

NATURAL BEAUTY AND HOW TO OBTAIN IT.

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"Fair traces man's imperial race ensnare,
And beauty draws us with a single hair."—*Pope*.

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."—*Keats*.



THE first two lines—by Pope—are correct enough, I believe; for all men love to see beautiful hair, especially if it be not too much frizzled and "fuzzied."

Strangely enough, the method of wearing the front hair, now so much in vogue with girls in the upper end of their teens or in their twenties, is precisely the same as that adopted by many savage races I have met with in the wilds of Africa. These, however, do not hold their "fuzzy-wigs" down with invisible hair-nets, but by good honest daubs of yellow clay, which is quite as efficacious, though probably not so elegant.

Kwallacovie, for instance, was a little girl of mine who used to accompany me in my walks through forest and jungle, and whose style of coiffure was a facsimile of what I see in the dress-circle of a theatre any night I go to the play. In one way, too, Kwallacovie's dress was very fashionable, being low-bodied to a degree. My regard for this savage maiden was purely platonic, for Kwallacovie was as black as my Newfoundland all except her eyes. These were as large as door-knobs, and showed a deal of white when she rolled them. But Kwallacovie was clever. She carried all my specimen-cases and my luncheon—the biggest half of which fell to her share—and was the best hand at catching green centipedes, tarantulas, and beetles ever I saw; even venomous snakes hadn't a show when Kwallacovie made up her mind to catch them.

But there was one thing to be said for Kwallacovie—she was natural, and that is more than we can say for most British beauties.

Well, Keats tells us that

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty."

It was probably good for this gentle poet to believe so, but were he living nowadays, and either read the truth concerning Spanish cruelties or took mental notes—aided by an opera-glass—at any entertainment where ladies may be seen in evening dress, he would no doubt feel inclined to revise that line or to delete it altogether.

For beauty is not always truth—not women's beauty anyhow. And yet I must confess that some of the weaker vessels make up or get themselves up so well, though transparently, that one does not know which to admire the more—their coolness or their knowledge of art. There is only one thing to be said in favour of artificial beauty, it seems to make the lady who adopts it happy while displaying it, and happiness brings health in its wake. Besides, when one considers that Miss Pompadour, for instance, dresses and powders and paints and stains all to please us poor stupid men-folks, we should be very ungrateful indeed not to admire her.

Do I condemn the art of beauty-making *in toto*, then, it may be asked? Before now I have said that I did not, especially when it is not actually meant to deceive.

So I thank you, Miss Pompadour; you really look too charming for anything to-night!

But now to consider beauty a little more in detail. There are various kinds of it, then, and if women would only seek to obtain that which belongs by right to their years all would be well, and they would find themselves respected in society or wherever they appeared, more particularly if that beauty were backed up by something like solidity in the shape of mental qualifications, and those delightful gifts—calmness and *sang-froid*. If a woman is not, however, perfectly calm and self-possessed, she cannot be otherwise than an irritant to those around her, even while she may be doing the best she can to please. Indeed, it is this very labour of trying to please that spoils everything and renders her efforts futile. If tranquillity dwells not in her mind, she is simply nervous and a fidget, fidgeting herself and, by the strange power called suggestion, fidgeting everybody else around her. Her desire to please, moreover, is in reality born of selfishness, for it is admiration she is seeking for all the time, and the male sex cannot help noticing the fact. But can a woman who is very much "got up," as it is called, retain self-confidence in society? I hardly think she can. She may do so in church, or at the opera, or even at lawn-tennis, or when cycling, but there are other situations in which she cannot wear the borrowed plumes of beauty with quite so much self-assurance—at a garden-party, for instance, at tea or during a *tête-à-tête* with one of the opposite gender. At such times, unless she is a very excellent actress indeed, the made-up young lady cannot feel perfectly at ease; she must ferment to some extent. And this kind of mental fermentation is killing to beauty. It ages a woman, and makes a young lady old-maidish more quickly than any other species of worry that I know of.

Of all kinds of beauty, that which draws men most to women and causes them to admire and respect them is the natural and unaffected, and this should be studied if it does not exist as a gift. This beauty might be called the beauty of eternal youth. There is no affectation about the most beautiful children. It is their innocence, their candour, their naturalness which constitute the chief charm that draws us towards them.

It may be difficult for girls to retain their beauty of youth when they come to get well up in their teens—some might say impossible—and yet no one will deny that the mind has a marvellous effect upon the body. All I want you to do, then, is to be honest, truthful, and sincere, and honesty, truthfulness, and sincerity will model your beauty so that it shall be apparent to all.

How I do wish that girls would spend more time in the cultivation of their minds and less in fixing hairpins and making impossible faces at themselves in the glass! They smile to themselves, they nod to themselves, they look languishing, sad, this, that, and t' other, and they fondly imagine they are thus cultivating beauty, beauty that is certain to draw when they go downstairs. So they think, but they are grievously mistaken. There are men with quiet eyes who can read them through and through, and can tell sincerity when they see it as easily as they could a good shilling compared to one made from the bottom of a pewter pot.

But the minds of most modern girls—up-to-date lassies—are left a blank, and as nature abhors a vacuum, she does the best she can, and nought but folly fills them. Where the mind is a blank, the face is little better than a map. Faix! it isn't so good, for a map does show one something; a map is true, the modern girl's face is not, and is meant to hide more than to give information.

"The maids of merry England,
How beautiful are they!"

Mind, I did not compose the above couplet.

