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ONE of the latest sensations—and how, nowadays, can life be endured without an ever-succeeding excitement of some kind?—has been the phonograph. One effect of witnessing the performances of this wonderful instrument will be to dissipate the exaggerated notions regarding its dangerousness. There has been an idea current of late, towards the dissemination of which the comic papers have not slightly contributed, that the existence of a phonograph in the locality, say anywhere within the same room or below the same seat, is likely to result in the recording of testimony of the most incriminating kind—the testimony of one's own voice.

Closer experience, however, shows that the new invention is not the treacherous monster it is represented. For this certainly the phonograph deserves no thanks. Its intentions to betray you at all times and in all places are evidently of the best. Like the deaf old scandal-monger who sits concealed behind the foliage of the conservatory, its innocence is the result of causes beyond its own control, and if the phonograph were capable of desires it would, like that cheated old dame, doubtless shed tears over its present defects of construction. The point of perfection to which it has so far attained is indeed very wonderful, but judging from the closeness and distinctness of utterance required when speaking into it, Edison will have to devote a considerable amount more of time to its improvement before it can become the boon to inquisitive old chaperones and man-hooping mammae which was anticipated.

The size of the contrivance at present precludes the possibility of its concealment in the torso of the fair and 'fetching' ingenue who has got her heedless victim on the string. The march of science is, however, so mysteriously rapid that ere long a combination of the flash camera and phonograph may be perfected so diminutive as to bear concealment in the spray of flowers decorating the bodice of the adored one, and the one great difficulty of procuring sufficient evidence against the halting celibate will be overcome.

Oh, those clandestine interviews, those stolen moments which are viewed with such jealousy by the women not admitted to them! What will become of them when this modern demon shall have been perfected? The few sweet rays of memory which brighten the monotonous flat of the matrimonial pilgrimage will be extinguished. May they not, however, perhaps be intensified by the increased danger? Man is a creature who revels in hazards. All life is a speculation, and beset with risks at every turn. The phonograph will add another zest to love-making by increasing its hazards, and these need not necessarily be fatal. Many a phonograph studiously regulated and concealed by an astute mother on her daughter's person will incomprehensibly get deranged and return giving no echo of Lothario's vows, possibly owing to the maiden's complicity or the indiscreet pressure to which it has been subjected.

Nowadays nothing is sacred from discussion. A growing unrest is the characteristic of the modern intellect, and that implicit trust and contentment with certain social and religious dogmas which were so marked in the life of our predecessors, is fast disappearing. In fact there is so much writing and publishing in these times that, unless a journal has something astonishing in the way of news or views to communicate, it is speedily left in the rear, and passes over to join the majority of defunct periodicals. The latest exhibition of iconoclasm or idol-smashing has been given by

an American gentleman, who, with an enterprise racy of that soil, has started out to attack the received views regarding the unselfishness and politeness of women. One man having been courageous enough to break the ice, others are encouraged to follow upon the same line.

Educated man has renounced his primitive prerogative of knocking into silence the sex which, though weaker in the biceps and the lumbar regions, displays remarkable vigour and endurance in the neighbourhood of the jaw. Simultaneously with this deliberate renunciation of his one advantage, man has foolishly directed his intellectual powers to a literary idealisation of that other sex for which he has naturally a marked prejudice quite apart from reason. During the last century or more he has gone on 'puffing' woman in the abstract until woman has come to believe all that he has said about her is true, and having now acquired a certain facility of writing herself, has proceeded to perpetuate and enhance the process of her self-glorification until she exhibits an inclination to become tyrannical.

That thing called 'society' is in reality the creation of woman, and naturally the more she can increase the scope and domination of the views current in 'society,' the more she can subjugate man. Hence 'society' tries to establish the principle that a working man fagged out by his day's labour, or any other man, shall rise in a public conveyance and give up his seat to some fashionable woman who has perhaps been lolling away half her day upon the sofa. The result of the establishment of this principle, which in exceptional cases may be justifiable enough, is to make women ignore the rights of men altogether in connection with public vehicles, and come forth and tyrannise over the husbands and brothers of other women overtly as many do privately among their own men folk.

The time was truly when women were subject to all sorts of legal injustice of the most glaring kind, and in communities other than the most advanced of European peoples this is still the case. There are also certain kinds of social disabilities under which they labour, such as the customs restricting their freedom of action, or discountenancing their trying to earn their own living, or that of spying upon their actions, for the maintenance of which they have chiefly to thank their own sex. The more progressive and liberal-minded among men have succeeded in getting the worst of these ancient laws against women abolished, and have encouraged a small minority of women to embark actively in the emancipation propaganda for which they are still regarded with suspicion or contempt by their weak-kneed sisters. These latter, however, while they are very cautious about getting involved in the heat and burden of the fray, or of falling foul of the tongue of Mrs Grundy, are quite content to grasp lighter and less riskily-acquired privileges under cover of their sisters' efforts.

