

TRUE MODESTY.

It may seem a matter of trivial import to have asked the question I did concerning the amount of modesty requisite to enable a lady to appear at evening parties in what is known as "full" dress, and the reply, able and bearing upon one phase of it, is, I own, unanswerable. One remark furnishes me with a return of the ball, if "X" will condescend to catch it. As he judges the first throw came from the hand of a woman, it may not be worth while possibly to notice a second, but if he has the welfare of womankind at heart, a thought upon the subject may not be so insignificant as on the first glance appears. His statement, "the modesty of an action is not always to be determined by the action itself, but by the influence which the action has upon the minds of the actors and their associates," is well argued by the illustrations which follow the remark. But is not perversion of the "real" thing itself likely to accrue from following in the wake of others? How white is the flake of snow as it falls upon the bare earth, but contact with it soon mars its whiteness, and modesty inherent in all, but more delicately so in women, is just as pure in the child, and only contact with others whose first bloom has lost its exquisite freshness begins to tell upon what nature has made so susceptible,—and it is the want of thought upon this subject that is bringing evils morally and physically. With the latter I do not meddle; time will show where folly, if not modesty, begins and ends; but, morally, I am persuaded there is much harm being quietly done under the guise of custom and fashion, and if "X" will use his pen to show its evils, he will be helping in a good and needed cause.

It was not the doubt of there being such a thing as a chameleon, the debaters upon it argued, but how it appeared to them, each averring his view of colour was the right one; so modesty is the question we have before us, not its different aspects, and to argue that a woman is modest only when shoulders and bust are covered, immodest when the reverse, is not my meaning, but that to "feel" any shame under different conditions of time and place, as to apparel, does seem to me to have distorted ideas as to what true modesty really is.

There are but two roads in life, the right one and the wrong one; to invent a middle one, going under the name of expediency, brings all the mischief mankind suffers under, and so I ask—is it "true" modesty to feel shame at one time and yet be without any at another, merely because expediency, *i.e.*, fashion, custom, demand it? A woman who feels shame because a male acquaintance sees her bare shoulders in the morning, feeling none in the evening, must have undergone a process of brushing off nature's dower; for, if in St. Paul's day, it was not seemly for a woman to stand up with uncovered head in the church, it surely is not less so to stand before a crowd as women do in this age. As to the effects of the action upon the associates of the actors, can "X" deliberately side with some of the latter in the full dress of the period, when he stands before them and not think, if he does not say, that modesty, like the National Policy, seems in danger? That an infatuation for going as far as possible to the boundaries of indecency is not a growing evil, even associates in the custom being quite uneasy about it, is a fact testified to by the popular Princess of Wales, who recently intimated to some ladies attending the State Ball, she wished "shoulder straps" either discontinued, or that the wearers should refrain from attending again.

The true conception of what modesty "really" is, of what it consists in, will alone save fashion from such well-merited rebukes. Let woman but bring quiet thought to the subject, settle what modesty is, act upon it, and I venture to predict every one of the opposite sex, *whose good opinion is worth having*, will hail with respectful admiration "woman clothed in her right mind," no longer to be the sport and target for the witticisms of men, upon whose foreheads ought to be inscribed "apartments vacant within."

MARRIAGE.

It has been said that "friendship may turn to love, but love to friendship never," and this saying is probably true. In fact we generally find that nearly all love springs into existence from friendship in the first place, there being but few consistent examples of love at first sight. We find, moreover, that the lack of love after marriage is due to the lack of friendship before the marital contract has been too hastily consummated, either through want of care or else through pandering to one's vanity. "Friendship is the soil upon which the plant of love grows; the silken cord that binds when other ties are severed,"—so before you marry be absolutely certain that true friendship exists, and when you are married, that your wife is your best friend. For her you should live, and to her you should look for sympathy, and upon her you should pour out all the wealth of your love. She is ever your best friend, and your kindest thoughts, cheeriest words and best love are hers by right. In her keeping you need never have the slightest fear for the honour of your name or the sanctity of your home—if you have deserved it of her. To the wife we would say that the contract of a marriage brings obligations as well, and in some cases the husband's love is lost through the wife's ignorance of him; you must

