

founded upon her beauty; less witty—if the belle happen to be a wit; less talented—if she be a literary or musical wonder, or a girl who promises great things in other art. I mean women of mind so inferior, of disposition and nature so beneath her own, that her superiority is looked upon by them as a wrong or an insult. These, to use a most expressive phrase, “pick her to pieces,” and—spiritually—she is obliged to get herself together again!

And, alas! there are women in society that have so cultivated this aggressive art that, without betraying their malice offensively, they do the subtle work of destroying their rival's chances—alarming, sad to say! oftentimes the “heartfully-wished-for” right man—and lessening her charms by detraction of one kind and another, till all seem to melt away and fade, withered by venom. Her beauty—to believe them—is all, or to a great degree, artificial; her sweetness is assumed—“she has an awful temper at home!”—her talent has been doubted—to hear them believingly—by this one or that one “who is a judge, you know;” as for her wit, “it is wickedness.”

If she plays or sings, “she has no decided school;” if she recites, “her voice does not move them.” These, it is true, are not the subtle workers I have spoken of above, not the moles of malice, but the rabid ravens. These openly attack, and yet they do mischief. Poor belle! many are the forces against her strength; many the waters ready to whelm her; many the thorns in her flower-garden!

Think of it! . . . Besides her own mother, nine times out of ten harming in lieu of helping, there are the mothers of all the belle's rivals! Is it not a wonder that such a girl or woman ever marries, or, if she does, that she ever marries the one she would have preferred?

Among my own friends in belle-dom, two curious instances of final “success”—which I take to be marrying the right man—have lately occurred. In the first of these, the lady's papa lost every farthing, and the right man came to the front. “On my honor as a blonde,” said the belle, “I'll reward him!” And she did; and he is a happy fellow, so he tells me. In case number two, the young lady was confronted by a rival, who proved to be the bridegroom's cousin. The belle consented to be married, and the last time I saw her,

looked radiant. So did the bridegroom!

Now, truth to tell, the worst enemies of the belle are not, after all, as many suppose, the plain girls, the wall-flowers. These soon discover that they do themselves no good by detraction of her merits. Poor plain girls! you do have an unhappy time of it at balls as wall-flowers, but how many of you marry when the belle remains single! How many of you ride in the carriages of Mammon—remarkably nice carriages they are too!—and how many of you flash in jewels from out the pockets of rich husbands! How is it done? Explain, for the sake of those who yearn to ride and wear diamonds likewise!

It is done. . . . Fairly done, too, sometimes.

There are cases where it is genuine sweetness of disposition that carries the day for the plain girl—*real merit*. Even young Haughton, spoiled though he seemed to be by education, had a sound place in his heart, and saw the true worth of Violetta, so to call his lovely though homely bride. He said he was “tired of pretty girls.” Violetta was poor, let me mention. So, you see, Haughton was truthful in his assertion as to the pretty girls.

“I suppose,” said a certain lady to me, looking round upon a group of five plain daughters whom she was bringing out into society, “that my girls will all have to settle down with ministers, or widowers with families, as they are none of them pretty.” But my friend was no prophet. Every one of her daughters—winning girls, with sterling minds—has married well in every sense of the word; while their cousins, two girls of exquisite beauty and some talent, “still comb St. Catharine's hair,” the quaint foreign phrase for old-maidhood.

One reason, perhaps, for the fact that plain girls very generally *do* marry, is that they do not hesitate so long as will a girl more confident in her attractions. A belle, from the very fact of her belledom, is whimsical, difficult to attain to, and hard to please.

Fortune, besides, so often favors the unlovely one as to give her wealth and position. These are as available in the marriage-market as is beauty, and with them, while poor Beauty is gazing sadly after the right man, the plain girl walks to the matrimonial altar beside him. It is the system of compensation.

Again, plain girls expect much less in a suitor than does the belle. She will take offence at an awkward bow, a platitude, or at any proof of want of æsthetic taste. The plain girl passes over these things. She does not demand, as does the beauty, a high position, wealth, or expectations of wealth.

