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Mary M. Murphy, Managing Editor

Jean Blewett, Companion Editor

Katherine M. Caldwell, Food Editor

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Jean Blewett's Own Page

The Need of Mothering Sweet Sixteen

"MY MOTHER knows everything about books and music, ologies and isms, but not a blessed thing about girls," retorted Sweet Sixteen, in answer to my somewhat irritable: "It is to your mother you should go for advice when you get into difficulties." Silence between us while she peeped into her vanity case, adjusted her hat and patted a curl in place. Then: "My mother is simply wonderful. I could ask her about ideals, philosophy, clothes, a career, but not, for instance, about this letter-writing mischief—for mischief was all I meant—or what to say to a boy who wants to kiss me—" this last with the blush of innocence and youth—the loveliest thing in the world. "May Brown's mother listens to May's talk about these foolish things and laughs with her just like another girl, but my mother is so far above me I get that lonesome! She ought to pull me up with her and hold me there in spite of myself, or else come down to earth and sort of cuddle my silly little secrets out of me like May's mother does." Her voice had tears in it, very temperamental is Sweet Sixteen, and very, very, dear.

When They're Women in the Making

SHE SLIPPED HER HAND IN MINE and of course I let her talk away after that. She told some things that made me want to laugh, others that made me want to cry, and ended up with: "One thing I've determined on when I have girls of my own, I'm going to be one of them and know all they're up to in the matter of books they read, beaux they have, and—and that. Every night when I say my prayers (mornings too, when I don't forget), I ask the Lord not to ever let me stumble into anything I'll be ashamed to tell those girls of mine. Isn't that a dear idea?"

It was a dear idea, though our modest grandmothers would doubtless have deemed it improper.

"When they're little tads they won't need a great deal of attention," she went on, "dolls, playhouses, and picture books will absorb them; and when they're grown into real women they'll not be so much on my mind, but the 'between time,' you know what I mean, when they're too old for dolls and too young for—for the beautiful things ahead of them—that's when I'll stand right with them and let everything else go by the board, because," with a soft sigh for the mothering she herself is missing, "that's when they'll need me most, when they are women in the making."

Slipshod Speech of the Present Century

A TEACHER JUST BACK from her holidays called to see us this week. She is a Kent County product, a graduate of Chatham Collegiate—both of which things are to her credit—and possessing a personality so interesting it explains her success along her own line of work. Her talk was not of the holidays just ended, but of the task about to start. I love the enthusiasm of a busy person. It is a tonic in itself. On our enquiring what new feature she was introducing into the daily round this season she cried:

"Oh, I must tell you about our 'King's English League.' It has over fifty members, with officers, rules, etc. It has for its object the fostering of correct speech. Yes, it began with my pupils—I'm proud of my progressive young folks. There was an idle, unmanageable lad—the idea really emanated with him. We made him vice-president and he is proving a good one. I'm president and manage to throw most of my work on him. My dear, he loves being consulted."

"The speech of the present generation is extremely slipshod. If it is not corrected in youth it will never be corrected. Our League has a short session each Tuesday and Friday for the discussion of 'Mistakes We Make.' I wish you could be a mouse in the wall at one of these meetings and hear the queries put to me."

"We have a question drawer for those too bashful to speak out in meeting. You may have read this funny paragraph:

"'Speaking of mistakes often made,' began the teacher, 'Would it be correct to say: I will learn Mary her lesson?' Mary shook her head vigorously. 'Now,' continued the teacher, well pleased, 'Can you tell me why it would not be correct?' 'Because you can't learn me anything, that's why, teacher.'

"It originated at the first meeting of our League. As I never spoil a good story for the sake of relationship I had to tell it. Some of our mottoes are quite striking. The vice-president has hung a few throughout the school. How is this?"

"Conserve! See how many 'Aints' you can cut out this week."

"Can the adjectives. Evaporate the superlatives."

The Widow's Laddie

He would go, they could not keep him, for he came of fighting stock,
Long his widowed mother pleaded—he was firm as any rock.

"I'll come home again," he told her. "I'll come home again some day."

Laid his cheek to hers and kissed her, said good-bye and marched away;

Louder than the soft voice pleading, "Laddie, laddie, bide at home."

Was the shrill voice of the bugle and the deep voice of the drum,

Calling to him in the meadows and the harvest fields of home;

"Come, lad! Come, lad! Come, come, come!"

His face was like a maiden's face, so smooth it was and fair,

The laughter in his eyes of grey, the sunshine in his hair;

But a man's heart, true and gallant, beat beneath the tartan plaid.

And a strong right arm he boasted, did the widow's bonnie lad.

O, the battle field is gruesome with its dying and its dead.

And 'twas to the field of battle that the shrill voiced bugle led,

Calling to him, ever calling, and the deep voice of the drum:

"Come, lad! Come lad! Come, come, come!"

