

Woman and Her Work

Christmas will be here in such a short time that I question very much whether many of us have our preparations for that festive season in as forward a condition as we would like. Christmas never fails to take us by surprise, and this year the autumn has lingered so long with us, that it is impossible to realize the nearness of the great feast, but before we are half ready it will be here. I suppose the year never passes that we do not make valiant resolutions never to be caught this way again, but to start our presents not later than October, and be able when Christmas week arrives, to fold our hands in elegant leisure and contemplate with a quiet mind the result of our industry, safely stored away in the lower drawer of the spare bedroom-bureau: all ready to be tied up into neat parcels and sent away to the fortunate people they are intended for. And— if I may judge by my own experience, Christmas almost invariably finds us in the same predicament when next year arrives. It is really so hard to get Christmas presents for one's friends, so difficult to find things which will really be of some use or pleasure to them, and still be within our means. I know I see scores of things that are just exactly what I want to give my friends every Christmas, but they so seldom conform to the exigencies of my pocket that I dare not give them a second thought, while all the articles within my reach seem either of inferior quality, or doubtful utility, so I am torn by conflicting emotions and in a state of chronic indecision until the festive season is fairly over.

It is comparatively easy to provide gifts for one's female friends and relatives, but it is our male belongings that cause us heartburnings at this season; what to give a man—"ay, there's the rub." If he smokes one naturally thinks of a tobacco pouch, since they are always wearing out, and a new one is acceptable at any time. Some loving, but ignorant wives and sweethearts even go the length of thinking that a pipe may safely accompany the pouch since men always seem to need as great a variety of pipes as of boots, but here these dear innocents make a great mistake since no woman ever yet chose a pipe to suit a man, any more than she ever chose a box of cigars that he could smoke. There are just a few things in which we have been tried and found utterly wanting by the sex which worships us, and the ability to cater for a smoker's tastes is one of them.

Somewhat a man is always more pleased at receiving the most trifling bit of her own handwork from a woman he cares for, than the costliest gift she could purchase for him; the thought that it was his from the first stitch she took in it, that she must have had him in her thoughts all the time she was working is as flattering as it is delightful, and the feeling seems to last as long as the article itself. It is always safe to give a man a pair of worked slippers; I have yet to meet one who did not consider them the acme of luxury, and far more comfortable than any slipper that can be bought; and besides that the man can never be made to realize that the giver has not worked all the gorgeous flowers or intricate designs herself, so he regards the result as a triumph of genius and is delighted accordingly. If you do not feel like having the slippers made it will not make the least difference to him, he will take them proudly to his bootmaker, only too glad to have such trophies to display, and cheerfully pay whatever that worthy may choose to ask for putting them in wearable shape. Of course it is much nicer to send them already made up, since one would naturally shrink from giving a friend a gift which would entail expense upon him, but it is quite a common practice to give both vest and slippers in their crude state.

I don't know that I would recommend any woman to waste her time in working neckties for her male friends, such very beautiful and fashionable ties can be bought

so cheaply that I often feel one is really condemning a man to martyrdom in expecting him to wear our crude efforts in that line; it is really much better to spend the money that would call for in some good double breasted and crocheted him a tam o' shanter in his chosen colors, for of course he belongs to a curling club, every one does now. A crocheted, or as he will call it a "knitted" vest is always an appropriate and very handsome present for a man but then it is not only expensive but calls for a greater expenditure of time and real manual labor than most of us can spare. A really useful as well as a pretty present for a man friend is a muffler or neck scarf made of fine black silk in one of the close soft weaves that are like pongee except for a fine twill. Such mufflers are made the full width of the silk, which is hemmed on the edges the ends being finished with a two inch hem-stitched hem. A yard and a half of silk is sufficient for a full sized scarf, and it is most comfortable as a protection from the bitter winds of winter when folded inside the storm collar of ulster or overcoat.

