

WHAT ARE WOMEN MADE OF?

In the palmy days of childhood we were taught in the nursery jingle, and we implicitly believed, that little girls were made of

Sugar and spice,
And all that's nice.

But, growing older, we learned to our disappointment that they were produced from Adam's rib; and when we asked why woman was made of that particular bone, we were told because it was the most crooked in Adam's body. "Observe the result," preached Jean Raulin, in the beginning of the sixteenth century: "man composed of clay, is silent and ponderous; but woman gives evidence of her osseous origin by the rattle she keeps up. Move a sack of earth and it makes no noise; touch a bag of bones and you are deafened with the clitter-clatter." This observation did not fall to the ground; it was repeated by Gratian de Drusac in his "*Contraversies des Sexes Masculin et Feminin*," 1538. The learned in mediæval time did not spare woman. Jean Nevisan, professor of law at Turin, who died in 1540, is harder still on them in his "*Sylva Nuptialis*." Therein he audaciously asserts that woman was formed by the author of Good till the head had to be made, "*Permisit Deus illud facere demonio*." But the Rabbis are equally unsparing. They assert that when Eve had to be drawn from the side of Adam, she was not extracted by the head, lest she should be vain; nor by the eyes, lest they should be wanton; nor by the mouth, lest she should be given to tittle-tattle; nor by the ears, lest she should be inquisitive; nor by the hands, lest she should be meddling; nor by the feet, lest she should be a gadabout; nor by the heart, lest she should be jealous; but she was drawn forth by the side; yet, notwithstanding these precautions, she has every fault specially guarded against, because, being extracted sideways, she was perverse.

Another Rabbinical gloss on the text of Moses asserts that Adam was created double; that he and Eve were made back to back, united at the shoulders, and that they were severed with a hatchet. Eugubinus says that their bodies were united at the side. Antoinette Bourignon, that extraordinary mystic of the seventeenth century, had some strange visions of the primeval man and the birth of Eve. "The body of Adam," she says, "was more pure, translucent, and transparent than crystal, light and buoyant as air. In it were vessels and streams of light, which entered and exuded through the pores. The vessels were charged with liquors of various colours and intense brilliancy and transparency, some of these fluids were water, milk, wine, fire &c. Every motion of Adam's body produced ineffable harmonies. Every creature obeyed him; nothing could resist or injure him. He was taller than men of this time; his hair was short, curled, and approaching to black. He had a little down on his lower lip. In his stomach was a clear fluid, like water in a crystal bowl, in which tiny eggs developed themselves, like bubbles in wine, as he glowed with the ardour of divine charity; and when he strongly desired that others should unite with him in the work of praise, he hatched some of these eggs, and from one of them emerged his consort Eve."

The inhabitants of Madagascar have a strange myth touching the origin of woman. They say that the first man was created of dust of the earth, and was placed in a garden, where he was subject to none of the ills which now afflict mortality; he was also free from all bodily appetites, and, though surrounded by delicious fruits and limpid streams, yet felt no desire to taste of the fruit or quaff the water. The Creator had, moreover, strictly forbidden him either to eat or to drink. The great enemy, however, came to him, and painted to him in glowing colours the sweetness of the apple, the lusciousness of the date, and the succulence of the orange. In vain; the first man remembered the command laid upon him by his maker. Then the fiend assumed the appearance of an effulgent spirit, and pretended to be a messenger from heaven commanding him to eat and drink. The man at once obeyed. Shortly after a pimple

appeared on his leg; the spot enlarged into a tumor, which increased in size and caused him considerable annoyance. At the end of six months it burst, and there emerged from the limb a beautiful girl. The father of all living turned her this way and that way, sorely perplexed, and uncertain whether to pitch her into the water or give her to the pigs, when a messenger from heaven appeared, and told him to let her run about the garden till she was of a marriageable age, and then to take her to himself as a wife. He obeyed. He called her Bahouna, and she became the mother of all races of men.

There seems to be some uncertainty as to the size of our great mother. The French orientalist, Henrion, member of the Academy, however, fixed it with a precision satisfactory, at least to himself. He gives the following table of the relative heights of several eminent historical personages:—

Adam was precisely	123 feet 9 inches high.
Eve.....	118 " 9.75 in. "
Noah.....	103 " "
Abraham.....	27 " "
Moses.....	13 " "
Hercules... ..	10 " "
Alexander.....	6 " "
Julius Caesar... ..	5 " "

It is interesting to have the height of Eve to the decimal of an inch. It must, however, be stated that the measures of the traditional tomb of Eve at Jeddah give her a much greater stature. "On entering the great gate of the cemetery, one observes on the left a little wall three feet high, forming a square of ten to twelve feet. There lies the head of our first mother. In the middle of the cemetery is sort of cupola, where reposes the middle of her body, and at the other extremity, near the door of egress, is another little wall, also three feet high, forming a lozenge-shaped enclosure; there are her feet. In this place is a large piece of cloth, whereon the faithful deposit their offerings, which serve for the maintenance of a constant burning of perfumes over the midst of her body. The distance between her head and feet is 400 feet. How we have shrunk since the creation!"

But to return to the substance of which woman was made. This is a point on which the various cosmogonies of nations widely differ. Probably the discoverers of these cosmogonies were men, for they seldom give to woman a very distinguished origin. But then the poets make it up to her. "Nature," the singer of the land of cakes tell us,

"Her prentice man
First tried on man,
And then she made the lassies, O."

Guillaume de Salluste du Bastas (b. 1544; d. 1590), composed a lengthy poem on the Creation, in which he does ample justice to the ladies. His poem was translated into Latin by Dumonin (Joan. ed. Dumonin; *Beresithias, sive Mundi Creatio, ex Galileo Sallusti da Bastas expressa*. Parisiis, 1579), and into German, Spanish, Italian, and English. A specimen will suffice:—

The mother of mortals in herself doth combine
The charms of an Adam, and graces all Divine,
Her tint his surpasses, her brow is more fair,
Her eye twinkles brighter, more lustrous her hair;
Far sweeter her utterance, her chin is quite smooth,
Dream of Beauty incarnate, a lover and a love!

Our own Milton has done poor Eve justice in lines which need not quotation. Pygmalion, says the classic story, which is really a Phœnician myth of creation, made a woman of marble or ivory, and Aphrodite, in answer to his prayers, endowed the statue with life. We do not believe it. No woman was ever marble. She may seem hard and cold, but she only requires a sturdy male voice to bid her,

Descend, be stone no more!

to show the marble appearance was put on, and that she is, and ever was, genuine palpitating flesh and blood. Hesiod gives a