

and ridiculous coat. Whenever you find a man whom you know little about, oddly dressed, or talking ridiculously, or exhibiting any eccentricity of manner, you may be tolerably sure that he is not a married man. For the little corners are rounded off, the little shoots are pruned away in married men. Wives generally have much more sense than their husbands, especially when their husbands are clever men. The wife's advices are like the ballast that keeps the ship steady. They are like the wholesome though painful shears, snipping off little growths of self-conceit and folly.

So you may see that it is not good for man to be alone. For he will put out various shoots at his own sour will, which will grow into monstrous ugly and absurd branches unless they are pruned away while they are young. But it is quite as bad, perhaps it is worse, to live among people with whom you are an oracle.

Probably among the class of old bachelors you may find the most signal instances of the evil consequence of going through life with nobody to prune one. I could easily record such manifestations of silliness and absurdity, in the case of such men, as would be incredible. Of course I am not going to do so. An old bachelor of some standing, living in a solitary house, with servants who dare not prune him, and with acquaintances who will not take the trouble to prune him, must necessarily, unless he be a very wise and good man, grow into a most amorphous shape. I beg the reader to mark the exception I make; for I presume he will agree with me when I say, that in the class of old bachelors and old maids may be found some of the noblest specimens of the human race. A judicious wife is always snipping off from her husband's moral nature little twigs that are growing in wrong directions. She keeps him in shape by continual pruning. If you declare that you will do some absurd thing, she will find means of preventing your doing it. And by far the chief part of all the common sense there is in this world, belongs unquestionably to women. The wisest things a man commonly does are those which his wife counsels him to do. It is not always so. You may have known a man to do, at the instigation of his wife, things so malicious, petty, and stupid, that it is inconceivable any man should ever do them at all. But such cases are exceptional. B. C.

NEEDLE-WORK.



HERE is something extremely pleasant and even touching—at least, of very sweet, soft, winning effect—in this peculiarity of needle-work, distinguishing women from men. Our own sex is incapable of any such by-play, aside from the main business of life; but the women—be they what earthly rank they may, however gifted with intellect or genius, or endowed with awful beauty,—have always some little handiwork ready to fill the tiny gap of every vacant moment. A needle is familiar to them all. A queen, no doubt, plies it on occasions; the woman poet can use it as adroitly as her pen; the woman's eye that has discovered a new star, turns from its glory to send the polished little instrument gleaming along the hem of her kerchief, or to darn a casual fray in her dress. And they have greatly the advantage of us in this respect. The slender thread of silk or cotton, keeps them united with the small, familiar, gentle interests of life, the continual operating influences of which do so much for the health of character, and carry off what would otherwise be a dangerous accumulation of morbid sensibility. A vast deal of human sympathy runs along this electric line, stretching from the throne to the wicker chair of the humblest seamstress, keeping high and low in a species of communion with their kindred beings. Methinks it is a token of healthy and gentle characteristics, when women of high thoughts and accomplishments love to sew, especially as they are never more at home with their own hearts than while so occupied. s.

GIRLS LEARNING TO KEEP HOUSE.



NO young lady can be too well instructed in anything that can affect the comforts of a family. Whatever position in society she occupies, she needs a practical knowledge of household duties. She may be placed in such circumstances that it will not be necessary for her to perform much domestic labor; but on this account she needs no less knowledge than if she was obliged to preside personally over the cooking-stove and pantry. Indeed, I have often thought it more difficult to direct others, and requires more experience, than to do the same work with our own hands.