

WHAT IS SOCIETY?

WHO IS SOCIETY, AND WHERE DOES IT LIVE?

The Butcher's Wife and Mrs. V.—Get Out of My Light!—The Discontent of Society—What's the Two Gowns—The Discontent of Society.

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SOCIETY! What is society? Who composes society? And to what end or good does society exist?

I suppose every one knows, at least every one who has any great extent mingled in this same element of society, has at some time asked himself these questions, perhaps just by way of speculation and philosophy, or perhaps in some moment of weariness and disgust of life and its complications.

One's instinctive idea of society is that it can only exist in large communities and can be found in its perfection only in the few great centers of civilization—in Paris or London or Vienna or St. Petersburg or New York. But in point of fact society exists everywhere that even a few people are gathered together—that is to say, enough people to make public opinion possible. One person cannot form society, nor can two, for there would be no possibility of talking about somebody else, and that is the very marrow of society conversation. Three persons at least must live near together, engage in the same pursuits, covet the same things and emulate each other in their mode of life to produce the society of which we speak.

So nobody is content with jewels, and jewels are one of the badges and trademarks and artifices of a position in society.

And so it is with clothes. Mrs. X, with a deep purse, subsidizes Worth, one of his rivals to compose a toilet for her which shall exceed in richness, beauty and originality anything that ever yet clothed a daughter of Eve. The artist falls into a fine frenzy and evolves something which even Mrs. X admits to be beyond her wildest hopes, and as she plumes herself like a peacock and glides down the grand reception room, she suddenly encounters Mrs. Z, another Worth dressed dame, whose robes are an improvement upon her own, so that the latter may confidently whisper to her friend that "Poor Mrs. X," has tried to copy her dress by the aid of some domestic dressmaker, but has not quite succeeded—"not quite," my dear, for Worth is not so easily imitated. And poor Mrs. X, who suspects the slender, but has no opportunity of rebutting it, goes home gasping at the teeth and tearing her hair, and is ready to trample her poor gown under foot and to rend M. Worth limb from limb.

Or perhaps she is of a keener and more belligerent make, and instead of retreating, sails gallantly up to the enemy, exclaiming:

"Oh, my dear! What a sweet gown, and I'll forgive you for stealing my little hints to Worth—he made mine; you know, and I suppose liked the idea so well that he couldn't resist warming it over in yours!"

How joyful both those women feel as they smile at each other's faces and glare in each other's eyes!

Consider the matter of precedence, especially here in our New World's republic. In the kingdoms and empires of older communities the whole thing is settled for man, woman and child by the mere fact of birth. A little, frivolous, childish duchess of nineteen must take precedence of a venerable and dignified countess, even though it may be her own grandmother, and so on down to the delicate distinctions between the wives of barristers and the wives of attorneys.

But, thank heaven, we are not yet so highly civilized as all this, and the host at a dinner party or a ball supper generally gives his arm to the oldest lady, or to the distinguished stranger of the occasion, or to her in whose honor the entertainment is given, and this is so far the better plan than there is a far more common sense and the inherent fitness of things for such a choice. But for all this, our elective course opens wide the door to jealousies and heartburnings less likely to assail the born, hereditary conventional precedence, and one of the little and most of the society man or woman is to keep a sharp lookout that nobody is treated with more consideration or respect in this matter than him or herself.

Suppose this little exposition of the ruling passions of society could be read by some intelligent citizen of Jupiter, come down to earth on a tour of exploration, much as Stanley went to Africa, to see how *les autres* lived. He would probably exclaim:

"Why, what a dreadful condition of things society must be! I suppose everybody who can keep out of it!"

And we should reply: "By no means, my dear Jupiter! On the contrary, nearly everybody of average means, education and ambition aspires to belong to society and to have the reputation of belonging to it. It is the only thing to be out of the world, and in that case we might as well be dead."

"Being dead, my dear Bartholomew, would bring you into a great deal of society, and of a very fixed character. We Jupiterians understand more about these things than you do."

"Ah! Hypocrites! Is one of the fads of your society also, is it? Well, it has amused us somewhat, but it is getting a little passe, now."

"Perhaps, you'll be still more amused at it by and by," says Jupiter, and imagining his electric flying machine is off like a shot.

Yes, we all or most of us cling to society no matter how obscure a position we may hold in it, and many of us strain every nerve and keep up all sorts of pretenses to hold our footing there. The young fellow who lodges in a garret at an eat and a cheap restaurant may keep his name on the books of a fashionable club and go to fashionable receptions in suitable clothes; the mother of a family of girls who are all

to be dressed and taught some accomplishments whereby to hold their own in the arena of society's struggles; the unmarried woman of good family but very slender means, who in secret practices a thousand unknown and cruel economies that she may appear in the drawing rooms of her wealthy relatives in a proper gown and well preserved laces. All these, and how many more, are struggling to hold their footing in society, and why? Do they covet pleasure from their snubs and slights, and covert sneers and taunts? Is it joy to these souls to know, or at least to imagine, that everyone they meet is better off and more at ease than themselves?

