

# THE Ladies Pictorial Weekly.

EDITED BY

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## Shall Women Propose.

Some bachelor has been exciting himself on the question "Shall Women Propose?" and I have been asked what I think about it. Well really the necessity for thinking about it has not yet occurred to me. But the matter must be taken into consideration. As to its expediency I cannot say, not having as yet put the matter to a practical test. But I should imagine it would be a very brave man who would refuse any lady who should do him such an honor. As to its advisability—that seems to me a matter depending on the lady's anxiety to get married. As to its propriety I fancy that in this, as in every other matter, each woman is a law unto herself. A four-foot woman would require some assurance to ask a seven-foot man to marry her, while on the other hand, a Juno-like maiden could graciously and becomingly extend her hand to a masculine pigmy beneath. As to its rightness or wrongness, if a man can reconcile it to his conscience to ask a woman to take shares in an unlimited responsibility concern, a woman need not feel backward. She at all events will do her part. The point of the query is this: Any man can ask any one of the millions of girls in the world to marry him, while his sister is limited to the one, two, or a dozen men who may propose to her. Numerically the man has the advantage. He is the earth and she the mustard seed. But when the choice is made they are even in the matter of number, and then she has got the earth and he a mustard seed. The reversal in positions is often sudden. But seriously speaking—it is difficult in leap-year to speak seriously on such a topic—there are fewer matters needing reform than this and fewer likely ever to get it. The iron rod custom will never blossom into forgetfulness of male prerogatives until

"The pole-star sets, and the waves are still,  
And you hear the voice of the whippervill,  
With the voice of the ice-berg blending."

## Visitors to the Sanctum.

AND of course everyone who came in before and after taking Patti talked of her. The tenor of their remarks varied in accordance with whether they were going to hear her or not. In the former case they were disparaging; thought there were plenty of other as good singers in America alone; fancied she was played-out; insinuated that she owed her reputation to her charm of manner; asserted that she was not considered a musician in Europe; considered five dollars too steep for one evening's doubtful pleasure, and so on. In the latter case they were enthusiastic as becomes those who have purchased the right to be critical. It is curious how the moment one buys a ticket for anything one begins to praise it up. One feels a sort of proprietary interest in it, and one is bound to shew others that no mistake was made as to the attraction of the affair.

And after?

The same phenomenon was visible. People who paid five dollars were not going to let those of us who had not it to pay fancy that they had not got the worth of their money. So it is pretty hard to tell whether they were really pleased or not. Some people would despise the musical performances of an angel. Her—but there is no scriptural authority for a female angel is there?—well—his "phrasing" would no doubt be faulty, and the performance in the light of modern criticism would probably lack tone. But Patti's eyes are finer than Bernhardt's, some one, told me, and "her voice's music—call it the well's bubble, the bird's warble."

ONE can get Browning for everything.

"Do you know where those lines are from?" I looked to ask Flips and Moosey. (The one is as likely to know as the other.)

Of course they did not know. So then I stopped writing of what my visitors thought of Patti, to explain to them that Browning's drama, "A Drop on the Scutcheon," had in it this little song.

"There's a woman like a dewdrop,  
She's so purer than the purest,  
And her noble heart's the noblest,  
Yes, and her sure faith's the surest.  
And her eyes are dark and humid  
Like the depth on depth of lustre,  
Hid 't the harebell; while her tresses,  
Sunnier than the wild-grapes cluster,  
Gush in golden-tinted plenty  
Down her neck's rose-tinted marble.  
Then her voice's music—call it  
The well's bubble, the bird's warble.  
And this woman says: "My days  
Are sunless and my nights are moonless.  
Parched the pleasant April herbage,  
And the lark's heart's outbreak tuneless,  
If you love me not"—and I, who  
("Ah for words of flame!") adore her,  
Who'am mad to lay my spirit  
Prostrate palpable before her,  
I may enter at her portal soon,  
As now her lattice takes me,  
And by moontide, as by midnight,  
Make her mine, as her's she makes me."

