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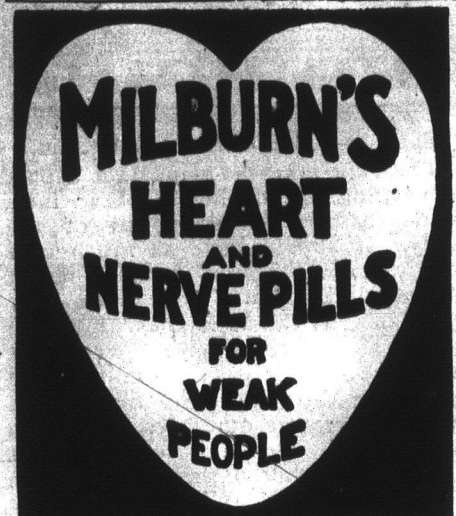
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Woman—The Eternal Scapegoat

[Written especially for the "Western Home Monthly" by a woman.]

If the ventilation of an evil is the first step towards its removal, then are we surely on the high road to social progress! Never since the world began was the potter so great. Daily and weekly and monthly we have exposures, small and big, put before our eyes in language, the straightforwardness of which is only varied by the degree of education to which the writer may have attained.

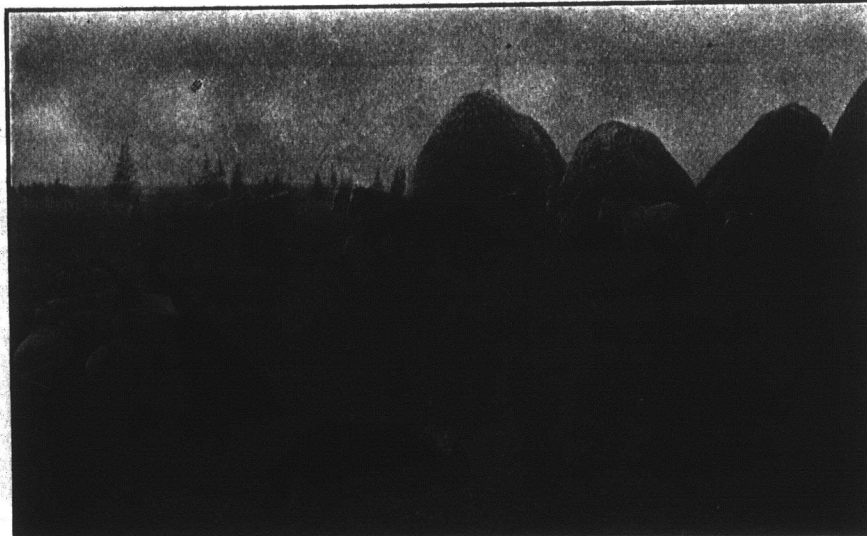
The pater familias of the paper tells what he thinks of the world of the day, especially the feminine portion of it, in words whose force and sincerity lack nothing from the critic's forgetfulness of grammatical rules. The superior young man points out to us, through his favorite illustrated weekly, the great length and width of the path which has led us away from the salvation of the domestic haven; while in the magazines the advanced man or woman (more especially the woman) sends forth didactics on present abuses, couched in language which, robbed of its scientific dress in a paper, would lead to the intervention of the public prosecutor.

Men, be it noticed in these discus-
sions, are generally the great croak-
ers, the severe critics, and the most
helpless monitors. A few mornings
ago I amused myself by reading out
to a young woman extracts from a
batch of their letters. The writers, I

rhetoric of the club or the impossi-
bility of earning a living had much to
do with the conformity. Still, however,
formed, a habit is a habit, and to reach
an ideal set up by man has ever been
the aim of the majority of women.