But the others—these who are really prosperous and assured, who have their own position and are quite able to maintain it—do they find the life of society a life of real joy and satisfaction? Apart from the rivalries—and it is in this more prosperous class that the rivalries have their full swing—apart from the pressure from their snubs and slights, and covert sneers and taunts? Is it joy to these souls to know, or at least to imagine, that everyone they meet is better off and more at ease than themselves?

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WOMAN'S WORLD.

Spring and Summer Fashions Developing—A Host of Ideas for Dainty and Elegant Underwear.

New Styles for Dressing the Hair—Suitable Dresses for the House.

The woman who can do fine needlework can now make her underwear beautiful without putting any other trimming upon it than the labor of her hands. In the stores where specialties are made of trousseaus, and of very fine underwear, all the work is done by hand. Stitches so fine that they seem as if set by the fairies are gleamed over by the connoisseurs, and close closeness with which they are placed is counted as of special value. Handwork is again in fashion on linen, lawn, muslin, or whatever may be the fabric.

Embroidery cottons are used to form the either or monogram that marks who the owner of the garment is, for nowadays a lady does not let indelible ink touch her belongings, but instead her favorite way of writing her initials is wrought out in firm stitches and small letters. On a night-dress the letters are high upon the bust, on petticoats, on the ribbon strings, on chemises on the shoulders, and on undersuits in the same place. As far as possible, garments are cut without seams, but in most instances there are seams, and these are made of the finest material, the fit that is of importance, for "lumpy" underwear will cause your outside bodies and skirt to "set" improperly.

For the woman who is inclined to be stout, or the one who wishes to keep her figure looking as slender as possible, it is best to have the various pieces of underwear so arranged that they will all but disappear upon one's body, and this yoke should be under the bust, on petticoats, on the ribbon strings, on chemises on the shoulders, and on undersuits in the same place. As far as possible, garments are cut without seams, but in most instances there are seams, and these are made of the finest material, the fit that is of importance, for "lumpy" underwear will cause your outside bodies and skirt to "set" improperly.

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dance of dark or fair hair, the hair may be simply combed up to the top of the head, there forming a small coronet, fastened with a tortoise-shell head pin; the remainder of the hair is coiled in an 8 lower down. In front the hair is simply brushed up from the forehead.

When the hair waves naturally, there is nothing to do but to brush it from the brow and temples, leaving only a few frizzles in the centre, and to form a coil at the back, fastening with a tortoise-shell comb, inserted on one side. Another way to form a chignon is to arrange it into three superposed rolls, fastening with hair-pins.

The American fashion of wearing a very high cut of frizzles on the middle of the forehead, coming up over the forehead is not very much admired in Paris; a very light cluster of frizzles is preferred.

A pretty evening coiffure is that which has a fluffy cluster of curls over the middle of the forehead, the hair brushed back in loose waves, and a chignon composed of a number of loops of hair among which are arranged beautiful orchids, forming a lovely head-dress.

Small coronets of wild pansies, roses, forget-me-nots, or pink may-blossoms, are very prettily arranged in the hair, always very much to the back.

Cloth is the material mostly in favor for between the seasons. We have been shown a new style of cloth dress, dress which is slightly ribbed, but much finer than the fabrics so fashionable last year. It is soft and light, and manufactured in all new shades of gray, steel-blue, seaweed, cocoa, terra-cotta, dahlia, and almond.

Foundation-skirts are now quite gone out of fashion. The latest style is to have skirts with silk of a color contrasting with that of the dress. A narrow pinked out ruche of the same silk is added just inside the edge of the skirt.

A very becoming house-dress for a young lady is of finely striped sand and sun-colored woolen material, skirt slightly flared. Bodice plain at the back, round waist, with a few pleats at the waist in the middle of the front. A sun-colored velvet sash goes round the waist, and is fastened with two dog's head loops and long lappets coming down to the foot of the skirt at the back. High collar and cuffs of velvet to match.

The homespun are as usual remarkable for their soft and pliable textures and are produced in checks, in straight and diagonal stripes, and in mixtures. The most popular mixtures are for the most part woven in beige coloring, while the checks display more decided contrasts, such as stone-gray and white, dark-gray and white, and golden-brown and cream.

A charming travelling dress for a March bride unites golden-brown Bengal line. The bell skirt is made with a flared back and a slightly pointed train and a bias band of Bengalina about four inches wide is applied all round the bottom of the skirt, and the dress is fastened in front over a Breton vest of Bengalina that is completed with a standing collar, and coat-laps are allowed below the centre seam. A Medici collar having deeply pointed ends that reach to the neck and is lined with Bengalina. The sleeves rise quite high above the shoulders and are finished with deeply pointed cuffs. A long cloak of the homespun; a turban to match trimmed with loops of Bengalina, and brown gloves, gloves complete a very stylish costume.

While passing through our principal streets one day during the