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As King Gama in 'Princess Ida' says, 'isn't your life exceedingly flat when you've nothing whatever to grumble at?' Those who go to view the agreeable combination of humour, music, and stage spectacle in the operettas of Gilbert and Sullivan are apt to miss the full force of philosophy or latent satire contained in their libretto. Much of it is dependent upon time and place, while that which is of universal application fails to get fully home to the intellect on account of the intervening distractions. But is it not sound, solid truth, at least with reference to the people of our race, that life without its petty annoyances would be intolerable? The notion of old King Gama roaming dejectedly about his earthly paradise, 'spoiling,' as our American cousins say, 'for a fight,' and never encountering opposition of any sort, is not only intensely amusing, but it is so true. He was past the age for physical resistance, but he had still enough mental vigour left to desire somewhat on which to expend this, and sooner than be continually wasting his energy in beating the air, was even willing to render up his body to be kicked.

As George Eliot has said, 'there is nothing more melancholy to contemplate in this world than the waste of energy. Energy is the overplus of vital force with which nature has endowed every mortal, until they reach that point in their earthly career when the vital forces do no more than balance those of decomposition. Then is their usefulness overpast. Hence when King Gama grumbled, like many others of us, he showed that there was life in the old dog yet. And if he sighed for lack of opposition, what wonder is it that so many homes are disturbed on account of the absence of objects upon which young people can expend the life and health with which nature has so bountifully endowed them?'

On this ground alone the increasing belief in young women going out into the world and espousing some sort of avocation is to be defended. If there is one fact more true than another with reference to mothers, it is that they are as fond of power in their little domain as any emperor or king is in his, and will not lay it down until physical infirmity compels them. As a consequence their daughters who have not yet succeeded in getting men to make them mistresses of households, are condemned to inactivity, and to this more than anything else the premature age and sourness supposed to be characteristic of old maids as a class is to be attributed. A complete answer to those who contend that the household is woman's province, and that she should be confined to that is found in the above fact, and the growing disparity between the numbers of the sexes is to a great extent the secret of the development of the women's rights doctrine.

Whenever it comes to be recognised that a marked proportion of spinsters can never get husbands, and no power on earth can indicate which are those who are destined to draw blanks in the lucky bag of marriage, a necessity falls upon the whole class to be each individually capable of doing something more than domestic work. As a matter of fact many young women, on account of the above 'I am here and I'm going to stay here' spirit of their mothers, receive but a very imperfect training for their possible housewifely office, and most young husbands are amply justified in adding to the other shortcomings of their mother-in-law the responsibility for the domestic tribulations and the culinary atrocities of the first year of wedlock.

Nothing is better for young women, and nothing more beneficial for the community than that they should be usefully employed. If it is with their heads rather than with

their hands, then so much the better, for the feminine tongue is an unruly member, the wagging of which comports with the deft and wondrous execution of astounding articles of needlework of all descriptions, each symbolical of the winding-sheet of countless reputations. There used to be an idea prevalent in the times of our grandparents that young people who proved troublesome were always ill-disposed or incorrigible, whereas the real defect lay in those who were responsible for their existence and up-bringing not taking due account of the necessity for every member of society being usefully employed if they are not to become a nuisance or a danger to their fellows. Looked at from this point of view, the greater tendency to give young women freer occupation and amusement is right, as it results in a wholesome vivifying and beautifying of their existence.

Threatened institutions live long, and the church bazaar still continues to flourish, though even some of those who derive profit therefrom pretend to scout the notion of its respectability. Possibly they do this in the belief that their resistance will be unavailing, and a little well judged protestation, when there is no danger of its succeeding, cannot do harm to any cause. We have no certain knowledge regarding the ecclesiastic who invented this mode of raising the wind in the dark days when the offertory-plate began to lose its power. Indeed, the offertory plate has for long ceased to have any chance whatever when making its septidial rounds for the simple reason that the material whereon to operate is elsewhere. If phlebotomy is to be practised in churches very successfully, it is above all things necessary that men should be brought within the fold. Women's half in the labour of the churches consists in attracting men to the gentle shepherd to be shorn, for little is to be made out of them in the base matter of the where-withal.

But the bazaar is an extraordinary and desperate resource, and has only been resorted to after all other expedients have failed. The ladies have charmed in vain with the Sunday bonnet. Women may frequent divine service in the most monstrous and novel of head-gear, but on these occasions they play to their own sex merely. Unmarried men take no interest in a woman's bonnet or hat unless it happens to envelop a particular head. As for the married men, never until the Great Doomsday Book gives up its secrets will it be known how many luckless Benedicts have been kept from coming within sound of the glad tidings by the thought of their wife's bonnet. There are latent tragedies sufficient in one Sunday bonnet to afford good material for at least one conventional novel, while when it is that of the incumbent's wife nature recoils from the thought of the silent struggles that decoration must entail upon the wearer's spouse. To think of the poor man having to raise his spirit to worlds unknown with the offending object continually bobbing about below, is terrible.

