

Woman and Her Work

I scarcely know whether old bachelors are as much out of date as old maids now, but somehow I scarcely think they are; the latter having changed within the past ten years into the alert, business-like thoroughly up to date "bachelor woman" but who ever knew a bachelor long past his prime who was not convinced that he had only to ask and have the most charming girl of his acquaintances, or who was not seriously convinced that every beautiful and wealthy widow, every blushing debutante, and every mother with marriageable daughters was "making a dead set at him!" The older the bachelor the more convinced of his own attractiveness does he become, until after sixty it is scarcely safe for a woman to be commonly civil to him lest he should suspect her of harboring some kind of design upon him; and his life is spent in concocting plans to defeat the various schemes he is sure are being hourly laid to deprive him of his liberty. Curious to relate this dear old soul seems to curiously underestimate the attraction of younger men and it is really amusing to watch him when in their society. Should a charming girl pass, of their acquaintance, he never for one instant doubts that the bright blush and sweet smile accompanying her bow are tributes to his manly charms, instead of those of handsome Charlie, or athletic Dick beside him. I suppose a lifetime of self worship has made him that way poor soul, and he is scarcely to be blamed for his little ways, but they are funny to the looker on, all the same.

I cannot quite endorse all that is said about the meekness, humility, and general tendency to self effacement of old maids for I have known many who held their own valiantly in the world, and utterly refused to be effaced by anyone, but one thing is quite certain—they are under no pleasing allusion as to the position they stand in with regard to young girls, and carefully avoid placing themselves at a disadvantage by entering into competition with them in any way, this showing their good sense, and avoiding many a snub and heartache since girls are far more cruel to older women, than young men are to the elders of their own sex, and are not slow to let the old maid feel her position.

The bicycle season is here once more, and the gay bicycle maid is out on her wheel and arrayed more gloriously than ever, for the swiftest of modistes, and the best of ladies tailors have been laboring unceasingly to add grace and beauty to the cycling costume which has not been considered just what it should be as far as beauty is concerned up to the present time. Sad to relate, the goal does not seem to have been reached yet in spite of all the improvements that have been made in the past two years.

True superfluous material has been discarded, skirts shortened openings skillfully defended against possible accident, and mysterious combinations of buttons and elastic have effected wonders in the management of a skirt in a high wind; but yet the costume which can really make a figure of generous proportions appear to advantage on a wheel has still to be invented! If we could only be like brave soldiers and always keep our face to the foe we should do well enough, but alas we can't, and it is the back view that is so trying. Opinions vary greatly as to whether women in general look well on wheels; for my own part I have seen but one, who was really at her best on her wheel; and but two or three who looked well when wheeling. There is something about the knee motion which is fatal to grace, and poetry of motion. A great deal depends upon the costume, I know, and any woman who wants to make the best possible appearance when cycling must pay strict attention to her dress. It seems to be generally conceded that the divided skirt more nearly approaches grace than any other when on the wheel, but off the wheel it is hopeless, and for that reason many object to it, since a costume that would prevent one from wheeling to a picnic or attending any gathering at a distance where it would be an advantage to be able to make use of ones wheel, and yet where a more correct costume than the divided skirt, would be required. Therefore many designs in bicycle costumes have come out this spring and the wheelwoman has her choice.

Simple circular skirts are preferred by many women to the more elaborate models, and these are merely cut shorter than the ordinary walking skirt and lined with silk just across the front in order to make the movement of the knees easy. Other designs show skirts plaited in front, or made with double sides independent of the

back so that they fall on each side of the wheel. These would probably be rather heavy and cumbersome for summer, but another model is divided half way up the middle of the back, between the plaits, and lined with pieces of the same material, hemmed on the bottom and cut large enough to allow the skirt to be drawn on like trousers. This is said to be perfectly secure in the strongest wind and to hang perfectly when walking. Each skirt is supposed to have its separate merits, but generally there is very little difference in effect between them; it is the jacket that gives individuality to the suit, and the variety in style, cut, and mode of trimming is simply bewildering. Serge covert cloth tweed, and venetian cloth are the favorite materials just now, but for warm weather there are the daintiest and coolest of pique and lined suits. The jackets may be either loose or tight fitting but they must be short, and the cton or bolero shape is very popular. Close fitting double breasted jackets which only reach to the waist are very desirable as they do not catch the wind, and annoy the wearer by blowing nearly off when she has to face a strong gale. A pretty costume of tan cloth is made in this style, and has black silk revers and collar, large smoked-pearl buttons, and a vest of white lawn frills edged with yellow lace.