Very few women read Browning, for some reason or other. Plenty of men do, or say they do, but women read Mrs. Browning if they read any of the family. Why is it? What poets do you read anyway?

Why don't you come and see me and tell me all about everything? I am always in the Sanctum in the mornings. I am there in the afternoons too, but I am not in the same beautiful state of mind in the afternoons. Good temper is not warranted to last all day. And you know I consider my letters visitors too so, "if you can't come write." This column is open to exchange opinions and stories—anecdotes I mean. Whatever else the Sanctum is it is truthful.

THE Brownings' did not "collaborate" much did they? That seems to be a recent device of the evil one. Of course collaborating varies according to circumstances. I know a girl who wrote a novel in conjunction with a young man. I asked her one day how they managed it and she said:

"Well we worked at it together, don't you know?"  
Word about, or sentence about, or chapter about?  
"Well not exactly—He wrote all of it but—"  
"What on earth did you do then?"  
"I shewed him how—some parts."

BUT to go back to music. I read somewhere the other day something—I forget exactly what—about the way people sing now-a-days. But as a matter of fact they do not sing now. They rather execute passages and render selections. We are too dreadfully concerned with the work going on behind the scenes, the past, present and future of the performer. It has long since ceased to be a question of whether we like artists or not, but whether they are artistic, trained, and five hundred other things. We are "accustomed to tracking the human voice through the mazes of far-fetched modulations, to noting its disappearance under complicated instrumental currents, and its sometimes painful efforts at re-appearance on the surface of this musical whirlpool." We are long unaccustomed to music that sings.

I WENT IN for a moment to a certain scholarstic institution with which I was once connected. I intended to pay a long visit. On the very threshold I was met by the following remarks:

"Oh Scissors! Here's the Editress!"  
"How pensive she looks?"  
"Here are ten poems I've been saving for you."  
"Do you want a sub-editor at ten thousand a year?"  
"What will you take for a sermon from me?"

Do you wonder I turned and fled out into the rain and the wind? Hereafter the institution can come to me. No one ever desecrates the Sanctum by a pun and none ever shall. I have spoken.

I SAT in the Sanctum all morning waiting for some one to visit me but everybody is down with *La Grippe*. I did not feel like writing and the music of type-writers is not calculated to lull one from the woes of the world. So I grew gloomy, a state of mind so unusual that I rushed and got a pen to describe how I felt. There's no telling when I might ever be gloomy again, and some time when I wanted to describe how the heroine felt after the hero had exhibited signs of alcoholic tendencies, or the hero experienced when the heroine danced six dances with the other man, I could utilize my own feelings, I should then be sure of a reliable description. That is no excuse for my making you gloomy, you say, but I cannot help it. You have got to take your writers "as you do your meals as they are dished up to you." It's no use your groaning. You have got to listen because there's something funny in it, but I won't tell just where, because then you would skip to it. Now look for it.

### GLOOM.

AN ORIGINAL ESSAY BY THE EDITOR.

When you are gloomy, the sun need not bother shining because you don't care whether it shines or not. The fact that the day is raining is regarded as only part of the general place of nature to crush joy out of your life. So much for the weather which is of no account at all with a person whose conversational ability is as brilliant as that of the author. When gloom reigns in your heart there is no room for any one else to reign there. Your dear Bessie

or your devoted Charlie as the case may be, are not in it for the time being. (This is no pun, the author does not indulge in puns when she is gloomy). There is likewise no pleasure to be derived from the sound of the dinner-gong. Eating is only one of the disagreeable necessities of living. Nor does the sight of your new ball-gown convey any raptures of anticipation. You rather reflect on the wreck it will be after its debut. Old letters make you weep. New ones suggest answers. To stay in is despair, to go out suicide. Blue sky is an insult. You can supply enough blueness for a ruin. You loathe your friends and feel murderous towards your relations. Aimability on their part is maddening, while ill-treatment is just what you would expect from them. Dismal prophecies haunt you. Everything bad that has not yet happened is sure to happen. Life holds no happiness in store for you. The low opinion you have been holding of yourself is now confirmed. You are not surprised that Jones called you a prig and that Miss Dimples said you had big feet. Even remarks about your temper are regarded with gloomy satisfaction. All is dark dense gloom "No pause, no change, no hope, yet I endure." The end.