After these useful things comes the inevitable handkerchief and necktie sachets which we are fain to fall back upon when we cannot think of anything else, the photo frame, the handkerchiefs worked with his initials, which are always appropriate and always gratefully received; the card case, and the cushion for his armchair or sofa. There is not much use in working an elaborate pincushion for a man because he simply has no use for it, I don't believe I ever knew a man who really used a pincushion! he generally slips it into his top drawer and resorts to the old convenient plan of scattering the pins broadcast over his bureau, where he can find them easily even in the dark. To the woman, on the other hand, a pincushion is always a welcome gift, provided it is sufficiently pretty to have an excuse for existing, or original enough to make its ugliness pardonable.

Some of the newest fancies in pincushions this year are really worth describing. One is composed three cat-tails tied together with green satin ribbon; the cat tails are of course not real but made of brown jersey cloth in the exact shade of the real article, and they are equally accurate copies in size and shape, being stuffed with lamb's wool, cotton wool is always a mistake, as the pins refuse to penetrate it—and the pins stuck into the wadding. These pincushions are put together by mounting the little rolls which represent the tails, on stiff round sticks wound with dull green ribbon, they are then firmly fastened so they will stand up like a miniature five o'clock table, and the fastenings concealed by the bow of green satin ribbon already mentioned.

Curiously the glass of fashion is inclined to reflect home made presents this year, and the very latest wrinkle is to make your Christmas presents yourself! The home-made card case is a fitting example of this fad, and if you are neat, and clever enough to make a card case for one of your girl friends, you may be sure she will appreciate it thoroughly. The task is not really difficult requiring more neatness than skill, and if a piece of genuine old fashioned brocade is attainable, it is the very thing you want. No stiffening is used in these card cases the object being to have them as soft and pliable as possible so they can be tucked into the muff, or the shallow pocket that ornaments this season's jacket. If the brocade is impossible to get, the next best thing is the real French upholstery silk which is brought out in all the conventional designs. I do not think I could possibly give more explicit directions for making, than to advise anyone undertaking the feat, to spread out her own leather card case upon the table, and copy it as exactly as possible in the silk. If the material is too thick to make seams practicable the back and pockets may be neatly basted together, and then bound with narrow satin ribbon the binding being machine stitched and, which not only holds it more firmly, but gives it a very workman like appearance when it is finished.

If you are at a loss what to give your friend, decide on a bag, for this is essentially the year of bags of every kind and description. I heard of one lady who had actually made thirty bags for her list of Christmas presents; there are work bags, scrap bags, duster bags, skate bags fan and slipper bags, laundry bags, and work bags. All of these except of course laundry, scrap, and duster bags, are now made with an oval shaped stiff bottom, and sometimes the work bags have a nice frame, covered with chenille to keep them in place. Some of the work bags are lovely, positive works of art, and they should be indeed a joy to those who receive them. One, of stiff brocade, had pink flowers on an ivory ground. It was gathered very full on the stiff oval bottom, and the wire framing which held the ful-



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This is a charming little story, and if there was only a little more deception of that kind in the world, it would be a pleasant place to live in. I really feel that I should enjoy giving that rather a good platonic hug.

It was at one of the musicales which the most fashionable singing teachers in town now give to their pupils that the following incident occurred. These musicales are supposed to give the parents of the pupils a chance to judge of their progress and to accustom the pupils to sing in public. Of course these concerts are strictly invitation affairs, just one may send flowers to show his appreciation of the honor of being among the favored ones bidden, and it is usual after each song for the ushers, chosen from among the guests, to struggle up to the stage laden with exquisite bou-

Two of a Kind.

Blenheim People talk for the Public Good on an Interesting Subject.

Our representative interviewed Mr. J. Holland, the popular shoemaker, Talbot St. with the following results. Said Mr. Holland:

"Speaking of myself I have had severe pains in the small of my back, in both



sides and between my shoulders for over seven years and I was also troubled with urinary difficulties, dizziness, pain in the head, etc., so much so that I could get but little sleep, and frequently got up as tired as when I went to bed, and feeling totally unfit for work.

"I got a box of Doan's Kidney Pills and they have cured me of all my kidney troubles. They have taken away the tired feeling, built up my system, and made me feel like a new man.