This is a humiliating confession,
perhaps; yet, can any one looking a-
round with eyes anxious to see things
as they are deny it? So if the home is
in a state of decay; if the mistress pre-
fers a restaurant dinner, where a chef
may be sworn at, to the family dinner
party, where the entrance of each dish
meant a distinct personal anxiety;
and if the girls prefer pretty frocks
and a good time to the housekeeper's
apron and responsibility, may it not
be whispered softly that masculine in-
difference or the tendencies of mas-
culine preferences led the way?

It is natural enough, then, that the
girls should cry out: "What cheek!"
when they hear the moans which have
arisen on all sides for the lost Grisel-
das. The mourners like to ignore that
it was they who dug the deep graves
and chanted the merry funeral marches
of the much regretted fair ones.
What a sweet revenge it would be if
our girls of the period could hold a
huge spiritualistic seance and summon
from the land of shades materialized
forms of these sisters of half a century
ago! They could substitute them for
themselves for a season. How would
Mr. Moneybags, who has planned a
little business dinner, with a visit to a
musical comedy and a run home in an
auto afterwards, like the impression
made on his friends by a wife in a
plain cut black silk gown, to whom



A WESTERN FARM SCENE.

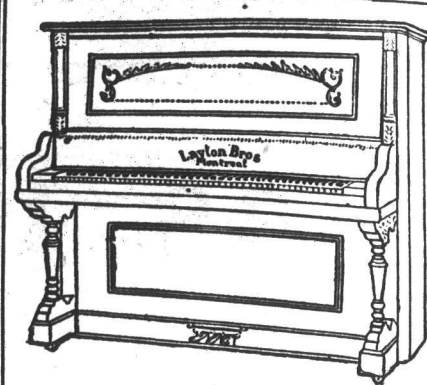
am sure, considered their composi-
tions vastly improving in tone, and
that the sentiments were bound to
have a salutary effect on any maiden
who should have the good fortune to
read them. My young friend listened
to the description of the chaotic state
to which she was reducing society,
and to her portrayal as the arch de-
stroyer of the home.

Was she moved to tears, to com-
punction, to resolutions of amend-
ment? No such thing. She calmly
laid down a glove she had been mend-
ing and said: "I never heard such
cheek!"

"Such cheek!" is the only response
to be got to masculine criticism from
the girl of the day. Can it be won-
dered at? She probably thinks it is
time for some one to resent her sex
being made the eternal scapegoat.
After all, it is the men, not the women,
who—up to the present, at any rate—
do most towards building up an age;
and it might really be well for them to
set about putting their own houses in
order before they work themselves in-
to such a state of indignation over the
condition of ours. I may have read-
ers with opinions so advanced that
they will feel wroth with me over my
old fashioned notions. But I really
believe that women of an epoch fol-
low the lead of the men. I am quite
willing to concede to possible oppo-
nents that they have often done so
through compulsion, and that the

theater going meant "perdition," and
who would require a week of sofa
and red lavender to repair the nerve
disorganization caused by a midnight
rush out of town? Or, again, how
would John Lawyer, in musty legal
chambers, which are only made en-
durable by the thought of the jolly
boating, or cycling, vacations which
he spends with "the best girl in the
court"—how would he enjoy paying
court to a damsel in white muslin,
who, as she selects her wools for her
cross stitch flowers, gives no livelier
response to his monologues a la "Wav-
erly" than the trembling of an eyelid
or the gradual rising of a delicate flush
to the cheek? Were John fortunate,
there might be added to the joys of
this drawing room wooing the excite-
ment of seeing his ladylove bursting
into tears and falling on the bosom
of a maiden aunt.

But the whole question really re-
solves itself into one of environment.
Each age, I suppose, produces people
who fit in with it best; and until our
masculine critics can prove that it is
women alone who are "losing the in-
stinct of home making," who are
"lacking in the spirit of self-sacrifice,"
who are "forgetting that there is a
word called duty," who are the "de-
stroyers of the idea of domesticity"—
until then, I say, we have all a perfect
right to join in with my girl friend
and exclaim: "What cheek!"



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