And there are men, even in these degenerate times, as some call them, who still look for those who will be good heads of families, domestic women, good housekeepers, and good heart-companions besides, and who fear that the belle, after “so much admiration, will find it hard to settle down.” And here let me say in passing, that the American woman almost invariably *does* settle down. Whatever her day of glory and grandeur, she is almost always content to glide gracefully behind a cloud and suffer another sun to rise and shine in the place that was hers.

Another advantage in the worldly war which tells on the side of the plain girl, is that all men *fear to be jealous*. Every man of any, of *human* feeling, knows that he may develop this passion. With the plain girl as a wife he has nothing of the kind to dread. Under the shade of his vine and his fig tree his heart is at peace. But with the belle, how different! He would have seen her eyes in his very ledgers and looking away from him!

I do not think, by-the-by, that any plain girl ever won her bridegroom by sewing for a Dorcas society. I know that this has been set forth as infallible, and that, after being jilted by the belle, young men of high tone are apt to rush—according to the statements of some—and fall at the feet of the wall flower just as she is finishing up some charity patchwork, or helping a blind woman over a gutter. I have seen this thing tried, and it has proved a failure. Therefore it is that I give the plain girls credit for having discovered franker and nobler means of attraction.

At all events, it is a fact that if all the women were plain, instead of being pretty, as two-thirds of them are—in America at all events—there would be just as much marrying as there is now.

And, ere I close, one more remark. It has always seemed to me that the girls who marry best are those who appear to bestow the least thought upon their future. I find that the girls and women who have the energy and

good taste to devote themselves to some useful and noble aim are sought for and married almost in spite of themselves, and this whether homely or handsome. Indeed, some good and noble work has been done, and for women there surely dawns, at last, a brighter day: I mean a day in which, whether married or single, they are allowed to peep over the tops of their work-baskets without hearing, “Cast down your eyes, Chloe, cast down your eyes!”

#### WOMEN IN RUSSIA.

A VERY interesting paper was recently read before the Liberal Club of New York City, upon the “Intellectual and Social Progress of Women in Russia.” This paper, which was written in Russian by a lady of that nation resident here, and translated by another Russian lady, was received by the majority of the audience as quite a revelation concerning that unknown land. After some statements of a general nature, the essay stated that in September next the doors of all the medical colleges of Russia will be thrown open to women, thus putting that supposed half-civilized country at one bound ahead of enlightened America, where women are usually obliged to confine themselves to female colleges, when desirous of a medical education. Society in Russia is divided into six classes. First, the aristocratic. The ladies of this class are walled in by caste from their sisters of the other grades. They obtain a brilliant linguistic and artistic education, but care little for the advancement of their male relations, occupy their time. Indeed, the diplomats in skirts are often more successful than the male kind. These women only refer to the “woman movement” with sneers. They occupy themselves as described until they are old; then they give themselves to bigotry or a selfish and foolish philanthropy. The second Russian class is composed of the scientists, writers, artists, etc., and all, from nobles to peasants, are free to enter it when qualified. The progressive women are found mainly in this class. The third is the clerical. It has now but small influence. The rising generation of this tribe of Levi are forsaking the profession to league themselves with the class above. The female relatives of the clergy are

