

WOMAN'S SUPPLEMENT

A FEW PAGES PREPARED TO MY LADY'S TASTE

The Editorial Table

Are Women Barbarians?

THERE is nothing which the man writer enjoys more than an attack on the alleged foibles of womankind. Long before the days of Solomon, the would-be writer of wisdom sat down and took his antediluvian pen in hand, determined to tell woman just how little he thought of her. And woman, even as she does to-day, read the untender screed, whether on birch bark or brick we cannot say, and smiled knowingly at the jibes. She probably came to the conclusion that some sharp-tongued sister had inflicted verbal injury on the caustic scribe, who was giving vent to his outraged feelings in psalm or satire. In fact, man was welcome to say what he pleased about the sex, if he only avoided personalities. However, woman has learned to write, and is sometimes tempted to follow the example of Solomon and others, and revile the failings of the other sex. If the Queen of Sheba were living to-day, she would, in all probability, produce an envenomed stylus, and proceed to inscribe on perfumed tablets proverbs of feminine poignancy, which would make the Solomon brand of wisdom a tasteless article.

About two years ago, a New York magazine published an article by Mr. Arthur Stringer, entitled, "Barbarous Woman," in the course of which the author scolded vociferously on the subject of the follies of women in the matter of dress. The article naturally excited much comment which is going on yet. The editor of *The Bellman*, a Minneapolis journal, not long ago made an attack of a humorous order on the Stringer article, alleging that a writer whose home is in Cedar Springs, Ontario, is hardly in a position to criticize the modern woman's attire. Shortly after the Minneapolis article appeared, a Philadelphia correspondent wrote to the editor of *The Bellman*, expostulating with him for this attack on a deceased writer and declaring that Mr. Stringer and his wife recently met their death "under most distressful circumstances at a New York hotel." Just as the editor was feeling duly remorseful, a letter came from Mr. Stringer, himself, which relieved the editorial gentleman and assured him that Mr. Stringer resided in Cedar Springs, only during the dog days. In his own sprightly fashion the author of "The Silver Poppy" remarks:

"Loth as I am to abjure so idyllic a spot as Cedar Springs, I am coerced into the painful confession that for the last fifteen years my residence has been in New York, that fountain-head of sins, both sartorial and otherwise."

"All women are not barbaric. But I still think it a not ignoble task to draw attention, however antagonistic, to that atavistic trend which threatens to convert the woman of wealth and acquired social position from an apostle of light into a clothes-horse, loaded down with paganistic absurdities."

Frivolous Woman Desired

M. R. STRINGER is very much alive, we are glad to say, although an irresponsible newspaper report of last year gave him to the flames. As to his attack on woman's fondness for fine clothes, the gentleman may as well spare his indignation, for, ever since Mother Eve's sartorial experiment with the fig-leaves, the daughters of the chatelaine of Eden have taken a deep and unflinching interest in the matter of raiment and will continue to do so, in spite of all that mere man may write. Nor would man really wish her to be different. He may say what he likes about her foolishness, but the wise woman knows perfectly well that it does not do to allow man to think that she is actually sensible. Man will admire the sensible woman by the hour, in paragraph or

article, but in practice he regards her from a respectful distance and bestows all the chocolates and roses he has to spare, on the dear little creature, who is devoted to the page which tells of the latest jabots, and who would not know a sonnet from a madrigal. Man will declare that the sensible woman is above rubies, but at an evening party he will devote himself to the most giggly and frivolous young person in the room. And why should he not find relaxation from the cares of the day in listening to the fond prattle of the Gladys or Irene who considers James K. Hackett "perfectly cute" and Billie Burke "simply swell"? This is a dull world for the hard-working, tax-paying citizen, and the sensible woman would make social intercourse too much like every-day work.

If you are inclined to be cynical you may conclude that man is a conceited creature, who likes to feel superior, and consequently enjoys the society of a woman who makes him realize his infinite wisdom and surpassing strength.

Works That Others May Play



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Fashions Reflect Conditions

AS to the charge of barbarity, woman will hardly be disposed to plead guilty. Here we have to fall back once more on what is merely a matter of difference in taste. There is no subject on which opinions differ more widely than on the important matter of wherewithal shall we be clothed and with what trimming shall our garments be adorned. Most of us will admit that women spend too much time and money on clothes, and too often confuse costliness with elegance; but that elaborate care in the matter of attire is "barbarous" is an entirely different charge. It may be admitted that women in all lands take a deep interest in the wardrobe, whether it be clothing or adornment, and that civilization only refines styles and multiplies fabrics. If adornment be barbaric, the decoration of our houses and halls could be condemned in like terms. The aesthetic side of life has the characteristics of the age, and feminine attire is only one of its manifestations. Ours is an age of large undertakings and rapid material progress, and the variety and splendour of the fashion pages reflect the triumphs on the stock exchange and in the real estate market.

Ostentation Not the Rule

M. R. STRINGER, in his rejoinder to the Minneapolis editor, refers to the disastrous effect of the rich woman's example on the woman who can not afford fine raiment. It will occur to many observers of the modes and manners of

the day that a woman who will stoop to what is grossly dishonourable, for the sake of fine purple or jewels, has so little sense of relative values that she is incapable of estimating what possessions are worth while and is really slightly affected by what the other woman wears. Her ambitions, such as they are, are individual and selfishly personal. She is of the class which would urge a husband to disregard everything but material gain in the business world, and would even hold her own honour as a thing of little worth, in comparison with diamonds and the latest make of limousine. She has always been in this long-suffering world, but her tribe is decreasing and she is not going to impede the general progress to any alarming extent. If Mr. Stringer intends to attack ostentation and over-adornment, he will find many to echo his sentiments and enforce his protests. However, it is hardly fair to make all women responsible for the vulgarity of the few. Most women are neither wealthy nor extravagant, but are doing their best to achieve the maximum of distinction on the minimum of expenditure. As to the ostentation of the rich, it is frequently misrepresented by the sensation-mongers of the pulpit or the press, looking for "head-line" material.