Where the fighting had been fiercest, as the sun sank in the west,

Did they find the widow's laddie with a bullet in his breast,

And his smiling face turned upward. Did he dream at last—who knows?—

Of his mother's kiss of welcome—lying there in kilt and hose,

With the gold hair gleaming brightly underneath the bonnet blue,

And the tartan plaid laid gently o'er the heart so brave and true—

Stilled forever. With death's coming did there fall upon his ear

Music that he loved to list to? Bugle's challenge loud and clear?

Thrilling, stirring, sweeter, shriller, and the crying of the drum:

"Come, lad! Come, lad! Come, come, come!"

Calling softly through the shadows, calling sweetly through the shadows:

"Come, lad! Come, lad! Come, come, come!"

JEAN BLEWETT.

"Do you belong to the 'I done' and 'have went' family? Look out!"

"Stop trying to murder the King's English."

"By their speech ye shall know them."

"Spare the slang and talk sense."

The idea is so good we are happy to pass it on.

A Western Writer in Search of Material

MISS ANNE MERRILL is a Canadian writer overseas in search of material. She is a young woman full of surprises. She settled herself in her own particular editorial chair on the Edmonton Journal, as if she meant to stay there, made her Woman's Page a power for good. Then came the war, with its upheavals and changes, and from the newest part of the new world, that lovely city overhanging the Saskatchewan Valley, to the old world, black with the smoke of battle, went our Anne. The fact that she looks on ancient things in open-eyed western fashion and tells of them with a

lightness and breeziness peculiarly western, makes her work most attractive. One of her letters contains the story of how Colonel Seymour of the Canadian Army, out-argued the Dean of St. Paul's. It is so good it will stand repeating. The Colonel had asked and received the Dean's consent to deposit five flags in the Cathedral. His next step was to invite two ladies to take part in the ceremony. Would Lady Perley, wife of the Canadian High Commissioner, and Mrs. Page, wife of the American Ambassador, place the flags in their historic resting-place? They would. He hurried to the Dean with the good news. "What!" cried the great man, who like St. Paul of old, had his own opinion of woman's sphere, "If I were to allow women to officiate at a ceremony in St. Paul's it would establish a precedent."

"Women are allowed to take part in the ceremony of baptism," argued the quick-witted Colonel, "so let us look on the flags as babies at the font, with Mrs. Page as mother and Lady Perley as godmother." And so it was settled.

Be Not Guilty of the Crime of Dowdiness

THE STOUT WOMAN who tells herself that all the nice styles are designed for her slender sisters, and that it does not matter how she herself dresses, as nothing looks decent on her, makes a mistake. She is not excluded from the attractive styles. Many of them are made especially for her. She can, by judicious choice of a costumer and taste in the selection of style and material, be well and becomingly dressed. This year, in fact, some of the nicest fashions—the surplice bodice, the sleeveless jacket, the coat dress, the chemise blouse—seem made for her especial benefit.

Color has much to do with how well or how ill the stout woman looks when her dressmaker or tailor gets through with her. Bright shades draw attention to her size, dull ones detract from it. Let her beware of dowdiness, remembering always that among woman's rights is the right to be just as good and just as good-looking as nature and the grace of God can make her.

The Popular Sinful Slanders of the Day

A PORTION OF A LETTER just received from one of Montreal's lovely daughters now a member of the Women's Army Auxiliary of War Workers Overseas, runs:

"For the sympathy you have shown the W.A.A.C.'s during the baptism of slime and mud they have been treated to I want to thank you personally. Not that we let the lies told of us as a Corps depress us unduly. We were too busy for that. 'The country we serve will see that we are righted,' we said, and sure enough the country did, promptly and powerfully. Male slackers who had been snubbed started the slander, and women—well, you know what Kipling says about the female of the species being more deadly than the male. We were tipplers, we were unsexed and immoral, so they said with winks and grimaces. It hurt, we cried a little when we had time, which was not often; but nobody worth while believed a word of it. Now, what I want to ask you is why should a certain type of man or woman try to smirch the purity of workers who have proved themselves over and over again? From France, my fiancé, a lieutenant in the trenches writes: 'A true soldier is sure to be maligned. . . . You see, we have both been under fire and must love each other all the more.'"

Calls the W.A.A.C. Splendid Women

SO WIDELY DID THE unfounded slander spread that the Government had it investigated, by a Commission of Enquiry. This Commission went through all the W.A.A.C. camps, subjecting each to a rigid examination. Its report is in our hand.

"The charges rest on no foundation whatever. The W.A.A.C. is a body of healthy, cheerful, self-respecting young women conscious of their place in the struggle and zealous in the service."

"As a Commission we find that these women have played their part admirably in the Empire's hour of need. As regards the British Army to-day, the nation has as much right to be proud of its splendid women in the auxiliary force as of its men,—which is the highest appreciation that can be given."

Good for you, my little friend in uniform! And for all your trusty corps. And the Lieutenant in the trenches is a man after my own heart.