

Woman and Her Work

As I see by an editorial article in a recent issue of *Progress* that the subject of Persian lamb fur is attracting national attention in the sister republic, the subject having been considered of sufficient importance to warrant the issue by the department of state at Washington of a circular report from Persia describing the means by which that fur is obtained I think it better to sacrifice my own feelings which would prompt me to spare those of others, and supplement the information published in that report by some additional facts which my own study of the subject has revealed. Desperate diseases call for desperate remedies, and I think this evil is a sufficiently crying one to justify the employment of some plain speaking in the hope that it may prove the remedy so greatly needed.

The full process by which that awful fur is obtained then, is briefly this—the gentle ewe mothers are fed on the choicest food in order to make the skins of their unborn lambs as thick, and beautiful as possible; then, when the lambs approach birth, the mother is not exactly killed, as the report states—at least not then—the lamb is obtained by a process over which I am compelled to draw a veil, but which is the cause of excruciating torture to the mother. The shrieking, quivering little animal is then skinned alive, and the mother afterwards killed. I do not pretend to explain why the performance should be drawn out to such an extent but it is all done in order to enhance the beauty and value of the fur, and prevent a certain deterioration which is supposed to take place in it after birth. What matters a pang or two more to a defenceless animal especially to a Persian, a Turk, or a Russian? The commercial value of the article is the only consideration that weighs for one moment with them, and the beauty and becomingness of the article seems to be the only one that weighs with those who wear the fur, and so encourage the trade.

But at least none of us can any longer plead ignorance as our excuse, as the subject bids fair to be well ventilated. Professor Angell of Boston, Dr. Rainford of Toronto aided by the gifted "Kit" of the "Toronto Mail and Empire," and last but not least *Progress*, which always has been and I trust always will be found championing the cause of the oppressed, are entirely upon a crusade against the use of this fur.

Someone who probably knows whereof she speaks, being a matron of wide experience, many charming qualities, and a thorough knowledge of the tricks and the manners of that complicated, and complex piece of machinery called man, has pronounced the surprising theory that the real way to win a man's affection is not to flatter his vanity, to feed him on choice food, or to coddle and pet him, but simply to let him do things for her, wait on her in fact. This astute lady has observed that the moment a man begins to be interested in a woman he shows it by wanting to do something for her, to be of service in some way to her. And therefore as soon as a man shows an extraordinary eagerness to wait on a woman that same woman may be sure that she has made an impression on him, and she must on no account disturb the current of events by refusing to let him have his way. If she does he will not like it at all, and then chances to one he will stop loving her on the spot. It is the nature of the male animal of every species to like to be a very big Indian indeed, and have his female companions dependent upon him for everything, so he naturally dislikes any assertion of independence on their part, and prefers that they should revel in his protection. Therefore when a man wants to do any little thing for one of his lady friends, let her see to it that she accepts his offer gratefully, and even pretends that it is the one thing in the world she wanted done; in fact that life would scarcely have been worth

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the living without it, and that no one could have done it half so well as he.

We are such an independent set now—days, says this wisacre, that we never want to accept services from anyone, and when a man offers to post a letter for us, or run some small errand our first impulse is always to decline with thanks, and assure him that we would not trouble him for the world. But it seems that if we would really retain what hold we have now upon that man's heart we must not let our independence, or our wish to save him trouble, win ascendancy, we must crush the impulse at once, and thanking him gracefully for his kindness, accept it just as gracefully. It seems, according to the authority I am quoting, that when a man offers to do a thing, it is almost invariably because he likes to do it, and to be refused, and told that the woman he is offering to serve would prefer doing it for herself, provokes him beyond expression. It looks as if she could really get along without him, and what man living would like to think that?

So the new gospel of fascination is much easier to practise than the old, since woman has no longer to flatter, wait on, or feed the nobler animal, in order to win his affections, but simply to sit still, graciously permit him to do things for her, and then thank him prettily for his kindness, and tenderly slip the halter around his willing neck. Truly all kinds of labor are being wonderfully simplified in these days, and it is indeed a privilege to have lived in the closing years of this most wonderful century!

