

Woman and Her Work

I stumble, quite incidentally, the other day upon a piece of information which was quite a surprise to me. Perhaps it should not have been, but then one cannot be expected to know everything, and though on reflection I succeeded in unearthing a sort of sub-consciousness that I had heard something like it before, a sub-consciousness is of very little use for practical everyday wear.

This bit of information was the appalling fact that no woman, whatever her rank, is really entitled to bear a crest. It makes one fairly shudder to think of the consternation which this small item would cause in upper middle class if it were suddenly to become law. Picture the distraction, not only of the haughty colonial dames, and daughters of the revolution who have long ruled society in the sister republic, but also of our own social magnates who have become so accustomed to luxury in the shape of a crest, that they cannot relish their food unless the fork they eat with, and the spoon wherewith their tea is stirred is decorated with a crest; and who would find it utterly impossible to write an intelligible note on any but crested paper. Poor souls, how they would suffer! And how some of them would open their eyes when they further discovered that only a comparatively small number of men possessed the legal right to "bear arms," as the heraldry office expresses it. Even when a man is entitled to this distinction it does not by any means follow that all his male descendants have the same privilege; in point of fact only his eldest son is entitled to bear the crest belonging to those arms without restriction. The younger ones may bear the arms, provided they are distinguished with the "mark of cadency" as the heralds call it, in each case, but only the eldest son may bear the crest itself, and that not during his father's lifetime.

What a re-painting and varnishing of the panels of swell carriages there would be in—New York for instance, if this rule was rigidly enforced, and how much so-called family plate would have to go into the melting pot, if the crest was too deeply cut to be erased! Perhaps it is just as well for our own peace of mind after all, that we don't know very much about heraldry on this side of the ocean; ignorance is certainly bliss in this instance, so why should we court wisdom only to find unhappiness?

Speaking of American society women reminds me that I have often wondered over, but never succeeded in solving the problem of where the average American society dame sits when she is at home in the bosom of her family. That she is seldom to be found in the drawing room, except on her regular reception days, seems to be pretty clearly established by that mirror of fashionable life, the modern society novel; since, both in the novel, and the magazine story by prominent writers, the young man who makes an informal call on the heroine some afternoon when she is not expecting company is almost invariably ushered into an empty drawing room, where he sits alone, a prey to the tumultuous emotions which have driven him thus unexpectedly into her presence, until the portieres part suddenly, disclosing her charming form framed by their rich folds.

Now where did the heroine spend her time before she parted those curtains and set the young man's pulses throbbing in such an unhealthy manner? Was she doing the Saturday mending in her bedroom, or merely loitering on a luxurious couch in her boudoir devouring a new novel and a box of caramels simultaneously? I do hope the family had not yielded to that habit which is only too common, of making a family sitting room of the dining room, and reserving the best apartment in the house for the exclusive use of strangers.

It is one of the great points of difference between the English and American society

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story, that in the form when the visitor is shown into the drawing room, he is shown at the same time into the very heart of the family circle, and is at home at once, while in the latter case he is confronted at once with the depressing conditions of an uninhabited room, and a period which varies in length, of his own society before the object of his visit makes her appearance. There are few things more calculated to depress the spirits or ruffle the temper than those moments of waiting, and I believe many a lover who would have cast his heart and fortune at the beloved one's feet if he had found her in the drawing room when he arrived, has had time to think better of it during the bad quarter of an hour he spent in the solitude of the drawing room waiting for the idol of his dreams to part the silken portieres and make a picture of herself as she enters the room. Second thoughts are not always best but they frequently break up what seemed to be a most promising love affair, all the same. The moral of which is—Don't be afraid to use the best room in the house for a family gathering place. What is a drawing room for if the members of the family are not going to enjoy it, and why should any place on which we have expended so much time and money be given up to strangers who care nothing about us, while the second best is considered quite good enough for ourselves and our families.

Really I scarcely like to refer to anything so startling as the latest departure of a very up to date fashionable woman—a new woman most emphatically, and I feel as if I should request the printers to put this paragraph in the smallest type possible, so as to make it a sort of confidential whisper but it is a mistake to be too modest now a days, so here goes. This very advanced dame has not only dismissed her maid, and actually engaged a valet, but really glories in her emancipation from the feminine yoke, and declares that she has never been so well served in her life. Her hair has never been so beautifully dressed, her clothes are perfectly kept, her boots and shoes always like new. Moreover, she has proved a perfect treasure in travelling, never forgets anything, and is an ideal in every way. He does nothing for the master of the house, who has his own man, and his mistress was highly amused when one of her sisters with whom she was staying, expressed surprise at a man being allowed to unpack his mistress's trunks and lay out her dresses; the idea of permitting a strange man in one's bedroom, and amongst one's belongings seemed so extraordinary to her.

