

agile, more given to ruminating, and therefore less receptive of what is new and striking. So there is no wit in the world to be compared with that of La Rochefoucauld, of Scarron, and of Voltaire; while there is no humour in any literature which quite equals that of the English writers whom I have already mentioned, and that of Steel and Fielding, of Goldsmith and of Holmes.

What is usually spoken of as "American humour" is very often not humorous at all, but is essentially marked by wit. The writings of Mark Twain afford abundant instances of both wit and humour, even though they are usually classified as belonging wholly to the second category. When he joins the dignified to the ludicrous in order to excite our mirth, when he startles us by some unexpected turn of phrase or thought, then he is simply witty. On the other hand his drolleries, conceived with an air of perfect gravity and put forth as though with a sincere simplicity—these are really humour, as when, in "The Innocents Abroad," he describes his experiences in a Turkish bath or tells of how he wept at the grave of Adam. The same thing is true of Lowell, whose "Biglow Papers" are at times irreverently witty and at other times replete with the richest humour.

But though the French as a people are more witty than humorous, and though the English as a people are more humorous than witty, it would be a very sweeping statement if one were to assert that the French possess no sense of humour. The innumerable comic scenes in Moliere's plays and the fact that his countrymen enjoyed them with an intense delight would prove the contrary, not to mention the abounding fun in Daudet's tales of the immortal Tartarin and his Algerian adventures, his faithful camel and his Falstaffian stories of his prowess as a hunter.

HUMOUR AND WOMEN WRITERS.

Precisely in the same way would it be absurd to hold that women have no sense of humour. The pages of literature—and of very great literature at

that—are enough to vindicate them from the charge of being merely witty. There are touches of humour to be found in all the novels of Jane Austen—in the love affairs of "Catherine Morland" and the flirtations of "Isabella Thorp." In "Mrs Poyser," George Eliot has given to the world a richly humorous type, witty, worthy to be set beside some of the most comic of the characters that Dickens drew. And so in her "Middlemarch" there is not only observation but real humour embodied in the sketch of "Mr Brooke"—that inconsequential, superficial, self-satisfied squire, "who used to know a good deal about this sort of thing some time ago," though at any given moment his knowledge about anything whatever is wholly scrambling and uncertain.

Again, the most amusing kind of humour is to be found in some of the chapters written by Harriet Beecher Stowe. Whatever one may think of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" as a polemical novel, there are scenes and incidents described in it which will make anyone laugh with unrestrained enjoyment. Topsy—that impossible little picaninny, mischievous, exasperating, and yet with a human heart—is droll to a degree; and scarcely less so is the primly conscientious Miss Ophelia, who undertakes to train and civilise this little waif of Africa. In quite another vein, yet with scarcely less effect, has Mrs Stowe uncovered a golden vein of fun in the theological portions of "The Minister's Wooing."

If we were to cite contemporaneous examples, the list of women writers who have shown the gift of humour might be lengthened out indefinitely; but the name of Mary Wilkins may serve alone as an admirable and convincing proof of what can be achieved by women in this field. Her New England characters—her prim old maids, her village boys and girls, her "hired men," her pedlars, and her grocers—are drawn in such a way that all their humorous possibilities are seen. And in drawing them she has shown a mastery of the supreme and finest type, in that the fun is often mingled and inseparably blended with that pathos which is never entirely re-

moté from the creations of the greatest humorists: since humour itself springs from an inner sympathy which lies very near the source of tears.

Clothes Made of Paper.

The day is not far distant when it may be the fashion to wear clothes made of paper. At first we shall be incredulous and sceptical, but with extended knowledge there will come enlarged faith, and in selecting our new summer suitings the preference will probably be for the very latest "paper cloth" patterns.

The new cloth is named by its Saxon inventor "xylofin." It is a paper yarn that has been successfully used in a wide range of textile fabrics.

The utilisation of paper wood fibre in this new and practical way, and the extreme cheapness of the new material compared with other yarns now in use is really a remarkable achievement.

It should be understood that xylofin is a wood fibre spun into a paper thread or yarn, and may be woven into any desired fabric. It is primarily a thread or yarn, and is employed exclusively in weaving.

The thread is not brittle, it does not have a hard surface, and it neither shrinks nor stretches to any appreciable extent. Having certain resilient qualities, it cannot be readily crushed or dented like paper, and on its moisture has practically no effect. It is a serviceable substitute for cotton, jute, linen, and even silk. When bleached the yarn is of a snowy whiteness, and at first glance cannot be distinguished from cotton. It can be woven to appear as homespun linen.

