



### "COMMON-PLACE" GIRLS.

I FEEL sorry for the "ordinary" girl. Nowadays she is, and acknowledges it sadly, a nobody. The aim, at present, of each girl is to become different from her companions in some way; it does not seem to matter how! In other words, she aims at originality. If she cannot be a doctor, she can be a nurse; if not an artist, why, then a house-decorator; if she is beautiful, she becomes a professional beauty; if she is plain, why, then she talks slang with a cigarette between her lips, wears a shirt and coat, and becomes such a perfect copy of her groom as fairly to astonish old ladies and gentlemen out of their wits, as she whirls past them in her dog-cart.

But the "common-place" girl, who is conscious of no especial talent or beauty, whose ambition is bounded by a dream of orange-blossoms, and a home which she will have as much pleasure in arranging as a child has in a new doll's-house—what is she to do? Generally she waits from seventeen to twenty-one with her heart soft, and full of tender thoughts of the expected lover, and, if he comes, it is all well with her. She becomes, probably, the happy wife and mother, and remains contented and pure-minded throughout life, happier, as she bends over the cradle of her first-born, than all the fame and admiration of the world can make her more

talented or lovelier sisters. But suppose the lover does not appear—and somehow in this degenerate age he often fails—what then? Disappointed and anxious, she probably thinks that by going about hunting and seeking, she will find the lover who will not take the trouble to find her. Time rolls on. Between thirty and forty she begins to dimly realise that she has made no further progress than at twenty. Her good looks are fading, and she has nothing else to charm others or cheer herself with. Among married women she feels "out of it." In their conversation she finds no interest. For her there is no rosy darling to be shown off for the envy of the

other mothers; no fair young daughter in whose pleasures she could renew her youth; no clever son to fill her heart with pride. Among the *débutantes* she is still more out of place; they look on her with unconcealed scorn and ridicule, for she has been unsuccessful—she is but a failure! At length, when no amount of forced animation or rouge or dress can hide the fact that she is no longer young, she becomes—for it is unavoidable—that dreaded thing, the very name of which made her shudder thirty years ago—an old maid, afternoon tea and gossip her only consolations.

Perhaps a reader may here exclaim, "It is all very well talking like that! But what can one do? I am a "common-place" girl, but how can I help it? That's the thing."

I can tell you the remedy in a few words. It is simply this: Don't be a "common-place" girl; in other words, don't make marriage the sole aim of your life; instead, fill your time with other interests. But at the same time don't deceive yourself. Don't, for instance, go in for church work on account of the

interesting young curate; or painting, because you think you will render yourself "fetching" by being seen before your easel sketching "dear, sweet, ragged little children." It would be much better to wash their faces and mend their clothes. No; set your face against what is false in any form. If you are true you cannot be common-place. For if you consider it, the secret of a noble life is the love of what is true. If we do things because others do them—because, in short, it is the fashion—then we are common-place. To be true we must be brave, we must not fear the laugh or sneer of the world. Remember, the few are the thinkers, the many the non-thinkers; the few are the leaders, the many the followers. In these times of pressure and examinations, it sometimes seems forgotten that to be able to think is a more valuable power than the mere knowledge of facts; that we are educated not only for the sake of the facts and words we may be able to recollect throughout life, but still more for the sake of drawing out our powers of observation and

thought. In what do the great men and women of all ages spend their lives but in the search for what is true, and therefore their actions live after them, and "smell sweet, and blossom in the dust," when the host of triflers, fellow men with them, with like advantages and talents, are forgotten for ever. Let no one say, "It is too late for me to change." Believe me, it is never too late as long as you have eyes to see the wonders and beauties round you, and a tongue to speak words which may alter the whole course of other people's lives. Begin with to-day. Determine to make your own opportunities instead of waiting for them; to mould your own life instead of drifting with circumstances; and, above all:—

"To thine own self be true;  
And it must follow, as the night the  
day,  
Thou canst not then be false to any  
man."

A. B. ROMNEY.



## A FEW WORDS ON THRIFT.

BY THE DOWAGER MARCHIONESS OF HERTFORD.

"THRIFT! What a dull, old-fashioned, worn-out subject! What can there be new or interesting to say about it? One knows beforehand all that can be said in praise of it!" I fancy I can hear these remarks from the lips of the young people who catch sight of the objectionable heading of this article. It is quite true—the word *is* old-fashioned, and has a Saxon origin; and sometimes one is led to fear that the virtue also is not only old-fashioned, but nearly extinct; for nothing is more certain than the fact that the great majority of people in this country of ours live beyond their means; and we may also venture to assert that of those who do not do so, one-half live fully up to their income. Still, if my young readers will condescend to glance at these few remarks, I hope it may be possible that they may have a truer and higher idea of the value of thrift than they have at present. I want to show them what a number of good things it includes; how valuable the practice of it is for *all*, whether rich or poor; and how mistaken is the idea that, however necessary it may be to preach and lecture about it to the poorer classes, yet surely rich and educated people need not study it. But if thrift means making

the most of your property, it stands to reason that, in the practice of it, the difference between the management of £50 a year and £50,000 is only a question of degree and proportion, and not one of principle.

I suppose most people agree that to go on spending money which we owe other people, and which, therefore, does not strictly belong to us, is a very grave error, which often leads to crime. Yet how often people are tempted by small beginnings into the most reckless and culpable extravagance, and at last hardly have a notion of how they stand, or of what is their own. Now, for anyone who is determined to keep within his income, there are certain rules applicable to all degrees of fortune, and those who transgress these rules are pretty certain to get into difficulties. The rules are as follows:—

1. Be sure that you know exactly what you have to spend.
2. Know as accurately as you can what you are spending.
3. Regulate your expenditure under different heads, and adhere to the proportion you have decided upon.
4. Pay ready money when practicable.

5. Always keep a balance in hand, in case of accidental and unforeseen expenses.

You cannot go very far wrong if you keep to these rules, which are as applicable to the fortune of £50,000 a year as to the modest allowance of £50, which is all that many girls have, out of which they are expected to defray the expense of dress, gifts, etc., to say nothing of almsgiving and subscriptions.

With regard to the expense of dress, I have seen nice little books professing to teach how to dress on £15 or £20 a year, but I confess I never met with one which satisfied me; there has always been something left out which I considered a necessity, or some item either under- or over-stated.

I am, therefore, not going to invite criticism by entering into details. Everyone is (or ought to be) the best judge of her own circumstances. Rather would I content myself with reminding those who are inclined to sneer, as well as to grumble at the notion of economy, that its practice gives opportunities for exercising many other virtues. Economy, it is true, sounds like a homely, practical, dull sort of a thing—nothing romantic or dazzling about it; but who can tell how much self-denial,