The proprietor of the valet argues with some reason however, that as long as our best milliners and dressmakers are men, and we do not mind in the least employing them, there is no earthly reason why they should not be better personal attendants. She insists that her masculine treasure can trim a hat or alter a gown better than any maid she ever had, and as for minding having him around, she would not be so vulgar as to think of such a thing as regarding him as an individual at all, she regards him as something quite impersonal, the personification of good service, nothing more. All the same I fancy the immaculate valet's conversation amongst his acquaintances in his own class would be interesting in the extreme, and if madame could overhear it she might cease to regard him as an impersonal something instead of an individual. And I am also very sure that if I were a man I should object very forcibly to my wife employing any but a feminine body servant. Should she persist, I would follow her example by discharging my valet and engaging the smartest maid I could find, to "valet" me. A good rule should work two ways. It is delightful to be advanced, but may not one carry it too far sometimes?

There is really so little that is new to record in the shape of fashions that one is obliged to fall back upon the decorations, of which the variety is almost endless, in describing the modes of the present season. Quite a novel feature of the newest dress is the quantity of chenille which is used in trimming. This soft and pretty, if rather

perishable decoration was used a good deal on the most dressy of the winter costumes, but new possibilities have been developed on the spring and summer gowns. One way of applying chenille is a dainty twisted cord either in one or two shades of the same color; this cord is applied by either sewing on in straight rows or coiled into some simple design. In an ecru nun's veiling one ecru chenille cord and one row of white, are sewn quite close together at the head of the circular flounce. The effect is very pretty and one requires to look a second time, to see how it is produced. Narrow plaitings and double frillings of black mousseline de soie, or chiffon, are used on foulard silk, barege and grenadine gowns. As edgings for the circular flounces on the skirt, and a square double yoke shaped collar, they are especially pretty. Plaitings of white swiss muslin on wool and silk gowns are a very decided novelty, and they are invariably finished on the edge with either ribbon or lace. A dress of blue and white foulard is trimmed on the bodice with swiss plaitings edged with a narrow black and white striped gros grain ribbon. Plain satin baby ribbon is also used.

Cloth, or serge, both of which have come to the front rank as fashionable materials this season, is the thing to have for one's spring gown, and the most attractive costumes are being made in both these materials, by first class dressmakers who combine a tailor finish with very fanciful effects. Embroidery and appliques of lace which cover revers, yokes vests and collar are features of this style of dress. The costume is made either with a jacket and vest in some pretty contrast, or with the bodice plain in the back, and slightly bloused in front. The embroidery is usually hand work and consequently decidedly expensive unless the wearer is lucky enough to be able to do it herself. A design in flowers, perhaps violet or primroses, and green leaves is wrought on satin in a little lighter shade of the color of the cloth and used for yoke, revers and vest. If the yoke is embroidered the revers may be plain as any excess in this style of decoration is sure to ruin the effect. Bands of black satin ribbon, and bias satin trim some of these gowns with rows down each side of the front which turn and continue around the bottom of the skirt. In other skirts the seams are opened narrowly over a band of satin in a lighter shade, and fastened together by an open-work stitch or else tiny cords. Many of the skirts are quite plain, and either cut with revers, gores or in three pieces with circular sides, and made with lapped seams.

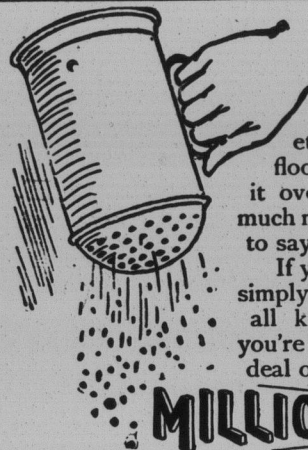
Costumes consisting of coat and skirt, usually have a bodice of plain, or white silk, checked with the color of the cloth, and the effect is decidedly good, carrying out the idea of a suit much better than if the bodice, or vest was made of a contrasting color. Report says that the jackets are to be much longer, and some very smart tailor made suits in the extreme English style are shown with this long coat and close-fitting vests of cloth in a contrasting color, or figure, or satin laid in fine tucks. But all the same, the very short jacket is the most popular just at present, and by far the most convenient and sensible for summer wear. Tailor gowns are not by any means confined to wool materials, and tailors are very busy just now making stylish suits of duck pique and crash, with carefully fitted jackets, shirt waists and skirts without linings, and made after the latest cloth models. They are trimmed with braid, or stitched bands of the same, or else left perfectly plain, the tailor cut and finish giving them a style which is very fetching. Gowns of white pique made with the blazer and worn with a fancy full vest of color silk, are vastly more becoming

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he feels perfectly well, for several days after the swelling has gone down. This is about the only treatment called for, except perhaps soothing applications, such as soap liniment, for instance, to the skin over the swelling. The diet should be liquid, and indeed it must be, for chewing is so painful that solids are out of the question.

Sarcasmic Novelist.

The people who want—and do not scruple to ask for—favors from public men are sometimes so unreasonable as almost to deserve a rude answer; such an answer, for example, as the Golden Penny quotes: A certain novelist, not unknown to fame, received from a lady an unstamped letter asking the loan of his book, on the plea that she could not obtain it at the book-seller's in her town. His reply was worded as follows:

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