

The Domain of Woman.

TALKS BY "TERESA."

Judging by the majority of the "Women's Columns" one reads in the newspapers whether Catholic or Protestant, dress-making and cookery would seem to be the sine qua non of a woman's existence instead of being merely comparatively unimportant essentials in the great business of life.

I have no intention of underrating the value of a thorough knowledge of how properly to prepare food, on the contrary I think it a branch of knowledge upon which every woman having the care of a family should be well posted; and yet, the majority, in this country at least, are sadly behind-hand in such matters.

But when one is constantly having recipes for the latest "confection" in bonnets, and the newest gastronomic novelty flaunted in one's face it becomes a trifle wearisome, and the question is apt to occur itself, whether after all women are capable of interesting themselves in other questions besides cookery and dress.

Of course they are. The real reason for such namby pamby "Women's Corners" etc., is to be found not in the woman who reads, but in those who write them.

Really good women writers, that is, those who write exclusively for their own sex are comparatively rare, and those who do exist are speedily snuffed up by a particular paper, which secures their services to the exclusion of every other.

There is a wide field at present for the ordinary common-sense woman who possesses any gift for writing, and is willing to use it.

What we want is some medium between the extremes of inanity and frivolity, and the absurd striving after privileges that should belong only to men.

But it seems to be a singular fact that the average woman of brains is the very one to display the greatest enthusiasm in the direction of what is generally termed the emancipation of woman. The latter day clever woman will spin out columns of "copy" about the tyranny and selfishness of man, the necessity for woman suffrage, the injustice of excluding woman from Parliament and the religious ministry etc., "copy" that editors generally fight shy of.

It never seems to occur to these modern Amazons that there are any abuses to remedy within their own particular sphere. The domestic servant question is one that only women can deal with, but how many of them trouble themselves about it? They have a mission to reform the world, but it never strikes them that the best way to accomplish their object would be to begin at home.

It is the story of Mrs. Jellyby and flannel shirts for the natives of Borrioboola-ga over again? These enthusiastic ladies want to get into Parliament and help to pass the laws for the Government of the country, while the children are to be left to govern themselves the best way they can.

How are our children growing up? This is a question that concerns everyone whether they are parents or not. Our children are the future citizens of our towns the future governors of the country, theirs are the minds that are being moulded for good or evil.

How are they growing up? I am afraid that is a question to which we cannot give a very satisfactory answer as concerns the children of the middle and lower classes.

Every year children are becoming more unruly and more difficult of control; the majority of the parents allow them to do pretty much as they like, they are allowed to run riot in the streets until a late hour at night, and impudence and rudeness are common, while the impressionable children are thereby rendered "smart." In many cases the mother's authority is made almost a dead letter by the father's foolish encouragement of such impudence and disrespect.

In many families the mother is referred to as "the old woman," and I know of one family in which the girls refer to their father as "old so-and-so." These are not Catholic families, I am glad to say, and to the full brightness of spring, hoping, waiting, and submission to the will of God.

But there is one item in the bringing up of our children, in which the Sunday school teachers are more nearly concerned, and that is, their behaviour in church. I am sorry to say that the children of the poor especially are sadly deficient in reverence, indeed their conduct at times calls for the severest reproof. Of course children are restless, everyone expects that, but when they openly misbehave themselves it should be the duty of those sitting near to check them.

They must be taught that the Church is a place in which to amuse themselves and that when they go they do so to worship God, and not to talk and laugh and play tricks upon each other.

I have often wondered at the apparent apathy of people sitting in the same pew with children whose irreverent conduct deserves reproof, in not checking them.

No matter if the children are strangers it is the duty of older people to see that they behave properly in church; it is a duty that we owe to God and to the children themselves, who otherwise do not realize the wrongfulness of their conduct.

Anyone who allows a child to behave in church offers an insult to Jesus Christ, in whose presence they are, not only by allowing the conduct to go uncorrected, but also by their own indifference.

THE MANCHESTER FIRE ASSURANCE COMPANY.

Report of the Directors

Presented to the Shareholders at the 78th Annual Meeting, held at the Company's House, 94 King Street, Manchester, on Friday, the 2nd April, 1897.

The Directors have pleasure in presenting to the Shareholders the report of the operations of the Company for the year 1896. The Net Premiums amounted to £731,497 15s. 6d.

The Losses, including full provision for all unsettled Claims, amounted to £131,523 5s. 4d., or 17 1/2 per cent.

THE BALANCE SHEET. After paying all Claims, and other Liabilities, the Balance Sheet shows a surplus of £600,000 0s. 0d.

Dividend carried to Funds, as per other side, £1,000,000 0s. 0d.

AN INTERESTING DIVIDEND. An interest dividend of 2s per Share was paid on the 15th of March, 1897.

Following the latter came a couple of grumblers who fancy themselves ill used, and the poor priest listens to a long catalogue of grievances.

The prospect of introducing a Society for the relief of the poor on the top of the church debt is not a very inviting one, and the unfortunate clergyman is obliged to cool his visitor's ardour by gently pointing out the quantity of cold water over the projected society.

There is an end of the golden dream, they don't think of working on their own account, they want to see wonderful results at once, the idea never occurs to them that each one of them might speak to someone and get them to join and speak to others in their turn, and yet that is the way most of the new societies are formed.

Surely you can not upon your own responsibility sometimes. It is impossible to say at first how new ideas will turn out in actual practice. It is the results that tell, and if a scheme has not the makings of success in it, nobody's influence can make it succeed.

There is a delicious promise of spring in the air, in the bright sun, and the feeling of exhilaration almost make one look upon winter as a thing of the past, yet the old gentleman has not quite removed every vestige of his presence.

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AUDITORS' REPORT.

To the Shareholders of the Manchester Fire Assurance Company. We have examined the books, accounts, vouchers, receipts, and vouchers of the Manchester Fire Assurance Company for the year ended 31st December, 1896, and in our opinion the foregoing Balance Sheet is a true and correct statement of the Company's affairs.

ASHWORTH, HOSLEY & CO., Chartered Accountants, Manchester, 2nd March 1897.

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