not think that because you have won him, or he has won you, that your grace of pleasing is not to be exercised any more. What was it that attracted or charmed your husband before marriage—you know perfectly—well, continue to please him in the same manner; perhaps it was the sparkling witchery of your eyes, or the gentle, kindly rippling laugh—or your good common-sense. Whichever it was, continue to use it. If it charmed him at first, it will ever charm him—his love needs something to feed upon; he is flattered that you are his, and you can easily please him if you will make up your mind to understand him. He is just as much a contradiction as you are; has just as many whims and fancies, and needs petting just as much, though perhaps in a less sentimental manner. He is extremely gratified at your clinging dependence upon him, and the more you are dependent, the better he likes it, though he may pretend to be bothered by your unceasing questions. You can even sometimes, perhaps often, have your own way, by deferring to his opinions, or seeming to yield, while gently leading him. As a rule, husbands are selfish and egotistical, and you must make a man of him; this you can not do by wounding his egotism or depriving him of his own way openly. You must use the same arts and tactics which won him, and your control over him will be lasting. You make the home, and domestic happiness depends as much on you as on him; keep him at home by making it attractive and lovable. Dean Swift has said that "the reason why so few marriages are happy is because ladies spend their time in making nets, not in making cages." Is this true, or is it a libel? If it be truth, it is the plain duty of wives to so act and live that no philosopher of the present time can re-assert it.

Further, do not depend altogether upon your beauty, your dress or external attributes, for the continuance of your husband's love—depend also upon the truth, worth and goodness of your mind; be always true, never deceive and never show temper; be unruffled in your disposition, if you can, or to as great an extent as possible. Your kindness and truth will wear longer and have more lasting influence than mere beauty; in verity, it is doubtful, extremely doubtful, whether true beauty exists without a kind and good heart—a bad heart mars any beautiful face, either by the expression of the eyes, the quiver of the lip, or the contemptuous uplifting of the eyebrows—signs which show the tempest within.

"Virtue is a jewel best plain set," so do not mar its lustre by the over-elegance of your attire. Above all, make your husband feel that you love him, and tell him so often; he knows it, but the words are sweet to him, and he never tires of hearing them. And husband, "never let the cherries on your wife's lips drop ungathered. A kiss is often more to a woman than a crown," and its memory sweeter than honey.

Aggie Fern.

THE EDUCATION OF OUR DAUGHTERS.

If it be true that intellectual pride is the characteristic of this latter part of the nineteenth century, the full outcome of the evil will be tenfold augmented if the desire for a *mere* intellectual eminence should be abetted and favoured among the young girls of this period. The veil that masters a man is intensified when it conquers a woman. The worldly dissipation, which is fast becoming the curse of this age, will spoil a daughter, or mother, even more than it will injure a son or a husband. Woman's nature is finer than man's. It is more susceptible, and therefore more vehement; more ardent, and therefore less open to those adverse counteractions and balancings which come to the aid of a more calculating judgment.

On the other hand, let me guard myself against even seeming to create a prejudice in relation to the very highest intellectual culture among young ladies. The most educated and learned woman of this century was Mrs. Somerville, and her Memoirs convey the impression of a lady who came behind in no womanly duty or family requirement. I lived in Florence for a time when Mrs. E. Barret Browning had her home in that fair city. She was everywhere spoken of, not only as a gifted prophetess, but as a woman of surpassing gentleness, sympathy, considerateness for the poor and suffering, and who was remarkably practical in her methods of benevolence and in her home-life. These names are merely quoted as examples of thousands of women in Europe and America, who combine high intellectual attainments with practical abilities and spiritual sympathies.

We may go further. Few things were more demanded fifteen years ago than those literary examinations which proved that young ladies were capable of intellectual attainments of the highest order, and that in point of solid learning they were rivalling their brothers. The institution of these examinations formed an epoch in the history of Great Britain, and has done much to raise woman's strength and influence. But danger lurks in the path of every advance. The rebound of the ball that strikes another carries it further than was desired. A gentleman graduate makes his certificate or degree to be tributary to his practical success in life; a lady graduate who intends to be a teacher is equally helped forward in the very noblest of vocations by her literary honours: but what if her mission in life is not that of a teacher, but of a daughter or wife? A degree may give her weight, and the intellectual culture whereby it was reached may have strengthened and enriched her