enslaved by all the old notions. It is still the custom for an old priest to bequeath his office to some young priest on condition that he marries the old man's oldest daughter. The fourth class is composed of the rich merchants. Their women are also in bondage. Lately some have broken through the walls of bigotry by help of their young brothers. The fifth class is the bourgeoisie. As many of their women tend the retail shops, they exceed those of the merchant class in intelligence and freedom. The essayist's heart aches when she comes to speak of the sixth class, the peasants, who work side by side with men in all manual labor, and attend to their domestic duties besides. The first woman movement in Russia took a *dilettante* form. A good deal of inferior work was done by women. Their consciousness of this inferiority brought some to the grave and others to the sullen inaction of despair. They felt themselves, though unwillingly, dead capital, as far as life's greater works are concerned. At last came the strong, practical women, able, like Miss Blackwell, to pioneer for their sex, and break the bonds of absolutism. But many victims fell upon this field of battle. The progressive Russian woman of the present has boldly entered the lists against all those influences which tend to keep her sex in bondage. Equal education with men is her first demand. The longing of these earnest women for a university education led them to besiege the authorities with petitions, but they were obliged to go to Switzerland for it. Since 1867, when a Russian lady graduated at Zurich, the most of the lady students there have been from Russia. Some, on their return, establish schools on the plan of Pestalozzi, some kindergartens, nurseries, and cradle asylums, where working-women can leave their children while they are at their daily labor. Working-women's associations have also been formed. In short, Russian women are beginning to conclude that they can no longer trust entirely to the chivalry and fine phrases of men. In conclusion, the essayist said, that while Christianity had sowed the seed from which grew the spirit of liberty, it is the vocation of modern thought and labor to direct that spirit aright.

WHEN does a man have to keep his word? When no one will take it.

### THE RETURN HOME.

BY MARY L. CLOUGH.

ONCE more adown the lane I've wandered  
Unto my father's door,  
Once more my footsteps wake the echoes  
Along the oaken floor.  
Through many years of changing fortune  
Mine eyes have never seen  
The blushing of these Summer roses,  
These walls all mossy green.  
There lays some tender tale of childhood  
In every greenwood tree,  
Some story in each rustic arbor  
Of what I used to be.  
Up yonder tow'ring tree I've clambered  
To reach the topmost bough;  
I trained that rose's climbing branches,  
That hides the brown roof now.  
Here as I sit within the parlor  
Where oft we used to meet,  
I seem to hear the ring of laughter  
And trip of happy feet;  
And phantom faces come and vanish  
Within the doorway there;  
I see the flash of snowy fingers,  
The gleam of golden hair.  
Here mem'ry conjures up before me  
Each form of early grace,  
And every scene of youthful pleasure  
That blessed this hallowed place;  
While in and out among the shadows  
Flit childhood's boys and girls,  
The shimmer of their summer garments,  
The waving of their curls;  
I hear their footsteps on the threshold,  
Their voices in the air,  
Within the hall I catch their whispers,  
They call me on the stair.  
I hear a low voice sweetly humming  
Snatches of olden lays;  
They wake within my heart a mem'ry  
Of many long-gone days;  
But when I reach to grasp the vision  
That smiles and warbles there,  
It passes through my outstretched fingers,  
A phantom of the air.  
Mother! thy weary child hath wandered  
Through years of doubt and pain,  
And now, all sad and lonely-hearted  
He greets his home again—  
But not the loved, familiar faces.  
O mother! can it be  
That here I sit within the homestead,  
And call in vain for thee!  
Oh! once again to lay my forehead  
Upon that gentle breast—  
To feel thy brown hair float about me—  
To sleep and be at rest!  
O shadows of this ruined household,  
That throng with ghostly tread!  
I cannot clasp your phantom fingers:  
Would too that I were dead!  
Your joyous smiles are brightly beaming  
In better worlds than this,  
Your angel voices loudly swelling  
In choruses of bliss.  
E'en now your blessed wings may hover  
Around this sacred place;

Your pitying eyes may read the sorrow  
That clouds this troubled face.  
E'en now the crystal gates are opening,  
And breaths of Heaven's bloom  
And floods of holy light are wafted  
Unto this hallowed room;  
While to my sad and troubled spirit  
Float messages of love,  
Sped hither by the blessed angels  
That watch me from above:  
They sweetly soothe my wounded spirit,  
So late with anguish riven:  
They whisper, though on Earth a stranger,  
I have a home in Heaven.

### Diamonds of Thought.

It is a miserable economy to save time by robbing yourself of necessary sleep.

HE that cannot forgive others breaks the bridge over which he must pass himself.

GENIUS without taste will often commit enormous errors; and, what is worse, it will not be sensible of them.

CERTAIN people study all their life; at their death they have learned everything except to think.

