

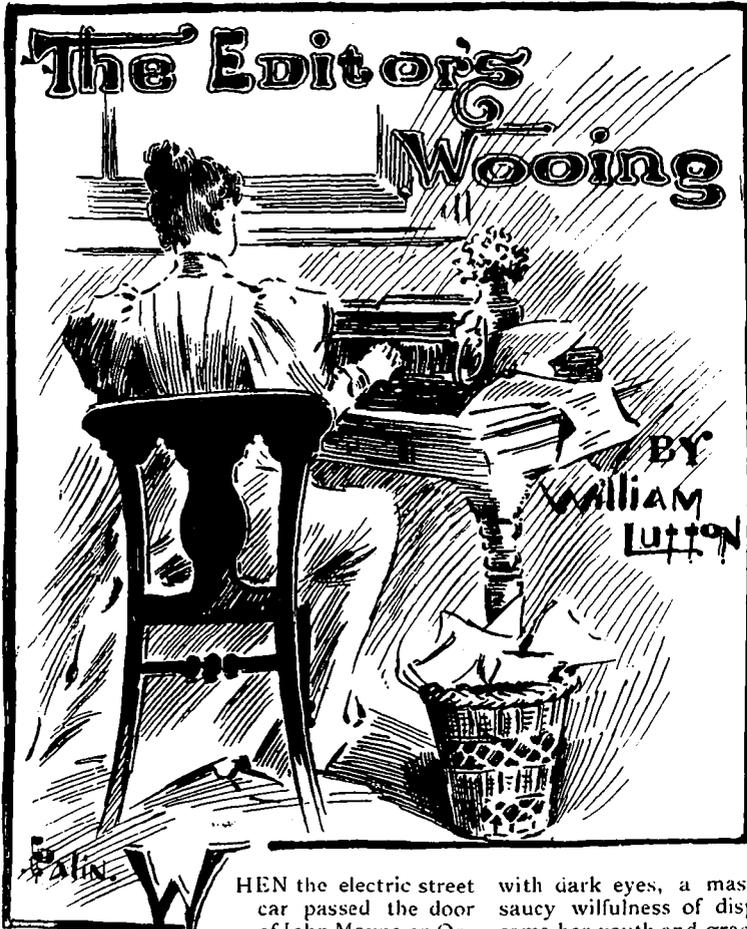
# THE LADIES' JOURNAL

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For the Ladies' Journal.



WHEN the electric street car passed the door of John Mayne on Ontario street, Montreal, the old man looked sorrowfully at his little bit of garden. "A brutal prose has robbed you of delight," he murmured. "Here was a little poem to gladden an otherwise barren street. Here was benediction when the bald highway baked, and burned in the hot glare. Ah, my pansies, my hyacinths, my marigolds, no wonder you tremble, no wonder you lament. This thing they call rapid transit is the barbarous Cossack who ravishes innocence in her retirement, trampling beauty and repose beneath his iron heel. Ah, my little garden, you and I are out of date. In a world where there is no longer leisure, and where the struggle of life constantly deepens in ferocity, what room is there for simple old people like you and me? The modern invades and overwhelms us. First, they covered the street with asphalt, which is as unimaginative as a door nail; then they put up the electric light, which has murdered the poetry of the shadows—populous with dreams and fancies to the young imagination—and made bathos of the divine sadness of the moon; and now listen to the shriek of that trolley; see that devil's fire

with dark eyes, a mass of saucy wilfulness of disposition which well became her youth and grace.

When her parents died old John Mayne, her uncle, and his wife, took the orphan girl, and made her their own. A nature less pure and good might have been spoiled by the love which the childless couple lavished upon the young girl; but Esther grew up to womanhood with a loving heart, a simple faith, and a nature unconquerably optimistic. When Mrs. Mayne died, which event occurred when Esther was seventeen, the latter became more than ever endeared to the lonely old man.

"And suppose they do," said Esther, answering her uncle. "I like beauty, but I like progress better, I think. The electric car is the symbol of progress. I believe in giving the people power, satisfied that every community and nation will ultimately be bettered by the use which the people will make of it. I believe in the ballot for men, and—but there, I won't say women, uncle," and Esther laughed merrily. "I know that is one of your horrors. I think I would like to have the power to determine the character of the men who make the laws which affect my life, and under which I must live."

playing like the frightful gleam of the eye of Lucifer; note modernity with its ruthless crunch, crunch—ah, my poor trampling pansies!—Ugh, you brute!"

As the old man apostrophized the passing car, with a knitted brow, a soft voice said, "Why, uncle, you are at it again; but, there, I know you'll never adopt modern conditions, whereas I am modern from head to foot. But then you were brought up in the country, while I, instead of hearing the whistle of the robin, have been greeted since childhood with the screech of steam."

"The next thing they'll do will be to parcel out Mount Royal in town lots." The old man spoke fretfully, pursuing his own thoughts, and not answering the soft voice.

The owner of this voice was Esther Mayne, a tall young woman of twenty-one,

"Go on, go on," said the old man gloomily. "I expect to hear that you will want to ride a bicycle next."

"Well—no," was the slow reply. "I have thought this thing out, and I have decided that the bicycle is not graceful. A woman should before all things be graceful. Her status, her influence, her power, is determined by the degree of gracefulness to which she attains. We have worn some monstrous things, I admit, but the costume which makes cycling safe for women must always be a horror to every æsthetic nature. I do not ask what men think of it. I know in my heart that it is a barbarism. No, uncle, I shall not consent to make myself ungraceful in order to keep a fad in countenance. But I am for equal, moral and civil laws, and I am just dying to show the men how much better we would vote than they have voted hitherto. Your garden is very well, dear uncle; I love to tend the flowers, too; but give me Edison as the incarnation of the spirit of the age. But there, uncle, it is not a disquisition that I care for just now, but a concrete fact. My application to the Editor of the Montreal Despatch has been successful. He has offered to make me his secretary—whose duties will be to take charge of his correspondence, and do a little shorthand and typewriting."

The old man's face brightened at once. "This is good news, Esther, and I congratulate you. You know I never wanted this; there is enough for both of us; but I admire your spirit of independence, which is typical of our young country, and I wish you success."



AH, MY POOR PANSIES.