"My son James, now 13 years of age, was attacked four years ago by malaria, which left him with severe pain in the back and weakness of the kidneys. He has been troubled in that way ever since, and until he took Doan's Kidney Pills could get no relief, but they have cured him entirely.

"It is no wonder that I speak highly of these remarkable pills, for they are undoubtedly the best kidney cure in the world, seeing that they cured both myself and son in such a short time."

quets for the lucky damsel who has just done up the aria or ballad that was down for.

As the famous teachers rarely give lessons for nothing, most of the students are well to do, as their gowns and the gorgeousness of the flowers sent them proclaim; but their are exceptions. It was the exception that caused the incident.

Fifteen of the twenty girl students named on the programme had already sung with more or less success, some so frightened that their voices seemed far away, some with taste and purity of tone. There had been duets, trios, glees, and many solos, principally love songs, which these ambitious maidens sang with much fervor for art, but little for love. The gold and white concert room was more picturesque than usual, with the girls, mostly in fluffy white, seated in a half circle on the stage, the flowers heaped up along the footlights.

It was the moment for the little exception to sing. She was from the South. Her brother, the only one of kind or kin to her in New York, sat well back, in an agony of nervousness for fear of her breaking down, and with an aching heart on account of the certainty that she was the only one of all to take part that [did not have a bunch of flowers waiting to add their sweetness to her success. In his misery he positively scowled at a charming girl on the stage, a contralto, who had just received much honest applause and at least a dozen superb bunches of American Beauties. His sister, the little exception, was about to begin, however, and he fastened his eyes upon her.

She was very small, thin and dark, and there was something about her trock that was not right, but at the first note of the accompaniment a change came over her, her eyes grew wide and luminous, and the little face was transfigured. Clear, limpid, with the flexibility of a Melba, the young voice rippled out. When she began there was only her brother in the audience that cared; the moment after they were all her friends. As she finished, her hands, which she had held tightly clasped, dropped limply at her side, and a great storm of applause burst from the house. She gave a quaint little bow and looked over to her teacher. Then she went back to her seat; but the applause kept on and on, and she got up again to bow, while an usher came rushing down the aisle with a huge bunch of roses and lilies. When she took it nobody could doubt the happiness her success had brought her. It positively radiated from her, and they all applauded still more.

When the concert was over many people

crowded up to be introduced to her. Her brother stood near, no longer scowling.

"Why did you send me such superb flowers, Dick?" she whispered. "You know you couldn't afford it."

"I didn't send them," said Dick. "I'm not there a card!"

The happy little exception shook her head and was introduced to someone else.

At a short distance the girl of the many roses was talking to a group of friends; but she said good night as soon as she could.

"I am so tired," she murmured to her father. "Let us get away."

"This is Miss B—, I think," he said.

"Yes," she answered wearily. He handed her the card.

"This came with some flowers," he said apologetically, "that arrived for you after you had sung, and there was no chance to take them up to you."

She tore open the envelope, and looked at the card. The weariness went out of her face on the instant and she glanced up, smiling.

"Where are the flowers?" she asked.

The usher hesitated.

"I am very sorry," he murmured, "but they seem to have been given to the little girl with the big voice who hadn't any."

She looked at him keenly and then laughed.

"At least you had conscience enough to save the card for me," she said softly.

"Good-night, Mr. Paul Jones."

"Then," said the usher "as he told [the story afterward, "for once I said the sort of thing I usually think of the next day. 'I suppose,' I answered, 'you mean to call me a highwayman off the high Ca.'"

"Just exactly," she said her eyes dancing.

"But you are wronging Mr. Jones," he went on, wanting to keep her a moment more. "He was no pirate, but a gentleman with a Government commission and honour in poetry as the 'knight errant of ocean.'"

I am sure that you did not mean to pay me a compliment.

"I humbly beg Mr. Jones' pardon," she said, avoiding my question.

"Have I your forgiveness?" I asked.

"She flashed her eyes at me and murmured 'Yes,' as she turned away, which was very good of her," ended the usher. "For I'll bet a hat those flowers were from her best young man."

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