But after a long series of ordinary services, men are at last promised something more than a silent contemplation of the unattainable. There is to be a bazaar. The married men are not averse. Brown hopes that Mrs Brown may by selling Jones a bad brand of cigars of his own procuring, manage to make Jones sick, Jones having taken to keeping certain vagrant and destructive poultry who have played havoc with his garden. Mrs Robinson sees a chance of getting to know young Smith recently arrived, and who on account of his reputed wealth and accomplishments, is the lion of the hour. This is purely on her own account, for Miss Robinson is not out yet, nor does Mrs Robinson wish her to be. Little Miss Robinson also silently worships Smith from afar, but keeps her secret well, and in her capacity as a flower-girl looks to victimising him with button-hole bouquets innumerable. Robinson, though he affects contempt for the whole thing, is furtively saving up his money, so that he may go nightly and be dunned by the girls. Then he will get compensation, and all in the best of possible causes, for many Sunday bonnets wrung from his reluctant pocket sometimes. There is a general ripple of excitement throughout the highways and byways of the congregation, and a sudden quickening of the spirits of all in a manner formerly inconceivable. For the great day is approaching, the day of our church bazaar, and in that time ye shall know how much more potent are the wiles of woman in the matter of extracting the bawbees than are the entreaties or denunciations of a Lacordaire or a Massillon.

What is romance? Carlyle says that no age is romantic to itself. This is equally true of persons. No age realizes the aspect it will present to its successors, and no person realizes the impression they produce upon those whom they encounter. If, as we toil along under the oppressive heat of a summer's day, muttering imprecations under our breath upon the weather, sighing for interminable drinks, and feeling generally bilious and crotchety, we happen to meet a friend, we studiously dissemble all this and for the moment assume an aspect of sprightliness and contentment we are far from feeling. Possibly we may remark lightly *en passant* that it is 'rather hot,' or 'very oppressive to-day,' but this represents very feebly the condition of our feelings, for the expression of which no vocabulary hitherto invented by the fertile mind of man would suffice. Our friend is probably as dissatisfied with the state of things, possibly worse satisfied than ourselves, but he looks even more comfortable and content, and on separating you depart with a feeling that he is fortunate in being able to enjoy life under such a temperature. He all the time is dreaming of the delights of the winter season, and praying for its return.

Similarly when we form part of some spectacular function—a fancy dress ball or a romantic opera—we only see part of the fun. The element which we contribute to the general effect is lost to us; we are not romantic to ourselves. This, no doubt, was the idea floating in the mind of Shakespeare when he said, 'All the world's a stage, and all the men and women only players.' Egotistical as is human nature, it nevertheless is continually straining for something without itself, and in this consists the feeling of romance, the desire of self-oblivion. Hence no person is a hero or a criminal unto themselves; they are just themselves. The sense of romance, the impression of the heroic comes perhaps afterwards, when long years are past and the impressions are obscured and overlaid so as to come presented as if of some other person. So is it with scenes of historic interest within the shadow of which we have resided, and regarded indifferently as the mere commonplaces of our life. We marvel when they are beset by excited tourists who have expended much and travelled far in order to enjoy what never seemed notable or beautiful to us. Thus does strong imagination beguile the tedium of life and hold out promises which, if never fulfilled, give a leaven to existence.

AN OLD STORY.

OH, you are fair and young, my love,
But I am growing old,
And in good sooth you do me wrong
To ask a story or a song,
For all my songs are sung, my love,
And all my tales are told.

My voice has gone this many a year,
My wit has grown so small
I'm even forced to speak the truth;
But somewhere lives a lucky youth
Who'll tell you—lies, I think, my dear,
But you'll believe them all.

He'll have a noble scorn of self,
He'll sing and sigh and snee,
He'll say his love will last for ay—
And Heaven knows what he will not say—
I've done this sort of thing myself,
It is not hard to do.

He'll talk of dying, if you doubt
The ardour of his flame;
You'll save his precious life, my dear,
And in a quarter of a year—
But there—you'd better find it out—
It's always much the same.

HERBERT E. CLARKE.

EDUCATED HERSELF FOR MARRIAGE.

AMONG the graduates of the year says an American journal one brave young woman has completed a course frankly taken in preparation for matrimony. Like many girls who make society amusement their chief existence, this young woman did not realize the deficiencies in her education until she had won the friendship and love of one who was her superior in intellectual acquirements. With the realization of her ignorance came the determination to study for self-improvement. Entering as a pupil at a well-known school for girls, she took courses in literature, philosophy, and other studies which would enable her to write and speak with accuracy and would teach her the best methods of thought. She entered classes of political economy and studied the newspapers under competent direction. Urging her teachers to correct all imperfections in her speech and manner, she made constant effort to attain the standard which might bring her nearer to an equality with her future husband. The struggle was not easy. There were trials of pride in studying with girls of a more youthful age; there were many moments of mortification from the exposure of her ignorance. Determination to succeed won its usual rewards. The society girl, whose bright mind had been eclipsed by the routine of pleasures, became renowned in the school as one of the most earnest and satisfactory pupils. When she graduates this year into the refined home that has been in preparation for her she will meet her husband upon an equality, and entertain his friends with a feeling of cheerful confidence. She says that the whole world seems more stable since she has been sure that her sentences are grammatical and her pronunciation according to the best authorities.