TOLERATION is the silken string running through the pearl chain of all the virtues.

IF you would not have affliction visit you twice, listen at once to what it teaches.

THE best humor is that which contains the most humanity, that which is flavored throughout with tenderness and kindness.

EXAMPLE.—"We do not want precepts so much as patterns," says Pliny: "an example is the softest and least invidious way of commanding."

LANGUAGE AND THEOLOGY.—A teacher, catechising his scholars, put the question, "What was made to give light to the world?" "Kerosene," cried one of the youngsters, after a short pause.

LIKING AND DISLIKING.—There are people from whom we secretly shrink, whom we would personally avoid, though reason confesses that they are good people; there are others with faults of temper, or the like, beside whom we live content, as if the air about them did us good.

ECONOMY DUE TO EMPLOYERS.—"Waste not, want not," is a good old proverb. "He that is faithful in little is faithful also in much." A person who takes no care of the materials committed to his hands by his employer will never duly husband his own property. Economy and wastefulness are habits that will influence us in all things, either when we are engaged about our own substance or that of another. To waste another's goods is the same as to rob him. The loss in both cases is equal, and the principles whence they spring very much alike. The man who takes care of his employer's goods is sure to look after his own, and thus is on the road to prosperity.

FEMALE LOVELINESS.—Do not think you can make a girl lovely if you do not make her happy. There is not one restraint you put on a good girl's nature—

there is not one check you give to her instincts of affection or of effort—which will not be indelibly written on her features with a hardness which is all the more painful because it takes away the brightness from the eyes of innocence, and the charm from the brow of virtue. The perfect loveliness of a woman's countenance can only consist in the majestic peace which is found in the memory of happy and useful years, full of sweet records; and from the joining of this with that yet more majestic childishness, which is still full of change and promise, opening always, modest at once and bright with hope of better things to be won and to be bestowed. There is no old age where there is still that promise—it is eternal youth.—RUSKIN.

WALKING.—Walking briskly, with an exciting object of pleasant interest ahead, is the most healthful of all forms of exercise, except that of encouragingly remunerative, steady labor in the open air; and yet multitudes in large cities, whose health urgently requires exercise, seldom walk when they can ride, if the distance is a mile or more. It is worse in the country, especially with the well-to-do; a horse or carriage must be brought to the door even if less distances have to be passed. Under the conditions first named, walking is a bliss; it gives animation to the mind, it vivifies the circulation, paints the cheek, sparkles the eye, and works up the whole being, physical, mental, and moral.

### Our Spice Box.

DON'T TAKE 'EM.—"Mamma," said a precocious little boy, who, against his will, was made to rock the cradle of his baby brother, "if the doctor has any more babies to give away, don't you take 'em."

ECHO ANSWERS "WHERE?"—"So you are going to keep a school?" said a young lady to her maiden aunt. "Well, for my part, sooner than I would do that I would marry a widower with nine children." "I would prefer that myself," was the quiet reply; "but where's the widower?"

WILY FRENCHMAN.—A Frenchman was once asked to dinner, with an assurance from his host that he would not make a stranger of him. "But I beg you will make a stranger of me," said the wily Frenchman, who doubtless calculated that, in the latter capacity, he would have the best chance of a good dinner.

"SAFE" SAUSAGES.—At an Irish breakfast-table a traveller from the East handed to one of his fellow-travellers a plate of sausages; whereupon the question was asked, "Are they safe?" He was met with the reply, "This is a prolific pig country, and it is safe to eat sausages wherever pig is cheaper than dog."

A PHILOLOGICAL DIFFICULTY SURMOUNTED.—"You will observe from the word *pater*," said a professor of languages, "the great flexibility of the Latin language. *Pater* is a father, and hence we have *patruus*, an uncle on the father's side, and *propatruus*, a great-uncle on the father's side. Can you make any such change in our language? *Pater*, *patruus*, *propatruus*, father—is there any way you can change 'father' into 'uncle' in English?" "I don't know of any," replied a hopeful young philologist, "unless you can get him to marry your aunt."