Of these, the right to oust the tyrant man from his legitimate seat in the tramcars is one. Now, the tyrant man is not unwilling to sacrifice his comfort occasionally for a woman with a baby, or for one who has just caught the last car of the day, or is in some way subjected to unavoidable inconvenience, but the tyrant man being in some sense a reasonable being, and especially so where his own comfort is concerned, perceives that there is a certain sort of injustice in women refusing to wait a few minutes for another vehicle, and crowding in recklessly with all their damp skirts and fal-de-rals upon a body of unfortunate males. And, moreover, the tyrant man being an eminently reasonable being, and much more ready to compromise a difficulty than the tyrant woman, would probably see no objection to the ladies sitting down upon him (which they so enjoy doing), provided they are of moderate dimensions, and as the reverend gentleman in the 'Sorcerer' terms 'distinctly comely.' This 'splitting of the difference,' so to speak, seems to be the most rational solution of the problem. If the ladies don't like it, let them stay behind for the next train, or seek their homes by the methods of locomotion granted them by nature.

From the tone of the cablegrams coming from London it looks as if the commerce of the world were about to receive another jar from a strike on the part of the body of the

federated unions there. The question in dispute is the old one of the free worker. Outside every union there is still an element of floating or unorganised labour which affects to sell itself to capital in the open market, and this the body of capitalists and the body of labourers are alike anxious to control, for therein lies the whole question of victory and domination.

So far the law is on the side of the capitalists in that it lays down the right of every person to sell his labour to whomsoever may choose to buy it. Even in this question, however, the law is not exactly consistent, for it denies to anybody the right of selling his services for a lifetime, or for any purpose which hitherto has been regarded as immoral. It does this on the ground that such contracts tend to the enslavement and debasement of society, and are therefore injurious. But again, here the law was not formerly consistent either, for it allowed soldiers to enlist for a lifetime, and permitted press-gangs to enslave free citizens for an indefinite period of service in the navy. All these anomalies were excused on the ground that the public need was urgent, and somebody must be sacrificed.

The teaching of these facts is that a dominant party can generally succeed in wresting the laws to suit their purpose. The present struggle after all is a question of might and not of right—at all events not of right as it is expressed upon the face of the legal system. The capitalists have for generations considered that they were masters of the situation, and, indeed, they were so long as the majority of mankind remained ignorant, isolated, and disorganised, and the enthroned and landed plutocrat could use his humble fellows pretty much for any purpose connected with his own exaltation he might choose. The result was that the page of history is stained with the narrations of countless enterprises set on foot by persons, the object of which was the aggrandizement of themselves and the proportionate sacrifice of other human beings. In such causes multitudes have perished in every way surnamed by the pittance of pay tendered to them, or even dying violent deaths when reluctantly endeavouring to slay their fellow-men.

Many consider that a pitched battle between the forces of capital and labour is going to be the outcome of the increasingly frequent deadlocks which we are nowadays witnessing. That entirely depends upon the success of the present struggle. If the capitalists can manage to detach a sufficient body of the labourers—it calls them free labourers—from the unions, or can prevent the unions dominating these, they will be, as their predecessors were, in a position to get their work done or their battles fought by these instruments on something like their own terms. Society will then be no further advanced than the ancient Roman plutocracy or the medieval feudal tyranny, for the uncontrolled rich will dominate the unorganised and unseeried many. The happiness of society in the future depends upon the subordination of capital to labour, for the simple reason that capital is the accretion of labour and not existent without labour. The possessor of accumulated capital is helpless without somebody to help him, and the millionaires of the world know that they will be helpless to coerce the labourers so soon as there is no body of unorganised 'free' labourers on whom they can work their will, restricted only by the feeble law of wages.

ONLY TEN YEARS.

ONLY ten years of joys and tears—
It seems not very long—
Only ten years of hopes and fears
That to my memory throng;
And as you are standing again at my side,
So fair and so young, my bonnie bride,
Now breaks from my heart this song:

Only ten years of joys and tears,
Of merry and cloudy weather,
Have blended our lives together, my love,
Have welded our hearts together.

So we'll dream once again of the happy days when
We timidly stood in the morning
With hearts full of love, with the blue skies above,
And roses our garden adorning.
And now you are standing again at my side,
So fair and so young, my bonnie bride,
With roses our pathway adorning.

Only ten years of joys and tears,
And the tears into pearls are turning;
Only ten years of hopes and fears,
And now a sweet incense is burning
(On the altar of Love, whose diadem
Now shimmered and glistens with many a gem
Of sanctified sorrow and yearning.

Only ten years of joys and tears,
Of merry and cloudy weather,
Have blended our lives together, my love,
Have welded our hearts together.
Only ten years of hopes and fears!
Their passing was fleet,
But their living was sweet.
In merry and cloudy weather, my love,
As we've journeyed along together.