Being paper, it can be more readily dyed in delicate shades, far outmatching the range of colours to which cotton or silks are susceptible, and vastly more than those of linens.

Among the various fabrics in which the greatest amount of work has thus far been accomplished is the making of rugs and carpets, and at the factories

of the inventor paper floor coverings are woven in great quantities.

In Saxony the yarn of heavier quality, woven into beautiful designs, is found to possess advantages over certain classes of floor coverings.

Some idea of its adaptability for towels may be gathered from the fact that last year alone 7,000,000 pieces were made and sold, and it is likely that not one purchaser in a hundred but thought he was buying linen towelling at bargain prices.

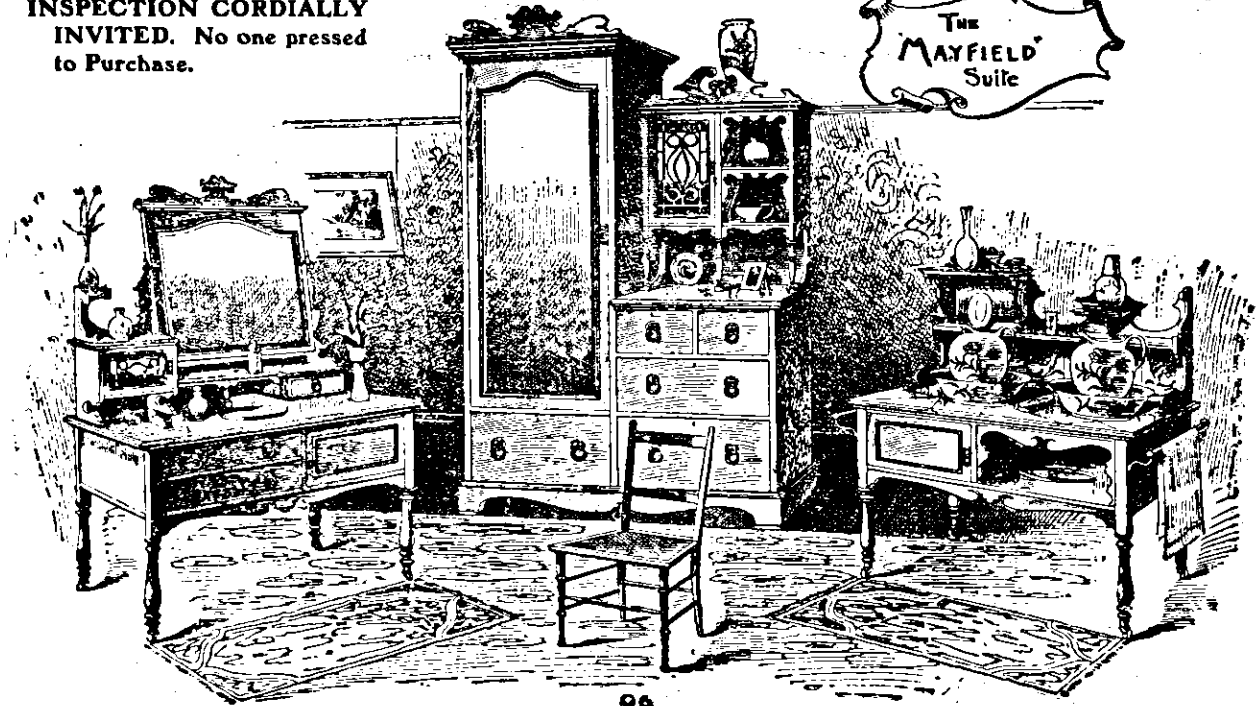
Grumbling Children.

We cannot expect our children to be cheerful and gay if we constantly set them the example of grumbling. I am sure we have all noticed that some children gradually take this tone from their mother, until the habit, with or without cause, is firmly established. They see discontent printed on the face which ought always to be pleasant, and the same lines form themselves on their own little faces, almost unconsciously.

I overheard a child say to her nurse, one day, recently, "Don't you find it (presumably some duty) a bother? Mother says everything is a bother!" Now, that child would never have thought of such a thing if the idea had not been suggested to her by her unwise parent. Have you never passed a group of gossiping women, and noticed the expression on the faces of the little ones who are standing by, listening to the remarks, complaints, and detailed anecdotes, etc., of first on woman and then another? Small wonder is it that the little girls grow up into loud-voiced scolds. Even in their play their tones lose their childish cadence, and are transformed by mimic anger into harsh unlovely sounds. As there is a time for everything, so there are occasions when it is necessary for you to show displeasure at something which has occurred to annoy you. But having once spoken out plainly about it, say no more, especially in the presence of the children, who are born mimics, and are quick to take their tone from yours.

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