My private poet has gone to the seaside for a holiday and for inspiration, else I should ask him to improve the lines. But stay! I can easily teleg— No, I sha'n't. I will try what I can do myself. I've only to sit down at the piano here and roll my eyes in fine frenzy for a few entrancing moments, and the heavenly goddess of poesy will take pity on me. Ahem!

Ye maids of Merrie England,
How beautiful you'd be
If you would only think a bit
And take advice from me!

For health means wealth of beauty
And happiness combined,
And those who can possess it
Are the queens of woman-kind.

The bath, fresh air, and exercise,
How great the recompense!
And the best of all cosmetics
Is—a little common sense.

When is a woman most charming? That is a question that takes a good deal of answering. It is a question I am trying to answer from one year's end to another, and one which a clever author replies to as follows: "A woman is most charming when she is tender and sympathetic. She may dazzle when she is merry, but when she is gentle and full of sympathy she enchains a man's heart. When her voice takes a softened tone and her eyes look words that her lips hesitate to speak, then, if she only knew her power, it would be a bad time for the world at large, for she could do what she chose, only she never does know it. Probably woman charms most when she is unconscious of it. The very unconsciousness is a part of the charm.

"A woman is most charming when she is animated and bright. A tear may move pity, but it is a smile that commands admiration. But she must not be for ever sparkling. She must have her sober moments, if only to throw into higher relief the moments when she is gay.

"A woman is most charming when she is good-natured. Bad temper never charmed. Good temper is an attraction even in a plain woman. When a woman has that in addition to her other qualities, when she is natural in her manners, unconscious, animated, tender, and gentle, then indeed is she charming to all the world.

"Sometimes a woman possesses a quality known as fascination, which no one has ever yet been able to define—a quality outside of and beyond all these attractions, and independent of them to the ordinary eye. But even without this fascination, a very good substitute may be formed from the qualities just counted up, and many a woman can cultivate these graces and make herself charming in the eyes of all who know her."

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There are two or three oft-quoted lines in Burns which I think my readers would do well to remember. They are these—

"O wad some power the giftie gie us
To see oursel's as ithers see us;
It wad frae monie a fautie* free us
An' foolish notion;
What airs in dress an' gait wad lea'e us,
And e'en devotion."

The poet refers to devotion of the canting kind, the same which my clansman the great General Gordon so truly despised.

Well, I hope I have said enough to show that even a plain woman—there are no plain young girls, for they always have the freshness of the rose-bud unless their

features are deformed—may be charming and fascinating also, although Nature has denied her what is so glibly termed beauty.

Natural beauty may be called the beauty of health. Because if a girl enjoys good health, she cannot help looking fresh, especially if she be tastefully dressed in colours that shall accord with her hair and eyes.

Natural Beauty of Complexion.—Let me assure you that if, instead of using constitutional means to secure this, you trust to powder and rouge, you will only succeed in losing confidence in yourself and the esteem of those whose respect, if not love, you are desirous of obtaining. But this is not all, for the ordinary powders cloy up the pores of the skin and injure it most materially. Powder tends to age the face, to pucker and to wrinkle it; if you once begin the habit, you have got to go on and on with it. A lady may look fresh and bonnie even at fifty if she has not powdered and used face washes in early life; if she has, she will be hollow-cheeked and haggish at forty; if lean, and if still plump, her cheeks will have a tendency to fall, owing to the softness of the adipose tissue beneath. The eyelids will be puffy, and there will be small bags beneath the lower ones.

No one can retain natural beauty who suffers from indigestion, who eats unwisely and too well, who sips stimulants—alas, the habit among women is getting terribly common!—or whose system generally is not free and open.

But fruit, vegetables, and oatmeal in the morning must be depended on to maintain the system in a natural condition and not quack medicine or fraudulent "blood-purifiers." Fruit is best in the morning after a glass of cool spring water. Get only the fruits that are in season. Fruit must be ripe, but not on the turn. Too much starchy food is apt to render the blood impure and the complexion muddy. Stimulants of all kinds hurt facial beauty, and so does over-excitement or too much cycling.

Bathe the face of a night with warm water and very mild soap. This opens the pores, but always douche with cold water and soft sponge afterwards. Rain water is best for the complexion. It is so good that I only wonder that quacks "on the make" do not advertise it for sale. If they vended it as "pure rain water," and filled their jars out of the Thames, it would only be on a par with the rascality that is everywhere found rampant in the advertisements displayed in ladies' newspapers and journals generally.

The bath in some shape or form should be taken every day. The cold morning tub may not suit all, but it is undoubtedly the most bracing of all baths and most toning. Years ago I described what I termed "The Girl's Own Bath"—it might as well have been called, "Beauty's Bath." We have many new readers now, and no harm can be done if I speak of it here.

For this, then, there is needed a sitz bath or ordinary shallow one, with a bucketful of cold water in it, placed there the night before, a very large sponge, hot water poured into the toilet-basin, and a very mild soap. Well, the bath is taken as soon as one gets out of bed; the body is simply lathered over quickly with a smallish sponge, soap and the hot water, and while the skin is thus rendered warm and cleansed, one steps quickly into the cold "tub" and sponges well, and after half a minute or a minute rubs well down with first a smooth and next a rough towel.

A Turkish bath may be taken every week. After returning from cycling, if the ride has been a long one, retire to your room at, say, four or five in the afternoon and have this Beauty Bath, then rest on the sofa, after putting on dry underclothing, sip a cup of coffee or good tea, and read a book for fully half an hour.

This is oriental luxury, and it greatly tends to natural beauty, and keeps the freshness of youth in body and mind.

* Small fault.