Another jaunty little jacket of this style has a queer little coat tail at the back, a pointed front, and rows of black braid forming a belt finish on the edge.

A very swell cycling gown is of fawn cloth with facing of white moire on the coat. White drill or pique may be substituted, and made to button on, so that it can be removed and laundered.

Another, a loose sacque, coat is perfectly straight and loose in the back, and the revers are piped with white and arranged to button across or be left open.

For the daimel who likes a rather striking costume when she sallies out on her wheel, is one of green tweed with two points of white cloth set in the skirt just at each side of the centre of the front breadth, at the foot. These points are trimmed round with black braid in military fashion, and the same idea is carried out in the coat, which is a jaunty little mess jacket with slightly pointed fronts trimmed up each side just where the last dart would be in a bodice, with the same design in braiding and opening over a vest of white sarah; a wide linen collar, and a scarlet tie finish the costume.

Another costume which is very stunning indeed but too conspicuous for good taste, is of deep red cloth, the jacket having revers, collar and cuffs of black and white striped silk, and a waist belt of white kid. A black tie spotted with white, is knotted loosely under the revers. These very fancy costumes are neither ladylike nor serviceable, and another model, a brown tweed with eton coat: the revers of which are edged with tan cloth and finished with rows of narrow black braid, is far more trim looking, and in many better style. A very fresh and pretty summer wheeling dress, is of white pique made with strapped seams, the revers and cuffs covered with pink pique edged with white braid.

A coat that bids fair to rival the eton, is the short belted Norfolk jacket coming about four inches below the waist and having a belt of light leather running under all the plaits except the one in the back. It can either be made loose like a coat or as close fitting as the wearer wishes and is often made with a yoke having three short points in the back outlined with braid. Another belted coat is of navy blue serge, fastening close up to the throat with but one reverse, which, with the collar and cuffs is of white cloth covered with rows of narrow blue braid.

The latest and best authorities on cycling garments assert that it is quite impossible for any woman to have the proper ankle motion which is absolutely essential to enable her to indulge in long trips, without fatigue, if she persists in wearing high laced boots. The only proper foot and leg coverings, which give absolute freedom to every muscle and sinew and allow a free circulation of the air which does much to stimulate and refresh the rider. Anyone who has gone for a long walk on a mild day wearing high, tight cloth leggings will remember the feeling of miserable dis-

comfort experienced, the almost impossibility of walking and the heat and constriction; and will understand what I mean. Golf stockings do away with all this, and are quite as desirable as far as trimness and modesty are concerned, covering the leg quite as effectually as either leather or cloth.

The latest cycling gloves are made of silk or cotton net, in tan, or white, and with leather palms to make them durable. The up to date cyclist also carries a cycling fan which has a cycling party painted on a white satin background; but what earthly use she can find for such a ballroom trifle, is a mystery.

ASTRA.

MORRID AND NEEDLESS.
Everybody can Make Some Friends If They Care to try.

The old doctor impatiently threw down the book of poems which he had been reading. 'It is one long groan from cover to cover!' he said. 'Not a living creature, apparently, appreciates or loves the woman who writes it. Our literature is full of such despairing cries for sympathy. They recall an odd little incident which happened when I was in Italy years ago.'

'There is a church, Santa Croce, in Florence which is known as the Westminster Abbey of Italy. It is filled with the tombs of her great rulers, poets and painters. They crowd the church and the quiet cloisters which encircle a shady square outside. Walking one day in these cloisters, I found in one corner a grave over which was a marble slab with the inscription in Italian:

'To the memory of a woman who was greatly loved.'
'Beneath it were the words in French, written with a pencil: "O woman, who was greatly loved, pity me, whom no one loves."