You don't think there's anything funny in that? Neither do I.

A PROPOS of the article in this issue on "Shall Women Propose," it is said that Patti proposed to her husband. He said to her one day.

"All Paris says we are engaged."  
"Well said she," why not?"

The distinguished wife of the famous M. de Lessop has also conquered her feminine prejudice to that extent. Mrs. Hopkins, the millionaire widow and her husband Mr. Searles, and also the Baroness Purdett Coutts, are other examples. I should like to know what some of my other visitors think about the matter.

Madge Robertson

### Mushrooms.

Poisoning by mushrooms is generally caused by the disregard of very simple points of observation. In the first place, no one should undertake to gather these excellent foods without being fully informed as to their shape, color, odor and taste. There are many books giving all these in detail, and in various parts of the writer's works the most minute cautions are specified. Here it need only be said that any mushroom which looks clean and fresh, is not worm-eaten, has pink gills under a buff-colored cap that turns dark when bruised or matured, has a nutty taste and pleasant odor, may be presumed to be good. Mushroom gatherers avoid fungi growing from what is called a vulva or hollow cup at the base of the stem. The writer's test, after noting the above characteristics, is to taste a small portion of the cap without swallowing it. If the flavor is sweet and nutty, and does not sting or burn the throat, the specimen, even if unknown, is placed among the candidates for cooking. Some salt is always carried, and a little is held in the mouth for a moment; still a little more is swallowed, care being taken not to swallow a particle of the mushroom. When the mushrooms are gathered, they should all be carefully washed in water containing salt. These precautions all insure safety. In fact, when poisoning by any kind of fungi has occurred, some carelessness of choice or preparation has been noted. Old-fashioned cooks usually relied upon using a silver spoon when cooking suspicious fungi; but the test has not been proven infallible. In case of actual poisoning use the same treatment as for narcotics, i. e., emetics, stimulative restoratives, and the earliest possible attention of a competent physician. It may be said in passing that mushrooms are far more important as an article of food than is generally understood. They rank next to meat in savor and nutriment, having largely replaced it in the South during the war.

Too many people fail to keep a proper supply of scissors in the household. It is false economy to allow a single pair to do all the work. The work-basket should be furnished with long, slender shears for general cutting, short button-hole scissors to do their own work, and a pair of small scissors for general use. There should be a special pair of scissors to clip papers, if any of the family keep a scrap book, as nothing injures scissors so quickly as to use them to cut paper and cloth indiscriminately. In the country you want scissors to cut flowers. There should always be a pair of scissors in the kitchen for trimming lamps and for various other uses there. Neither scissors, knives nor any other steel instruments should be heated, because in doing so you run the risk of taking the "temper" out of the instrument, and if once out, it can never be restored. The fact that the "temper" is gone is shown by the steel turning blue. An experienced cutter can sharpen an instrument which has lost its "temper," but it will not remain sharp for any length of time, and the process of sharpening needs to be repeated indefinitely and frequently, until it becomes burdensome.

THE ORIGIN OF THE THIMBLE.—It is said that thimbles (which are claimed as a Dutch invention) have been found at Herculaneum. The etymology of thimble is from thumb-bell, as it was formerly worn, like sailors' thimble, on the thumb. The Germans call the thimble "finger-hut" (finger-hat). A silver thimble is a very small thing, yet it takes more than twenty men, besides a great deal of machinery, to make one. The manufacture of thimbles was introduced into England from Holland in 1695, by John Softing.