The princess dress has been threatened at intervals for some years past, but the threats have never amounted to much. Now, however, there is no room for doubt that the princess style of gown will be really one of the leading features of the summer fashions. It will of course, be a revised and corrected edition of the old time princess dress, a very up-to-date garment indeed, and like nearly all the fashions, will be designed with especial reference to bringing out the charms of the slender woman. The princess dress of twelve years ago was a boon to the woman with hips, and generous outlines, while that of today will make the slim woman rejoice. The shoulders of this latest whim of fashion are cut long, the sleeves very close and with scarcely any fullness at the top, while the hips are almost as tight as the sleeves, giving that long slender outline to the figure which is now considered the correct thing. In fact all the skirts show this tendency to a sheath-like fit over the hips, and the underclothes of the fashionable woman are constructed with this end in view. Even the latest corsets fit tightly over the hips, and to prevent any extra fullness in that direction there is a new invention in the form of a corset skirt consisting of a corset and circular skirt cut all in one, and fitting with perfect smoothness over the hips. The lower part of the skirt from the knee down, is a circular flounce, which gives the necessary fullness at the foot. The newest departure in gowns is this sheath-like fit over the hips, and all the new models not made in princess form are almost moulded to the figure from waist to knee below which they flare out into voluminous ruffles—like plaits. The bodices are fitted closely to the figure with perhaps a little fullness just in front, and the latest jackets may be termed tight fitting, as they show so little of the loose effect so fashionable in the autumn, and what little there is directly in front. In short the fad of the coming season is to be elongation, and those amongst us whose figures do not lend themselves kindly to the elongation process will be hopelessly out of fashion. One very great advantage which the princess gown possesses is its adaptability to numerous variations in the style of trimming. One of the prettiest models opens at each side over panels of a contrasting material, and the possibilities such a gown affords for variety of trimming are almost endless. Another has the front of the bodice slightly bloused over the belt, and in each and all the perfect fit of the dress is the special feature for unless it is absolutely correct in this respect it cannot possibly be a success. Woe to the woman who dares to array herself in a princess gown without being sure that her back is

moulded with sufficient symmetry to stand that most trying style of dress! Her face may be beautiful, and her figure all that could be desired in other respects, but unless she is lucky enough to possess the rather long, narrow back with just the proper amount of convexity at the waist line and a little below, as well as broad and perfectly flat shoulders, she had better abjure the seductive princess cut, for her new spring gown. And oh how rare is a perfect back if we but knew it!

One new skirt model in blue cloth has a yoke around the hips not more than nine inches deep, where it points down a little in front, and at the back. This yoke is turned in on the edge and stitched over on the skirt, which is cut to fit without any fullness except directly in the back, where two plaits meeting in the centre dispose of the extra width. This yoke requires as careful fitting as if it were a bodice, and is quite as close and plain at the back, as in front. Rows of braided outlines the yoke all around, and also trim each side of the front breadth. It is said that our spring dresses plain and close as their cut may be are to be very lavishly decorated, especially with dainty trimmings which call for skilful handwork. Shirring, tucking, cording, embroidery done by hand, hem stitching, and all such devices for spending unlimited time over our dresses, will make the lot of the home dressmaker the reverse of a happy one, and help to swell the till of a professional alarm proportion. The guimpe style of gown which has been in such favor all winter is to be still more popular during the coming summer, if one can believe in rumor, and with skirts opening at the sides over panels of a contrasting color and material which matches the yoke and sleeves, the effect will be not only very pretty, but almost that of wearing two dresses together. Some of these contrasts are more in material than color as for instance a gown of pease green satin with yoke and sleeves of velvet in the same shade.

The sleeve which is absolutely tight-fitting and guileless of any puff at all at the top, has really appeared in some of the latest imported gowns. It gathers just enough over the shoulder to give room for the arm, and a tiny epaulette endeavors to atone for the loss of the becoming puff. Another conspicuous feature of the spring costume which is not exactly new, is the necktie or huge bow of silk, tulle lace or chiffon, with frilled or jabot ends, which seems to be an inseparable part of nearly every dress from heaviest silk velvet to lightest gauze.

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M. Frederic Fargeon, the oldest member of the French bar, died recently at Nimes at the age of 98 years. He was counsel for the Paris-Lyon-Mediterranean Railroad, and appeared in court till he was 92 years old.



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There is a perpetual war between him and the birds. He wanders among the nests at night and appropriates the bits of fish left by the nestlings and the young themselves if he can find a mother off her guard. But he has to be shy or he is killed by the stroke of bayonet bill and eaten in his turn. When a plume hunter has driven off or destroyed the parents of a rookery these crabs swarm forth and devour the orphan young in short order. But while the mothers are allowed to do their duty the crabs are ideal scavengers and devour the refuse as well as the insects that infest the bird cities. Their bright colors, like those of the tiger, make them less dangerous than their appetites would otherwise be.

There is a little purple crab along the coast of Southern Florida which seems to feed almost entirely upon the fruit of the cactus. This is so much resembles that you are suddenly surprised to see one of the succulent little balls move away from your fingers before you are aware it is alive. Step back and the crab will resume its place, and seem to be as curious about you as you are about him.

One of the most beautiful shells found among our coast is that of a large snail which climbs certain trees and grows delicately fat on the young birds. The shell is as thin as tissue paper, oddly curved and almost as transparent as the finest glass. It belongs to a family of edible snails so prized as a delicacy on the coast of France, and if properly prepared makes a delicious dish. It is most abundant about New River Inlet, where the slight shake of a tree about sunset will bring a shower of them to the ground. The breakage of shell seems to be of little trouble to the snail—he repairs the damage and moves on.

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