

IMMORALITY IN TORONTO.

BY HORACE SMITH, M. A.

IV.

I have great pleasure in calling the attention of my readers to an article which appeared in this paper by "Marie Stuart," in connection with the subject on which I am now writing. "Marie Stuart" is a lady who has thought deeply on many social subjects, and without necessarily endorsing all her views, I have no hesitation in saying that her various contributions on Sociology are among the ablest that have appeared from the pen of any woman on this continent.

I regret exceedingly that my copy miscarried last week. It was mailed by me in the ordinary way, and should have reached in ample time for the early issue of the paper. But as it has not come to hand yet, the natural inference is that it is lost. It is quite impossible for me to remember what I wrote, but I resume the thread of the argument where I left off in the issue of the 19th inst.

In the remarks about to be made on the conduct of married women in this city it is as well that people should understand my statements are not intended to be too sweeping. There are in Toronto, of course, many married women, who as wife or mother are essentially patterns of duty and propriety; but there are many, and in fact, very many, to whom this description does not apply. And it is of these others about whom I shall talk to day.

No one can doubt, who goes into society or reads the current literature, that the institution of marriage is not regarded as the serious, sacred thing it was only a few years ago.

No one can deny that the idea of forming a matrimonial alliance is very distasteful to an increasing number of men every day, and also strange enough, to many women. A young man who marries now a-days is usually unmercifully gayed by his sometime bachelor companions, and also regarded as a fool by all the young ladies of his acquaintance, except the one whom he has honored by selection, and she usually waits until after the marriage ceremony, if not to discover, at least to openly aver that she regards him as a fool.

This is a curious condition of things, and why is it so?

Why is it that so many men regard marriage as a mistake, and some women as a sacrifice?

There is no doubt that the general condition of married infelicity that single men know quite well is the state in which many of their married friends live, and the plain speaking of some married men to their unmarried friends, which generally assume some such formula as this, "Well, my boy, know when you are well off, and don't make a damned fool of yourself," has had and is having effect on the gilded youths of to-day.

The increasing selfishness and extravagance of young men and young women is also a strong deterring influence.

Men now smoke, drink, play billiards, gamble and bet in a manner and to a general extent unknown to the average young man of twenty years ago.

Young women now dress and drink and smoke to an extent that frightens men off any ideas of matrimony. And above all they flirt; and in this interesting occupation they all find the most astute, the most bitter, and the most successful rivals in the young married women whom they meet in society as their acquaintances and their friends.

There is no pretence of concealment about it. Many a married woman to-day boasts habitually of the men she has "mashed" with much more freedom than will many single girls.

A well known preacher at Montreal only the other day brought down a load of adverse criticism on his head by speaking plainly about the conduct of the majority of married women at the present time. He accused them in the plainest possible terms of "laying themselves out to attract the attentions of all men—whether married or single is usually a matter of absolute indifference to them, so long as it be the attention and the admiration of some man who is not their husband."

A married lady writes to me and says:—"Mr. Horace Smith, I only wish I had my hands in your wool." Now, I call this very kind of my correspondent, who, I am sure, is every inch a lady; but, like old Uncle Ned, I prefer to keep my wool on the top of my head; I am content to miss the interview. But, at the risk of another indignant letter, I quite endorse the above extract.

Anyone who goes into society at all, and observes how married women comport themselves, how they dress, and how they dance, who sees how openly they flirt, and who listens to their conversation, can have no possible doubt that their sole care, ambition, and study is to attract and fascinate men.

This is often done at first out of a silly kind of vanity to show that "though married" they are still admired; but more often to annoy the single women in the room. This may seem strange, but it is true; and the philosopher who said that every young woman had a secret longing to marry well so that she could insult her sisters, was an observant fellow and quite knew the sex.

In the matter of flirting, every single woman has the perfectly fair excuse that it may lead to marriage. But the married woman has no excuse, and, as a rule, asks for none. Her flirtations, begun in vanity or rivalry, can have but one inevitable result—she becomes some man's mistress.

This is the plain, unvarnished truth. Every man and woman of the world knows it is so. Many for various and often obvious reasons will not admit it; but in confidence they acknowledge that "unfortunately there is much that cannot be denied in this view of the matter; just look at Mrs. So and So, for example, and look how she goes on."

Anyone who goes to theatres and fashionable concerts, and watches the conduct of many society women, notices how they paint, powder and array themselves in the most light and airy of *decolletee* costumes, can doubt that the object is to gain the attention of—well, scarcely of the young ladies among the audience.

It is also noticeable the increasing custom among married women to attend balls and theatres with escorts who are not their liege lords, and the

apparent little grief caused to the ladies by the absence of their lawful protectors.

The effect of this rivalry between married and single women is morally detrimental to both. The single girls are often rendered desperate by the rivalry of their married friends, and often hence allow familiarities from men that they would not otherwise submit to; but they observe the greater latitude taken by the married women, and resent it often by indulging in it themselves.

The extravagance and ostentation in dress indulged in by so many married women urges single women to want to be costumed in a manner far beyond their means, while wives much too often dress in a manner far beyond the means of their husbands.

How many serious differences in married life—differences which have led to a life-long coolness—have arisen out of a milliner's bill; and how many women have taken the first step in a downward career to meet some obligation of this kind, contracted without the knowledge of the husband?

The example the married women set is followed by the single ones, partly from a real or a supposed necessity, partly from spite, and sometimes, it is to be feared, from choice. I have no hesitation in saying that the conduct of a large number of married women is responsible for a large amount of the private prostitution existing in this city at the present time.

(To be continued.)

THE BODY OF SAWTELLE.

We referred last week in the editorial column of THE OBSERVER to the confession of Sawtelle, the murderer. A strange story comes from Boston about the disposal of his body. We are told that Mr. Edgely, counsel for Isaac Sawtelle, the murderer, finds the legacy left to him by Isaac to be a costly one. He promised the murderer to bury the body. Isaac's body, encased in a pine box, left the Concord prison at an early hour to-day. It was placed aboard the first train leaving Concord over the Concord and Montreal Road and taken from the train at Newmarket Junction. Here it was the object of much attention from the residents gathered at the depot. It was then placed on a train bound for Great Falls. When it arrived there the people gathered in large numbers, but kept at a distance from the case containing the coffin. The trustees of Forest Glade Cemetery voted not to permit the body to be buried therein. Mr. Edgely then started for Boston. Here he met Mr. Hall, chairman of the Board of Trustees of Mount Hope Cemetery. Out of his own pocket he was ready and willing to buy a burial plot. The trustees sympathised with Mr. Edgely, but they flatly told him that the almost unanimous desire of the lot owners of Mount Hope Cemetery, which found expression in many ways, indicated that the burial of Sawtelle's body in the cemetery would be regarded with a feeling of horror. Forest Hill Cemetery is also closed to the body of the murderer. Mount Hope Cemetery almost adjoins Forest Hill, and within its borders rest the bodies of many murderers.

Mrs. W.—"I have just returned from a visit to that poor family that our dear good minister is so much interested in." Mr. W.—"I should think your dear good minister would call on them himself." Mrs. W.—"How can he, the poor man? He is over in Europe."