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[FOR THE CRITIC.]

LETTERS TO COUSIN CARYL.

Dear Cousin Caryl.—What a prophet was there, my cousin, when Victor Hugo said this was to be the woman's century. Do you know I don't believe there will ever be so much said again about Woman with a big W as there has been in the 19th century. Not, bless you, that I have any idea that women are going to expire in a burst of vain glory at the end of another decade and be so committed to oblivion, not that. But coming generations will be born into a world that recognizes the God-given right of every mortal to be what he or she can be best, and will not need to be branded with the fact before it is patent to them. It is wearisome in these days, at times, to hear and see women's struggles to get shackles free, and there seems a little danger now and then that the duality in life will be overlooked, and that it must be either men or women. Not so, it must be men *and* women, or women *and* men, in the world. But the danger will pass over. All reforms have to be over accentuated to impress them on ground that is never too fertile. Because civilization's march is a slow one, we cannot afford to leave any inspiring tune unsung. And it is not to be wondered at when the insignificant allies—as women have so long been dubbed—do excellent work in building redoubts against humanity's enemies, or in fighting them after the earthworks are up, or in hoisting truces when peace and not war is for the best good of all concerned, that then the singing is loud and long.

There is no question but that, in the larger field of what is fast coming to be recognized as a legitimate field of action for all who can climb unto it, women are going to make mistakes; they are going to attempt to do too much, perhaps the wrong thing altogether. This is just what men have often done. There is nothing criminal in a mistake if it is not persisted in. All women can do everything, though there be few things, if any, that some women cannot do, and now that there are so many things a woman may do, it is none the less essential to select one's special line of life work with the utmost care. It is usually safe to do what one wants very much to do, providing always it be a righteous thing in itself. The way follows the will. It is necessary, however, to make sure the way is a righteous one. The question of moral responsibility is one that all young lives especially should be taught to face intelligently.

The matter of "woman's rights" always brings up the eternal truth that the women are the mothers of the race. It is fast being conceded that a woman can be a good mother, a good woman and not a good cook, just as a man can be a good father, a good man and not a good shoemaker. But that not every woman can be or should be a mother is a species of heresy to a good many ears still. Immodest modesty is to blame for a good many evils in this world of ours, and among them prominently is the evil of being an unfit father or unfit mother to children. I should wrestle with son or daughter of mine to prevent them marrying if they were in bodily or mental or moral ill-health, as with a plague. Every mother's daughter or father's son should use their influence to prevent the transmission of physical disease, mental weakness and moral obtuseness, and yet there are people who take no thought of their responsibility for the blot on life's fair surface.

An cutting dress—yes, flannel by all means, at least some wool stuff. Anything more unsuited than cottons to picnics, boating, any out-of-door excursion is hard to find. Behold the picnicker who goes forth in the morning arrayed in all the freshness of a freshly "done up" cambric, muslin or what not that is cotton, and behold her again upon her return, limp and unfestive as you can well think in attire. Get a fine flannel or serge, Caryl, either with a very light ground barred off with lines of color if you want a dressy frock and not for steady service, or else a blue flannel. Make with a plain skirt (on the bias if you use the plaid) either plaited or gathered, and a "reefer"—that is a short jacket with notched coat collar and faced fronts, as on a man's coat, with coat sleeves. Have a wash silk, or thin flannel shirt blouse for a waist made with shirt sleeves and a rolling collar. Wear a soft silk scarf under the shirt collar knotted in front, a wide sash of the dress goods about the waist, finished off with knotted fringe across the ends and a small sailor knot. This is white with a light suit, blue with a blue dress, and may have merely a flat band about the crown, or a jaunty bow at one side; this bow, by the way, is a marvel of deftness to make; it has ten loops with two ends, notched, and is arranged in a rosette tightly strapped through the centre. In place of the soft silk or wool shirt, the regulation man's shirt—with starched bosom, standing collar and glossy linen cuffs is worn under some reefer coats, but it is not so pretty for a picnic or where there is to be so much exercise, as in rowing, tennis, bowling, etc., as the French flannel blouse with shirt plait down the front.

Why if you made fish-balls right they would not go begging for favor. Try this way of doing. I learned it at the cooking school last winter: Soak a piece of dry codfish in cold water for 10 or 15 minutes, then shred it fine, enough to fill a cup solidly full. Now cut potatoes—raw—in quarters and put what would fill a pint measure into a stew pan, put in your picked fish and cover with boiling water; boil until potatoes are done. Now drain, wash, add one egg well beaten, and beat the whole mixture up lightly with a fork, putting in one salt spoonful of pepper. Shape with a spoon, roll in powdered cracker crumbs—not flour—and fry in hot fat. For the latter purpose have a deep dish of fat, and use a wire frying basket. The fat should be smoking hot, remember. When you put potatoes and fish on to boil, put potatoes in pan first, and fish over them. You will find these fish balls, I know, delicious.

By the way, the ordinary way of "frying" in a greased pan is atrocious for anything but flap-jacks. Have a deep kettle of fat for croquette, fish-balls, etc., as you would for doughnuts. Have also a frying basket, a cheap affair of wire netting that you can lower into and lift out of the fat with all