'A handsome young girl sat near under the trees, a book in her hand. Her fashionable clothes her whole air and bearing, showed ease and prosperity, but her face was sullen with discontent and gloom. I noticed that she looked at me keenly as I turned after reading the words, and could not avoid the inference that she had written them, and was looking at me to note their effect. Just as the woman who wrote these poems has sent out in them a prayer for sympathy.

'I was busy for a brief time sketching a sculptured angel over the tomb, and while I stood there several tourists passed and read the pencilled words.

'Ah, poor creature! they would cry and express their pity in every modern tongue. The gloom deepened on the girl's face with each word. She evidently believed herself banished and barred among human beings, set apart to misery and solitude, and pined herself with all of her soul.'

'Presently a wholesome English girl, with her brother, paused and read the writing. "Nonsense!" was her sole comment.

'What do you mean?" the man cried, indignantly.
'The writer of that must be a grown woman. Why should any woman not a lunatic be friendless? This world is full of honest, good people. Let her go to work and make herself beloved. It is her own fault if she stands alone.'

'She passed on, and I saw that the other woman had risen and was looking after her with flaming anger in her eyes.

'I never saw either of them again, and I do not know whether the chance words bore any fruit; but whenever I read such morbid, sickly cries for pity as these poems, I remember the brief sermon of the English girl in Santa Croce.'

THE UNIVERSAL POET.
Longfellow May be Regarded as Such if Popularity Counts.
An incident described in the Independent by Prof. E. A. Grosvenor gives a striking illustration of the fact that Longfellow's poems have sung themselves into the hearts of men and women of many nationalities. The incident occurred in 1879 on board the French steamer Donai, bound from Constantinople to Marseilles. We condense the description.

One evening, as we were quitting the Straits of Bonifacio, some one remarked at dinner that though Victor Hugo was born in Paris, the earliest impressions of his life were received in Corsica, close to which

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we were passing. One of the party spoke of him as the exponent of what is best in humanity.

The Russian lady exclaimed in English to the gentleman who had last spoken: "How can you, an American, give to him a place that is occupied by your own Longfellow? Longfellow is the universal poet. He is better known, too, among foreigners, than any one, except their own poets. Then she began repeating:

"I stood on the bridge at midnight,
As the clocks were striking the hour,
And the moon rose o'er the city
Behind the dark church tower."

She added, "I long to visit Boston that I may stand on the bridge."

In the company was an English captain returning from the Zulu war, a typical British soldier with every characteristic of his class. As soon as the Russian lady had concluded, he said, "I can give you something better than that," and began in a voice like a trumpet:

"Tell me not in mournful numbers
Life is but an empty dream!"
His recitation of the entire poem was marked by the common English upheaval and down-letting of the voice in each line; but it was evident that he loved what he was repeating.

Then a tall, lank, gray-haired Scotchman, who seemed always communing with himself, suddenly commenced:

"There is no flock, however watched and tended,
But one dead lamb is there."

He repeated only a few stanzas, but apparently could have given the whole poem had he wished.

For myself, I know that my contribution was "My Lost Youth," beginning:

"Often I think of the beautiful town
That is seated by the sea;
Often in thought go up and down,
The pleasant streets of that dear old town,
And my youth comes back to me."

A handsome, olive checked young man, a Greek educated and living in England, said, "How do you like this?" Then he began to sing:

"Stars of the summer night!
Far in your azure
Hide, hide your golden light!
She sleeps!
My hair sleeps!
Sleeps!"

The captain of the Donai was not her regular commander, but an officer of the national navy, who was in charge only for a few voyages. To our astonishment, in accents so Gallic that one discerned with difficulty that he was attempting English, he intoned:

"Zee seeds of meet fair valence fast,
Ven trough an Alpen redness past
A youth, who bore meed snow and ice
A banair veed des strange devesce,
Excelsior!"

Nons of the other passengers contributed but already six nationalities had spoken—Scotch, Russian, Greek, French, English and American. As we rose from the table and went up on deck to watch the lights glimmering in Napoleon's birthplace, Ajaccio, the Russian lady said:

"Do you suppose there is any other poet of any country, living or dead, from whom so many of us could have quoted? Not one. Not even Shakespeare or Victor Hugo or Homer."

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