



A Dining-room With Beamed Ceiling and Field-stone Fireplace.

For Those in Need.

Another kindly reader has sent two dollars to help anyone in need. I shall spend it on food for a family whose breadwinner is sick. Thank you!

HOPE.

The Ingle Nook.

[Rules for correspondence in this and other Departments: (1) Kindly write on one side of paper only. (2) Always send name and address with communications. If pen name is also given, the real name will not be published. (3) When enclosing a letter to be forwarded to anyone, place it in stamped envelope ready to be sent on. (4) Allow one month in this department for answers to questions to appear.]

THE SUPERWOMAN.

At different times, when almost on the verge of beginning to give you, in these columns, a series of sketches of the lives of the famous women of past centuries, I have been brought to a halt by one uncompromising, uncircumventable fact: that the fame of so great a majority of them has hung upon their connection with some man. The story has been chiefly a love-story, and not always a creditable one—brain-power expended upon intrigue; manoeuvrings for clandestine meetings; power dependent upon a curl, or a winning flash of the eyes, or a facility for adroit flattery;—tell of these and you have touched all the high-lights, with little else that history has thought worth while to hand down.

And so I have hesitated, again and again. Personally, one may read of these things without feeling at all affected, yet one must realize all the hazard of recounting such histories in a public magazine; and so my series has remained broken, and I have been confined to let it include only those against whom conventional or morality can direct no disdainful finger.

The point I am coming to is this: that these last women, whose lives have been so above reproach that all the details of them can be told in a magazine which penetrates into the strictly moral

atmosphere of the farm home, have been almost invariably of the Victorian and Twentieth Century era. The Nell Gwynnes and Lady Hamiltons, the Du Barrys and Madame Pompadours and Louise De La Valieres, have given way before the on-coming of such women as Florence Nightingale and Otavia Hill; Elizabeth Barrett Browning; Jane Addams, Madame Curie, and Dr. Montessori.

True, we cannot sit in judgment too severely in regard to the ephemeral ladies of past ages. Their time had much to do with making them what they were. With all the interest of higher education denied them, brought up with the idea that they were meant to be men's pets and playthings, and that their only chance of mounting to positions of power

and social importance lay in affixing their destiny to that of some man of pre-eminence, it is scarcely to be wondered at that so many of them gave themselves up to the mad whirl, and the greater marvel is, perhaps, that any truly fine and good women were to be found among them at all.

However that may be, comparing the recognizedly great women of to-day with those to whom reference has been made, it seems clear enough that womankind has been evolving, and that rapidly enough. It cannot be denied, perhaps, that the unbending conventionality of modern times—with its contemptible, despicable double standard, which winks at that in a man which it hisses at in a woman—has had something to do with stifling perhaps natural impulses in many

a woman, and preventing a repetition of some of the stories of the past; and there are those who argue that such repression is not always altogether good, especially for the woman of marked ability. But the broad general sanity of the world says not so, and to the thoughtful it appears clear enough that repression may not be a bad thing for a woman, or for a man, that there are inner graces that grow from it, and that by acceptance of it must the vast order of the world be maintained. Self-sacrifice is always worth while if it tends to the world-good.

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And so we begin to wonder about the woman of the future, the superwoman who shall arrive as surely as the superman.

Love? Yes, she will love as woman must always love, but she will realize to the full that, in the words of Olive Schreiner, "whoso takes a love not lawfully his own gathers a flower with a poison on its petals." For the sake of the world, though not, perhaps, for her own, she will not tamper with that poison.

Nevertheless, in the day of the superman and the superwoman, this will be a temptation continually lessening. It will be realized that the less people think about sex the better, and so there will be more concentration on other things,—on public service, on the development of pure and beautiful art, on the acquirement of knowledge with all its vast, illimitable interest. Then, when love comes, it will be a real love, not a mere muddling of physical confusion driving into marriage which may prove to be all wrong. Men and women who marry will be companions because mentally equal and seeing eye to eye, and companionship is the true test of the love that lasts. To quote Olive Schreiner again: "There is a love that begins in the head and goes down to the heart, and grows slowly; but it lasts till death, and asks less than it gives."

Nor need it be feared that this shelving aside of the sex problem as the greatest thing in the world will give rise to a race of cold and bloodless humans. Once sex is recognized as a mere incident, bound up only with the short span of human life, it will take its true place, honored, yet subservient to vaster issues, accomplishing all that for which it exists, yet overshadowing not at all the great reasons for the existence of the human race. True love will be by no means thrown aside; the difference between it and that which so often obtains will be that between the short, fierce conflagration that burns speedily out, leaving but ashes in its stead, and the pure, rippling river, bright with heaven's blue, that goes on and on forever, bringing beneficence to all that it touches.



A Home-like Living Room.