

# OVER THE TEACUPS

## BOUDOIR GOSSIP FOR LADY READERS

### Brief Talks About Health Matters.

#### FALLACIES ABOUT DRUGS.

##### DANGEROUS PRACTICES.

##### DANGEROUS PRACTICES CON- DEMNED.

There is perhaps no more foolish or pernicious custom than that of drugging oneself with medicines of which we do not know the exact mode of action. This habit has been fostered of late years by the equally reprehensible practice of ladies' papers and the general Press supplying prescriptions for this, that, or the other ailment on request. Needless to say, such prescriptions are often quite unsuitable to the applicant's requirements as the journalist who undertakes this responsible task has never seen the person for whom he is prescribing.

For this reason, if for no other, we never in any of our papers give actual prescriptions or mention any but the most simple and homely remedies. Doubtless some of our readers would like to assume the place of their family physician, and with an air of grave superiority dictate to those whom we have never once seen what drugs they ought to swallow for any particular disease should it happen to attack them. We would remind such persons that the treatment of disease cannot be conducted on such haphazard principles. No medical attendant must first see and examine his patient, and then select the remedy best suited to that particular case. Many people fondly imagine that each disease has a particular remedy assigned to it, and that all the doctor has to do is to recognise the disease and then prescribe the corresponding remedy. The physician has much more to do than this, for he must select out of a dozen or more remedies the one best suited to the patient's particular condition, and not only so, but he must see that the patient gets the remedy in a sufficient amount and in proper combination, otherwise it may do harm.

The ideas some people have regarding drugs and their uses are simply astounding. These notions have been perpetuated for generations, so that at the present time they are deeply rooted in the minds of the laity as they never were before. There are many drugs which the man in the street makes use of only to his ultimate hurt, and yet this practice of self-drugging goes on apace.

We trust in this short paper to be able to point out one or two drugs in particular which are greatly abused by the public at the present day in the hope that some good may result, and that those of our readers who have fallen into this bad habit will be induced to break it off once and for ever.

#### CHEMICAL "FOOD."

We heard of a doctor the other day who asked a woman what her child was having in the way of food, and she replied, "Porridge, milk, eggs, and chemical food!" We wonder how many of our readers imagine that the red stuff called by this name is really a food. It is not a food, but a medicine in the truest sense. It is astonishing to find how often children are given this medicine under the impression that it is an excellent tonic. So it may be in certain cases, but it is by no means suited to every child who is run down in health.

While on the subject of tonics we may refer to the abuse of that old-fashioned remedy called Easton's Syrup. This is likewise often taken without counting the costs. It should never under any circumstances be taken save under medical advice. It contains one of the most powerful poisons known, and has now to be labelled "poison" in compliance

with the Act regulating the sale of poisons. This mere labeling is, however, of little real value so long as the public are not aware of the fact that this syrup is essentially a dangerous substance.

If any reader cares to take the risk, by all means let him go on consuming such remedies, but we are bound to warn him of the consequences which may ensue.

#### COD LIVER OIL EMULSION.

One of the most curious delusions under which the public rest at present is to imagine that there is only one cod liver oil emulsion. Unfortunately there are many, and some are comparatively valueless. Our readers would be well advised to consult their chemist before purchasing as to which, in his opinion, is the most reliable. We always advise pure cod liver oil, but if this cannot be taken on account of its taste, then nothing can surpass malt and cod liver oil.

#### DANGEROUS PRACTICES.

Many people fall into the habit of taking opium in the form of laudanum. The latter is a very dangerous drug, and ought never to be kept in the house, "just for emergencies," as it is very apt to be taken when quite unnecessary.

Then, again, chloroform is a drug which is often taken to relieve pain or cure diarrhoea. Now, this drug contains both chloroform and morphia, and is accordingly an extremely dangerous liquid.

We almost tremble when we think of the risks run by the indiscriminate use of laudanum and chloroform by ignorant men and women who think they are clever in being able to treat themselves when ill.

The same remark applies to such drugs as bromide, sulphonal, and the like, which are often used as remedies against sleeplessness. No one can predict the evil effects of such powders when taken save on the prescription of a medical man who has actually examined the patient. It is considered clever on the part of Mrs. Smith that she is able to tell her neighbour to give her child a bromide powder because it is having fits, but Mrs. Smith will not be responsible, of course, if the child suffers in consequence. Again, Mr. Jones is considered as a knowing fellow because he suggests sulphonal as a remedy to his friend who complains to him that he can never sleep at night; but this same gentleman will look very foolish indeed if his friend has to send for his doctor because the sulphonal which he has taken on his advice has led to the development of serious symptoms.

#### ABUSE OF PURGATIVES.

We frequently find persons who complain of chronic constipation, and who are constantly swallowing castor oil or cascara. This is a stupid practice which we only mention to condemn in the strongest possible terms. This use, or rather abuse of such drugs only favours constipation. Constipation, in fact, is best treated not by drugs at all, but by regular habits and a properly selected dietary. Hundreds of people simply keep their constipation going by taking drugs under the belief that they are doing all they can to cure it.

If drugs must be taken, let the one selected be pure water taken before breakfast, and again before retiring for the night. This cannot possibly do any harm, and not infrequently produces excellent results.

#### PASSING ON PRESCRIPTIONS.

Who has not met the man or woman who is always ready to give you their

own doctor's prescription when you are ill? This is mistaken kindness.

