

RIBBONS AS TESTS OF CHARACTER.

"Straws show the way the wind blows" declares a sapient proverb. Phrenology, the handwriting, the gait, the voice have all been considered indicative of the peculiar idiosyncrasies which mark varieties of individual temperament, but from a weak-minded feminine point of view, I would propose ribbons as a reliable test of female character. In her selection of colours, the way in which she wears the dainty trifles, the manner in which her hands manipulate the crisp and shining folds, a woman can no more help betraying her dominant characteristics than can the birds of the air conceal the traits that mark the class to which they belong. Trifles light as air, you object, but it is in the trifles that we betray ourselves. By some subtle instinct these gaudy and satiny vanities are moulded to express some fancy or quality of the wearer.

We all know the cast iron sort of woman who ties her bonnet strings in a hard defiant knot. From under that head gear we expect to see cold, clear eyes glancing severely upon the faults and frailties of her neighbours; we are impressed by a conviction that this woman entertains pronounced opinions regarding the incompetence, wickedness and dense stupidity of the world in general and her own connections in particular. There is a perverse sharpness and intrusive egoism whose ribbons stand aggressively upright, like cat's ears; these belong to grim females who indulge in a fashion of snarling likely to make the strongest nerves quiver, the stoutest heart fail, people who give voice to their venom in sentences barbed with gall. There are fatally pugnacious ribbons that appear to be animated by a spirit that, like the war horse of the Scriptures, "scents the battle from afar," and others again that betray a critical, irritating, inarticulate yet plainly expressed comment upon the conduct of everybody's affairs. Pert, piquant rosettes and pompons announce the success of prosperity and the arrogance of happy youth, that frisks in mere gaiety of heart; there is a mathematical preciseness of those who bask serenely in the sunshine of their own personal approbation. We have tender recollections of broad ample bows, tied under a comfortable chin, beneath a countenance shrewd, cordial and sympathetic. When the loops droop with melancholy limpness, we quite expect to find a mildly plaintive individual who makes piteous and forlorn appeal to all the world and who expects the soothing balm of flattering commiseration to be unceasingly administered. There are adornments which are always feeble imitations of another's fancies. The bows that would fain be piquant and only succeed in appearing vulgar and saucy are those that, missing the airy, capricious grace at which they aim, degenerate into silly effrontery, the heavy attempt of maturity to counterfeit youth, the tawdry efforts of penury to resemble wealth.

There are dainty ribbons which look as though they have been wafted into place by a breath of wind and appear never to have been touched by mortal fingers that are quite as redolent of coquetry as the most transparent sighs, blushes and shy glances. These have been fashioned by women who are the real sovereigns of men's destinies, enchantresses who, by virtue of some gift of tact or grace, without striking beauty or brilliant talent, win hearts without an effort, keeping them or casting them away with an easy grace which is always irresistible. The soft cushiony women wear ribbons that are always in disorder and yet appear just as they should be. You may depend upon it such persons possess a power of harmonizing incongruous elements, which is a most useful faculty for enabling one to glide through life with unruffled serenity. They are the easy-going souls who extract all the good out of circumstances and resign themselves to the inevitable evil with cheerful equanimity. Loud and glaring tones of colour betray vulgarity of taste so plainly that no one can be mistaken on the subject. Loose, ruffled bows that generally perch under one ear when their natural resting place should be under the chin, the long streamers that float contrary to the dictates of Fashion, the crushed cascades and kinkled

ends that are dotted about wherever it is plainly apparent that they can be neither of use or ornament, can only be worn by foolish and irrational creatures.

It can be accepted as an axiom, that a mean woman never yet arranged an effective knot of ribbon. The promptings of nature are stronger than those of art, and even though possessed of all the fat of the land and all the corn of Egypt, such people cannot part with the smallest scrap of anything without grievous pangs of heart. Regarding parsimony as the greatest of virtues, as a matter of conscience, they draw the loops up tightly in order to save a morsel, and clip the ends the minutest fraction too short. They exult in having saved an eighth of an inch, and utterly fail to comprehend that they have succeeded admirably in ruining the appearance of the ornaments.

Montreal.

BLANCHE L. MACDONELL.

RED AND BLUE PENCIL.

Mr. H. J. Woodside, of Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, writes me, in reply to a query about "The Cholera Doctor," that he was likely the individual to whom Mrs. Moody refers in "Roughing It." This was a Yankee, and no one knew his name; but he made no secret of his treatment, which was to anoint the cholera-stricken with a paste of lard and maple ashes, and then give them draughts of hot maple syrup. He was very successful in his treatment.

