

THE WOMAN WHO IS NERVOUS

BY KATE UPSON CLARK



AMONG the characteristics of the time is a strong tenacity of youth among the women of fifty or sixty and upward. By this remark is not meant the affectation of youthfulness in dress and appearance. The Mrs. Skewtons are less in favor now than ever before. But there is now a striking prevalence of youthful vigor and activity among women at an age when they were, not so many years ago, thought to be past all active participation in the main affairs of life. If you are inclined to doubt this statement, count the gray-haired women, with fresh faces and elastic step, whom you meet during a single day's walk on any favorite avenue. You will find that they bear a large proportion to the whole number.

One reason why the faces of these elderly women are so rosy, unwrinkled and full of the zest of life, is that they have not allowed their nerves to go to pieces with every slight shock which they have experienced. The importance of this matter to both the outer and inner woman may be readily perceived by a simple illustration.

The other day a pale, weary-looking creature, in other words an exceptional woman among the throngs of strong and healthy shoppers upon the street, was passing an engine, when it suddenly began to let off steam.

"Oh, mercy!" cried this poor woman to her companion. "Isn't that terrible! Oh, my! Oh, my!"

Her face was very much drawn as she said this, and she could not have shivered more miserably if she had seen a ghost.

Another woman who travels hundreds, if not thousands of miles in the course of every year, is never weary of descanting upon the "tiresomeness" of a journey. It is no wonder that she finds a ride in the cars "tiresome." She is never ill from the motion, but she steps on board a train always with a settled determination to be wretched until she alights from it. She sits bolt upright nearly all the way, shudders at the creakings and the squeakings of the wheels, and loses no opportunity for "ohing" and "ahing" during the whole course of the trip. It is not strange that she reaches her journey's end utterly worn out, and that she has grown old at the rate of six months an hour ever since she left home.

A very simple way in which to avoid such a strain as this is to make up one's mind before leaving home that one will take matters just as easily as possible. A deliberate attitude of mind should be assumed before setting forth on a day's journey, that one will waste no more of one's vital energy in worry by that way than is absolutely necessary. That wrinkle in your face, dear madam, which was visible when you heard a whistle blow just now, is fast making a permanent place for itself upon your countenance. Worse still, it is imprinting a corresponding mark upon your inner self. Why not follow the old Irishman's injunction about "taking things aisy," and smile at the whistles and jolts? Smiles, you know, are becoming, if not too pronounced and frequent, and they preserve youth and vitality. This fact, the fresh-faced ladies who have been alluded to, discovered long ago, or else they would not have that lovely color in their cheeks to-day.

And why not lean back as comfortably as you may during your long, dusty ride in the cars? Chloroform your nerves with a good dose of will-power, direct your thoughts to the most agreeable subject that you can find, and take your trip as a providential rest from the annoying cares of your usual routine. There is a good deal of oft-forgotten truth in the trite lines which tell us of life, that it,

"However good, however bad, depends on how you take it."

One of Henry Ward Beecher's most striking sermons was on happiness. Every man, he insisted, has a right to it, and should allow nobody to interfere with this right. We were made for happiness, and without our own collusion it cannot be stolen away from us. Losses, treason, illness, let them come, but let no mere external trouble cheat us of our rights. With a clear conscience within us, even when the clouds are all about us, happiness may be still secure.

This wholesome counsel has been eagerly absorbed by woman. She no longer languishes under the pangs of "disappointed love." She does not run shrieking away from a harmless mouse. She does not fly into a panic when a runaway horse or a fire-engine dashes up the street. She knows—oh, wise one—that she is only using herself up in such nonsense. She remains tranquil and untroubled under all ordinary provocations. She has too much serious work on hand to spend her strength in useless spasms over nothing. In short, though there are still butterflies, and drones, and foolish virgins among our women, the great mass of them are shaking off the absurd traditions of ages. They are determined to be comfortable and happy, and to keep off the wrinkles and infirmities of age as long as they can. Single or married, homely or beautiful, clever or dull, women are surely acquiring the grace of adaptation, and the joy and charm of a becoming acceptance of their environment.

Mrs. Kate Upson Clark, late associate editor of THE LADIES' HOME JOURNAL, has become the editor of "Romance," a monthly magazine publishing 15 to 20 complete stories in each issue. A sample copy will be sent for ten cents by Romance Publishing Co., Clinton Hall, Astor Place, New York. *.*

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