Pause for a moment to reflect what this silly custom means. It signifies that the prescription carefully prepared or Mr. X. by his doctor is handed over to Mr. Y. because the latter happens to complain of somewhat similar symptoms. As a concrete example, take, say, a cough mixture. The cough in the one case may be due to heart disease, in the other it may result from some throat affection. If the mixture which was used in the first case is given to the man with the throat ailment it will certainly cause alarming symptoms in the latter. And yet this habit of passing on prescriptions is pursued every day.

#### QUACK REMEDIES.

Just a few words on quack remedies. It goes without saying that gallons of quack fluids and tons of quack pills are swallowed by the public in this country every year. And little wonder when one reads the glowing advertisements of these fraudulent products. It is a very easy matter, however, to make statements about anything in print. It is quite another matter to prove the truth of these assertions; and yet men and women are found who take everything for granted and spend their money on that which satisfieth not.

To put it mildly we may say that quack remedies always cost a hundred per cent more than their real value. All these grand advertisements have to be paid for, and the poor deluded sufferer is made to contribute to the cost of his publication.

We have, of course, only touched the fringe of this great and important subject, but perhaps enough has been said for the present to awaken in the minds of our readers a sense of their great responsibility in using drugs on their own initiative and advising their friends and neighbours to do the same. Then, again, we sincerely hope that none of our readers will, after perusing this article, be so foolish as to buy quack mixtures, pills, or ointments.

"When really ill, consult your doctor," is sound advice which no one who has any respect for his health and well-being can afford to neglect. A half-crown given to a medical man will be a more profitable investment by far than twice the amount spent in the purchase of some high-sounding but utterly worthless advertised panacea.



### Have Women a Sense of Humour?

(By Lyndon Orr.)

**THE "GENTLER SEX" HAS MORE MALICE THAN MELLOWNESS. MORE WIT THAN HUMOUR— THERE ARE, HOWEVER, MANY STRIKING EXAMPLES OF HUMOUR AS EXPRESSED BY WOMEN WRITERS.**

Once upon a time a mis-guided man remarked to a group of feminine listeners that women had no sense of humour, whereupon one of them immediately retorted: "Of course, women have no sense of humour. If they had, they couldn't take men seriously."

There is a good deal that is instructive in this incident. If a woman had declared to a masculine audience that men have no sense of humour, it is not likely that any of them would have made so clever a reply. In fact, they would probably have said nothing whatsoever. Most of them would have taken it merely as a personal opinion; and the rest of them would have chuckled quietly over so sweeping an assertion. The swift retort which the woman made showed that

at least she had abundant wit. The silent enjoyment of the men would have shown that they did in reality possess a sense of humour, and it would have been quite as effective an answer, in its way, as the tart epigram which the woman uttered.

One reason why men think that women have no sense of humour is, indeed, found in the very fact that women usually become angry when you tell them that they cannot take a humorous view of things. Some years ago this question was raised in newspaper discussion, and all the women who took part in it were obviously indignant. They said and printed many caustic comments; but they took the thing so hard and their sayings were so slung as to prove that the ladies themselves were quite out of temper. Miss Kate Sanborn, whose story "Adopting an Abandoned Farm" is often very humorous, defended her sex against the charge with abundant irony and sarcasm. Her thrusts were keen and her epigrams were witty. But the nature of her defense and her counter-attack upon men made it plain enough that even her own undoubted humour had very decided limitation. Instead of poking fun at the men who accused women of a lack of humour, she berated them. Her weapon was not the laugh, but the deadly lance; and she preferred malice to mellowness.

In a general way, therefore, it is not unjust to say of women, as a sex, that the quality of wit is theirs in great abundance; whereas the quality of humour, though it be not lacking, is less often seen in women than in men, and is far less sure. And this is natural enough when we consider what wit is and what is the nature of pure humour.

Wit is swift and sharp. It leaps forth suddenly like the rapier of a ready duelist. It glitters a moment and then sends its thrust straight home. It depends upon surprise; its essence is ingenuity; its appeal is wholly to the mind.

Humour, on the other hand, in its higher form is almost a sixth sense, and is therefore very hard to analyse. It consists wholly in a peculiar point of view, and it makes its way into the mind far more slowly than wit. One enjoys it deliberately as though he were pleasantly savoring some ripe and sunny vintage, some rare old wine which must be sipped with deliberation so that not an atom of its fine bouquet shall be lost.

A certain slowness of comprehension often goes with humour, and even brightens its effect. At a brilliant flash of wit, one cries out in admiration. At a mellow piece of humour, one smiles a gradually broadening smile, which ends perhaps in a hearty laugh. Wit must be condensed; humour may be diffused over many sentences and even many pages. Of it there are numerous varieties, from the quiet, genial humour of Addison or the quaint fancy of Lamb to the broad fun which is best exemplified in Dickens.

#### WOMAN AS A WIT.

Remembering this, we can readily understand why women should have more wit than humour. They are more sensitive than men. Their minds are number. Their thoughts flash instantly to an intuitive conclusion. Hence wit is far more natural to them, and they have hardly the intellectual patience to create or to enjoy the less obvious and more deliberate moods of humour. When we contrast women with men in this respect, it will be contrasting the French as a people with the English. The former have always been famous for their wit and the latter for their humour. The French mind is lucid, mercurial, alert, and open to instantaneous impressions. The English mind is less