Everything linked with Acadia seems to be hallowed in the Lower Provinces. Thus, all the engines on the Windsor & Annapolis Railway—117 miles long—bear the names of the chief spots in the Land of Evangeline, such as the heroine herself, Gabriel, Gaspereau, Grand Pré and Saint Eulalie. The latter is called from Judge Weatherbee's orchard, which likely was so named after Longfellow's lines:—

Sunshine of Saint Eulalie was she called, for that was the
sunshine
Which, as the farmers believed, would load their orchards
with apples;
She, too, would bring to her husband's house delight and
abundance,
Filling it full of love and the ruddy faces of children.

A writer in the New York *Tribune* notes that no really great hymn is sectarian. The masterpieces of Charles Wesley could be used in the services of the Roman Catholic Church just as some of Faber's beautiful hymns are used in Protestant Churches. Churches may curse each other in their prayers, but in their hymns they can all come together and forget for a time the views and creeds that keep them asunder.

Here is a delightful proof from F. R. Havergal, which every churchman will read with ready approval:—

The memory of a kindly word
For long gone by,
The fragrance of a fading flower
Sent lovingly,
The gleaming of a sudden smile
Or sudden tear,
The warmer pressure of the hand,
The tone of cheer,
The hush that means "I cannot speak,
But I have heard!"
The note that only bears a verse
From God's own Word:—
Such tiny things we hardly count
As Ministry;
The givers deeming they have shown
Scant sympathy;
But when the heart is over-wrought,
Oh, who can tell
The power of such little things
To make it well!

Mr. J. A. Chisholm, of Antigonish, makes the following query, which I submit to my many bookish readers: "Would you please inform me through the medium of your paper whether 'The Voyage of Captain Pompanilla,' a satire by the late Lord Beaconsfield, is still in print? It was first published in 1828, and I have been so far unable to ascertain that copies of the work are now procurable."

My esteemed correspondent ends his letter with these following words, which, as editor, I

believe are not wholly undeserved: "You are to be congratulated upon the excellence of your journal, and it is pleasing to observe that you do not neglect matters of especial interest to your patrons in the Lower Provinces." Yes; chiefly do I keep track of your literary work which has always generously responded to me—the magisterial Duvar; the gifted Roberts family; the three muses, Elizabeth Roberts, Hattie McLennan and Sophie Almon; Bliss Carman; W. J. Alexander; Blake Crofton and T. Allen Jack; the Lockharts; Barry Stratton, and the Honourables W. S. Fielding and J. W. Longley.

Mr. W. D. Lighthall sends me the following question and reply:—In conversation with our representative, says the *Portland Transcript*, on his birthday, John G. Whittier inquired as to the identity of "Pastor Felix," whose series of confidences in his "Heart on the Sleeve" have attracted the attention of all readers of that charming paper. Mr. Whittier expressed his admiration of the style and spirit in which these essays are conceived and executed. "Pastor Felix" is the Canadian clergyman, Arthur John Lockhart, whose book, "The Masque of Minstrels," was lately noticed in these columns.

Referring to a suggestion that Mr. Grant Allen should be secured as a professor in Toronto University, Mr. J. Antisell Allen, of Kingston, his father, says:—"No position or emolument could induce him to exchange his beloved England for Canada. There was a time when this might have been, but not now nor henceforth. Canada suffered him to seek elsewhere what was denied him in the land of his birth." This is ungracious. Canada owed and owes Grant Allen nothing more than to any other of her writers, nor more than she did to Albani, who takes pride in returning and displaying her sweet voice for the enjoyment of her countrymen.

TALON.

THE WAILING SEA.

A VILLANELLE.

Discontented, wailing sea,
Murmuring at the shore's confining,
How alike thou art to me!

Chafing to be wholly free,
Is this the cause of thy repining,
Discontented, wailing sea?

Strong the Hand restraining thee,—
But folly all thy weak designing:
How alike thou art to me!

Thy rebellious passions He
Beholds against His will combining,
Discontented, wailing sea.

Wilful—selfish is thy plea
Of rocks and land thy bounds defining:
How alike thou art to me!

Than in place contented be,
Thou'd still God's plans be undermining:
Discontented, wailing sea,
How alike thou art to me!

Toronto.

WILL T. JAMES.

PARTURIUNT MONTES.

EPIST. AD PISONES, V. 139.

We smile, O poet, when we hear thy line
By pedants quoted, and applaud the wit
That makes the metaphor time-honoured fit
Each new occasion as by fresh design.
Yet to the mighty Architect divine,
Who slowly built the mountain stage by stage,
From base to summit, to withstand the rage
Of fires that strike and fires that undermine,
More precious than yon huge sky-pointing mass,
And surer witness of His sovereign power
Are those wee feet that stray amid the grass
And shake the dew-drops from the waking flower.
Montes parturiunt. From out the strife
Of suns and ages came this gift of life.

JOHN READE.

MONDAY EVEG.

MY DEAR LESPERANCE,—I send you the issue of my latest parturition. If you think it worth a corner, it is yours, as I am

Yours ever,

J. R.

The transposition in the penultimate line is *metri causa*.