

"When I was a youngster, it was a word and a blow, and the blow came first," he exploded. "Here you've wasted a good half-hour explaining to the twins that after a three days' rain and before the sun has had a chance to dry things up a little, is not the time to go camping. Explain nothing, I say. Command them and stand to your guns. What right has a child to want to know the reason you do or say a certain thing? You'll never break a boy's will going about it like you do, take my word for it!"

"I don't want to break the boy's will," she answered. "He's going to need it to live his life as fully and splendidly as I desire him to do. No half-hour is wasted which wins the twins to do as I desire of their own accord. By getting them to see eye to eye with me, they feel that the three of us is a good combination; it stirs up their belief in my judgment—and their own. Hark to that laughter! Isn't it the gladdest thing? And—oh, Uncle, it is better than every little heart-beat crying, 'It isn't fair! It isn't fair!'"



### A Detestable Woman

THE TYPE OF WOMAN who always has worked, and always will work, most harm to her own sex is the one who forgives men everything and forgives women nothing. It is the way she is made; it is also the way she has been taught by example, and trained by precept. The boy of the house may be wild and unfilial, may leave home for the far country and riotous living, and her hand will be extended to greet him, her smile

of welcome be warm. He is a male person; he is the material of which interesting prodigals are made. But let the boy's sister dare to step aside ever so little, defy the conventions in any way, and see what my lady's attitude is. She has no charity for women. You say to her of some heart-broken sister who has made the mistake of loving, not wisely, but too well, "Poor girl! The weight of punishment falls heaviest on her!" as she returns in chill implacable condemnation. "And so it should!"

Her attitude—and she is a type of many—invariably unfair, in this case is damnably so, for while she turns her back on the one sinned against, she has toleration and protective friendliness for the sinner, opens her door to him, makes much of him, shows him that the world—her world—holds no grudge against him for ruining a young life.

As for the girl, the only home my lady would open to her would be a home for fallen women. This is the woman who makes life hard for other women—the woman who ought to be ashamed of herself, but is not.



### After the War

WE SHOULD LIKE TO SUGGEST that when the War ends, as end it will, enough of hospital furnishing and appointments be freely given to equip hospitals in out-of-the-way places of this big country of ours. Our missionaries, our teachers, plead for this. "We could do good work if we had a hospital," they say, "but we find it hard to heal the souls until we have made some effort to heal the bodies."

"Too many women die in childbirth in this sparsely settled neighbourhood. We should have a hospital," comes the cry from more than one homestead.

At a Local Council meeting in a Prairie Province, a nursing sister addressed the members on "The Crying Need of the West."

"The overworked country doctors, the wives and mothers of our pioneer farmers, and the brain and heart of our people will bear me out in asserting that the crying need of both town and country of the West is hospital accommodation, fuller, better means of caring for our sick."

Now, when victory is ours, and white-robed peace goes softly through the land, there is going to be an embarrassment of riches in the way of hospital equipment. Never in the history of the world has there been such quantity, such quality. When the last wounded hero is well enough to walk out of the last military hospital, think of the unused linen, the sheets, pillows! Think of the beds, the chairs! Think of all the up-to-date equipment there is going to be! Surely the real philanthropists will see to it that of this unparalleled supply enough is reserved to furnish a hospital wherever a hospital is needed.



### A Friend of Our Heart

IT IS NOT THAT WE DO NOT LOVE our friends. Oh, no! It is only a desire to make them more congenial to ourselves which starts us massaging their bump of originality, self-esteem, assertiveness—call it what you will—out of existence. Their individuality is too vivid, so we apply the leech of criticism and pale it down; or it is too colourless and we try to tone it

up. We make onslaughts on their outlook, ambitions, even their habits—for their own good, of course. As though it were any of our business! It is egotism, pure and simple, on our part, for mark you, we do not care whether or not our friends show improvement to the world at large, providing they do to us. "Myself and the lucky moment!" to quote the king who reigned from the Ebro to the Elbe.

"If only she would overcome that temper of hers!" we say of one. "If he wouldn't weigh one down with his moroseness!" of another. A third is too light-hearted, a fourth lacking in tenderness, and so on and so forth. We lose a lot of precious time, and still more precious companionship, by making, or striving to make, our friends over. And we render ourselves unpopular, vastly so. They are not anxious to be made over, these dear human folk; they aren't in search of some one to mould and fashion them anew. What they desire, what we all desire, is:

"The friend who knows us, but loves too dearly To see our faults and follies clearly, Or seeing, loves us just the same."