

The Wise Mamma.

BEING A FEMININE FAIRY TALE.

(By Belle Blitz.)

Once upon a time there was a girl baby about whose cradle gathered four malevolent fairies, with their hammers.

"I will give her hay-coloured hair," said one.

"I will give her a shoestring figure," said another.

"I will make her dull and stupid," said the third.

"I will give her cheap, plain clothes to wear," said the fourth.

"And that will be about all of her," cried the evil fairies in chorus, chuckling horribly. But at this moment a good fairy approached the bassinet in which the unconscious infant lay, and as she waved her wand above it, said:

"Do not fear, my child. I will bestow upon you a good gift that will make all of their curses powerless to hurt you, for I will give you the blessing of a Maturing Mamma who knows her business.

"We shall see," shrieked the four evil fairies, as they mounted their broomsticks and flew away.

"We shall see," murmured the good fairy, "and they will learn that it is better to have a mother who is a good press agent than it is to have a perfect prouille."

For many years it seemed as if the four evil fairies had gotten in their work and were going to win out. Little Aurelia, for such was the infant's name, grew up into a maiden who belonged to the also-ran class. Her complexion and her hair looked as if they had been cut off of the same piece of calico. She had no eyebrows to speak of. Her figure was patterned after a telephone post, while as a conversationalist she was like a sentence of hard labour.

All of this caused the evil fairies great glee, and whenever they met up with a peacherino of a girl they would whisper to her:

"Get a line on Aurelia, for we opine that she will still be left hanging on the parent stem when all of the balance of the plum crop is gathered in."

In this, however, they reckoned without the good fairy, who, going to Aurelia's mother, said:

"Get busy. You cannot make Aurelia beautiful, but you can make her the fashion by touting her blemishes as charms."

Thus admonished, Aurelia's mother got out her hot-air bellows, and, assuming the expression of a connoisseur, instead of apologising for her daughter's looks, began to bat every one who was different.

"What a pity," said her dearest friend, as she pretended to sympathise with her, while in reality she hurled the tabasco. "What a pity that Aurelia has straw-coloured hair!"

"A pity!" cried the mother, as she gave the friend the hoot, "why, her hair is her glory, and if you were more cultured you would know that instead of her locks being straw-coloured, they are the pale gold that artists adore."

"So they are," exclaimed the friend, who did not want to be thought out of the know, and forthwith she went out and bleached her own jetty tresses so as to understudy Aurelia's.

"How unfortunate," said another woman, "that your daughter is so tall and lanky."

"Ha, ha," laughed Aurelia's mother, "you are indeed a back number not to know that the fashionable figure is All Bones, and that a woman would rather be accused of crime than of being fat. Besides the only kind of a waist that a man cares to embrace is the one that he can span at one effort."

"That is true," responded the woman, who was a dimpled, darling, and she hiked away and began banting and physical-culturing in order to work off her curves and acquire angles, and thus Aurelia became the great original hipless and stomachless straight front model, and was no longer spoken of as stringy, but became celebrated far and wide as lithe and willowy.

Now Aurelia never talked, because she had nothing to say, neither did she carry a side line of accomplishments like most girls, but so far from letting these defects depress the market the mother used them to boom her stock.

"How thankful I am," she would say to the men who had been working overtime trying to corkscrew a few remarks out of Aurelia, "that my daughter is not one of these silly little creatures with a double-action tongue, that will talk the unfortunate man that married her into his coffin. On the contrary, she adores sitting at the feet of a wise, intelligent, philosophical, eloquent, spell-binder like you and catching the pearls of thought as they drop from his lips."

"Truly," said each man to himself, as he heard mamma dope out the palatial explanation of Aurelia's silence, "it shows marvellous good sense and taste

in her to prefer to listen to me instead of spiling herself, and what I mistook for dulness I now see was merely her profound admiration for my views." So Aurelia's society was much sought after henceforth by men, and she became renowned as the most entertaining girl in her set.

Nor did Aurelia's mother quit the game when confronted by the other mothers with their daughter's accomplishments. She would listen with an air of polite patience while Julia sang or gazed through her lorgnettes at Mary's pictures, and then, turning to their proud parents, would remark:

"How delightful it must be to have these simple, unpretentious, amateur pleasures at home, and how I wish that I could induce Aurelia to sing and paint a little like your daughters, but she is so highly cultivated and so artistic in her nature that the mere thought of singing off the key or doing dauby painting sets her nerves on edge."

The other girls in Aurelia's set had all the clothes that were fit to wear, with diamonds a-plenty, whereas Aurelia wore the same frock wherever she went, and was strong on the simple white muslin act, but instead of putting up a moan because of her tough lot, her

mother exploited it as the only thing. "It grouches me," she would say, "to see young girls sporting giddy raiment, and I apprehend that only those do it who are not used to society, and do not know better. See how simply I dress Aurelia as becomes an innocent debutante."

"She must be an authority," said the others, or she would not dare to turn down a French confection," and so they regarded Aurelia's attire with awe.

"What a wife one so sensibly and economically brought up would make," said the men as they hot-footed after Aurelia, who became a great belle.

Thus was defeat turned into victory, and the truth established of the old axiom that there is nothing like having a mother who knows the ropes.

"Have you practised on the piano?"

"Yes, mother."

"And read Prof. Simson's lecture on Greek art?"

"Yes, mother."

"And studied your calculus?"

"Yes, mother."

"Then you may go out and play for ten minutes."



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