

finish his evening prow; I could hear his footsteps long afterwards as he paced up and down the terrace. I listened to them uneasily as I strove to fix my attention on my book; that ten minutes' conversation had troubled me. Mr. Mostyn had not said much, but it was easy to see from his manner that he was greatly perturbed; he had come to his poor kinswoman for comfort, and I am afraid I had disappointed him.

The next day Miss Faith went alone to the vicarage. Hope was offended and flatly refused to accompany her—her father intended to call on Saturday, she said, and he would like her to go with him, and Miss Faith did not venture to say more.

They made it up presently, and a few days later Mr. and Mrs. Marland and Miss Ashton dined at Wildcroft.

Just before they arrived I had gone into the drawing-room to replace a glass globe that Ann had broken, when Miss Faith and Hope came into the room together. They both looked very bright and animated.

"Look what Aunt Faith has given me, Berrie!" exclaimed Hope, running up to me in an eager girlish fashion, and pointing to her neck—and there sure enough was Miss Faith's pearl necklace with its tiny diamond clasp, and very pretty it looked against the child's soft white throat.

"Isn't it dear of her?" she continued, and Hope's eyes quite sparkled with pleasure, for, like most girls, she was fond of pretty things, and took an innocent pride in her own appearance. She had more than once complained that her father would not let her have any of her mother's beautiful jewellery. "He says," with a pout, "he is keeping them for me when I am older, and that young girls ought not to wear such things; but I should like some of mother's rings." But in my private opinion I thought

Mr. Mostyn was right, for I do hate to see young creatures just out of the school-room decking themselves with rings and bangles and finery; but Miss Faith's pearl necklace was just to my taste.

It was evident that Miss Faith was much gratified by her niece's pleasure and my own warm encomiums on her generosity. She was a liberal giver, and would have parted even with her treasured lace, on which she set such store, if she thought anyone coveted it.

"Nonsense, Berrie," she said, but there was quite a pleased flush on her face; "it was better for Hope to wear my pearls than to lock them up in my wardrobe"—and then she looked at herself complacently, and certainly the grey silk dress and beautiful lace ruffles were wonderfully becoming. Miss Faith always looked well in evening dress; rich materials and old lace suited her, and any excitement brought a soft colour to her faded cheek. "Aunt Faith really looks quite pretty to-night," but Hope's pretended whisper was loud enough to reach her aunt's ears. Miss Faith blushed like a girl when she heard it. Dear, dear, a woman's vanity dies hard!

I generally took care to be in the hall when the vicarage folk came up to dinner, for Mrs. Marland always liked me to go upstairs with her, and have a chat while she took off her wraps; she was a great favourite of mine, and she always paid me a great deal of attention, asking my opinion on household matters, and bespeaking my help for her Mothers' Tea or other parish entertainments.

The sisters were very unlike each other. Mrs. Marland was a lively little brunette; she had been extremely pretty, but the care of six children had made her look worn and thin, but in her husband's eyes she was as pretty as ever. They were the happiest couple in the world, and brought up their children admirably,

and indeed we all felt the vicar practised what he preached, for certainly he and his wife set us all an example of cheerfulness and ungrudging self-sacrifice; they gave willingly of their time and substance, and would go out of their way to help anyone in trouble.

We had our customary chat in the blue bedroom, which was always kept ready for guests, and Miss Ashton listened to us or put in a word now and then.

She looked handsomer than ever that night, I thought; the heliotrope silk just suited her, and the coils of brown hair had not a grey thread in them, but she was quieter than usual.

"My sister has come to us for a long visit," observed Mrs. Marland in her cheery way; "she was very shabby last year, and only gave us three weeks—now, Brenda, hold your tongue; you know Jack insists that you are to give us six or seven weeks at least."

Miss Ashton smiled and shook her head, but she did not argue the matter.

Miss Faith once told me that Miss Ashton had been a complete slave to her family, and that her devotion to her father after her step-mother's death, and the charge of a young family of boys and girls, had prevented her from marrying.

"I believe she has had several good offers," she went on, "for gentlemen always admired her, but she said it was impossible for her to leave her father; he was a great invalid for some years, but he is dead now, and the boys are all abroad, and the two girls are married, but she still goes on living in the old home. She says no one else will take such good care of it for Ralph." And a few months later Miss Faith told me that Ralph Ashton was just engaged, and that in another year he hoped to be married and settle down at Combe Lea.

(To be continued.)

## FOUR QUOTATIONS.

FROM "QUESTIONS FOR WOMEN (AND MEN)," BY HONNOR MORTEN.

### GIRLS AS COOKS.

We begin to teach cookery in our elementary schools now, and you can see little girls of ten being taught to make cheese-cakes and other messes. But at the same time they are taught to wash the saucepans and scrub the oven, and this is half the battle; for the old-fashioned cook looked aghast if you ordered her to scrub out the oven and wash the top of her stove. She might sometimes scrape the oven, but wash it—never! And she cleaned the top of the stove by brushing filthy black stuff on to it, and she multiplied pans in the scullery till it was necessary to have a maid to dust and clean them. There is no greater mistake than a large supply of pans and cloths and dishes and moulds. Week after week, for instance, the moulds are polished and cleaned and put up as ornaments on the mantelpiece, and used perhaps once a year. Dirty cloths accumulate in drawers, so do dirty patty-pans and pastry-cutters and what not. Why have pastry cut with a crinkled edge? Why have your jelly fluted and moulded atop like a rose? Certainly not for art's sake, and certainly not for the sake of cleanliness or sweetness or taste

in any sense. So we want our cook to have few vessels and to keep those clean. Then we want her to understand enough of her subject to put meat into boiling water, and not to pour hot water over the roast and call it gravy. We want her, indeed, taught to do things for a reason, and not follow unthinkingly the old superstitions that have dominated the kitchen for far too long.

### OLD WOMEN AS COOKS.

It is rather hopeless work teaching the old people to cook; nothing will persuade them that beef-tea is good unless it is a jelly, nor can you induce them to cook bacon in a hot pan—they will put it on in tepid fat and make it sodden.

### WOMEN INSPECTORS OF PRISONS.

There should be a woman inspector of prisons, and a woman doctor in each prison for women. Anyone going over a prison with an inspector would probably be pleasantly struck with the cleanliness and order, and join in Viscount Montmorres's expression that a term of imprisonment is equal to a visit at a health-resort. But there are things that the eye does not see in a casual glance;

there are things that the man's mind is sure to overlook. Who would imagine, for instance, that the women at Wormwood Scrubs, which is regarded as the model prison, are not provided with night-gear? They are supposed to sleep in their chemises, and, as a matter of fact, they sleep in as many or as few of their day-clothes as they choose, and the results are not pleasant or healthy.

### WOMEN IN PRISON.

Nothing is more noticeable in the way of statistics than the proportionate decrease of crime with the increase of education; so that the saying, that wherever a school is opened a prison is closed, has become common property. The actual figures are:—

YEAR.	POPULATION.	DEATH SENTENCES.	SENTENCES OF PENAL SERVITUDE.
1877	24,695,000	34	1648
1895	30,394,000	19	807

Or, taking the average of population sent to prison:—

	1862	1879	1889	1896
Per 1,000	9.4	6.6	3.3	2.4

A steady decrease, which is very convincing.