



AS SEEN THROUGH WOMAN'S EYES.

My Husband's Friends.

(By a Meek Woman.)

When I first married I made up my mind that my husband's friends should be my own, and that I would have no others. I have striven as far as possible to carry this out, but the task has been one of considerable difficulty. I have, not without many tears, resigned my own friends, but it has been no easy task to keep up with his.

Joseph is a highly intellectual man, and wanders from field to field of knowledge. This, no doubt, is of advantage to his mental development, but it has made rather hard demands upon my capacity for friendship. Soon after our marriage, he resumed ardently the study of entomology, which our courtship had temporarily interrupted, and as a consequence our first friends were mainly gentlemen who lived upon insects. I did not care much about insects, but I did my very best to be cordial to the collectors who at that time swarmed in our modest villa. Joseph was secretary to the English branch of the Bug Society, a title, as my readers are no doubt aware, bearing a generic, and not a specific, application. I was required to be particularly attentive to one man, because he knew the exact number of legs possessed by every kind of caterpillar; then to another, because he was the authority of the future upon antennae; and afterwards to a third, because he had a private recipe for making infant's food for larvae, which recipe I was to worm out of him. These gentlemen were, in the eyes of a young married woman, remarkably dry in their conversation, and they seemed to regard me as a common butterfly, not worth their attention; but I bore it as well as I could.

This study did not, however, long

satisfy Joseph's thirst for knowledge. He one day met a man calling himself a psychologist, and forthwith threw over the whole tribe of entomologists, just as I was getting used to their ways and to having their beetles on the tea-table. The study now was all thought transference, mnemonic impressions, second sight, omens, and even downright ghosts. The consequent friends were, I am bound to say, much more lively than the insect people, and they included ladies. They had one great virtue—they all talked at once, so that I was not at much expense for conversation; the expense was mainly in tea and muffins, for they all showed themselves extremely grateful for strong tea at any hour of the day. Joseph, of course, had his preferences among them. There was one lady, a widow, who saw her husband's ghost by her own bedside every night at eleven, where he stood till the whistle blew of the early newspaper train on the adjacent railway (he had been an editor when alive, she said), and to this widow I was almost commanded to pay special court. My private instructions were to get invited to stay the night at her house, and if possible catch sight of the apparition; but this I never accomplished. She always preferred to stay at ours. And there was a man with very wild eyes who professed he could always tell what his brother in New Zealand was thinking of at any moment, and Joseph was so eager to get at his "method" that I was required to cultivate him assiduously. I broached the subject of the "method" several times to him in quiet corners, but though he would quite unnecessarily take my hand and press it, he never made any revelations.

During this period I was also on terms of the strictest friendship with several mediums, and a man of extra-

ordinary "odid force," who could only keep the force up on chicken and port wine, and who was quite a tax on my exchequer as well as my anuity. But Joseph after two or three years deserted psychology, and I was forced to cut the threads of friendship which had grown up between them and me. I was rather sorry, as they were sometimes very entertaining, especially when they quarrelled who could "see" most. My husband then went right to the other extreme, and took up "physical development," and we had nothing but men and women of muscle in the house. For three months, at least, I was required to make a bosom friend of a lady whom Joseph much admired, because she could lift two 56's, one in each hand. The 56's, at this period, were served up regularly with the meals, and a "demonstration" held afterwards. Very many other subjects has Joseph taken up since, but I may say with pride that I have never faltered in my duty, so that I have this time had bosom friends under almost all the headings of the Encyclopaedia.

Joseph, however, does not neglect his business interests, and many and varied are the people whom those interests have made my friends. Never, perhaps, were more demands made upon my transferable friendship than at the time when he was trying for an excellent appointment under the Corporation. I remember well his coming to me almost breathless one evening to tell me that the then holder of the office was "on his last legs," that he meant to get it if he could, and that he understood Mr Alderman Gobble, of the Gas and Sewers, virtually had the appointment in his gift. He had approached Mr Gobble through a friend, and had invited him to dine the next day, and he conjured me to show him the warmest friendship that was in my

power. Needless to say that, as in duty bound, I did the best I could for Mr Gobble, and Joseph said he was very much pleased with me. I looked at him with eyes of the deepest interest right from the soup to the cheese, while he discoursed with my husband on the sewers and gases; I drank in the few words he vouchsafed to me, and I played and sang to him after dinner, just loudly enough to give a musical setting to his snores. Joseph told me a few days afterwards that we had made a most favourable impression, and that matters were progressing well. But the next week, alas! he discovered from a sure source that Mr Gobble was not the man after all; but that Mr Calipee, of the Dustbins and Monuments, really pulled the wires. Therefore I had to transfer my warmest friendship at once to Mr Calipee, and especially to his wife, through whose influence great things might be expected. This I did. Mrs Calipee was a very haughty lady; to use a common expression, she "wiped her feet" on me; but I abased myself before her for Joseph's sake, and showed her a friendliness which I do not think she often inspires. This went on for a month, during which time I had Mrs Calipee, or some of her children, on my back constantly. But again Joseph found out that he had got hold of the wrong man; Mr Calipee could really do nothing; it was Mr Terrier, of the Ways and Means, who really had the influence.

I have not time to tell the whole story of this appointment, for this was only the beginning. Joseph kept on making mistakes as to the real man who had the influence. The man who was "on his last legs" kept on them for over two years, and during that time there were at least fifteen men, several with wives and families, to whom I was required to show the full glow of friendship. And when at last the appointment was vacant, it was given to another applicant, through whose influence we never knew. It is as well perhaps that Joseph did not get it, as his digestion has never been very strong. But if ever I venture to say so, he says he believes a little more friendliness on my part would have secured it.

A Royal Reception which Cost Only £1.

It is probable that the King and Queen will visit Lord Salisbury at Walmer Castle during the coming summer. The event will recall the visit of Queen Victoria to the same historic fortress when the Duke of Wellington was its custodian as Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports. Her Majesty had not previously enjoyed the Iron Duke's hospitality, and the severely simple preparations made for her comfort amused her. She had heard of his iron truckle-bed and painted deal washstand, and was grateful that she had been granted a slightly larger degree of luxury. It is said that the preparations for the reception of his sovereign cost Wellington £1. The bed which the Queen used is still at the Castle.

Which are the Most Popular Hymns?

The "Sunday at Home" recently asked its readers to send on a post-card the name of their favourite hymn. Some 370 adults responded, and the result is briefly as follows: "Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me," 37 votes; "Lead, Kindly Light," 22; "Peace, Perfect Peace," 22; Jesu, Lover of My Soul," 19; "Abide With Me," 14; "Just as I Am, Without One Plea," 10; "I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say," 8; "There is a Green Hill Far Away," 7; "How Sweet the Name of Jesus sounds," 6; "Thy Way, Not Mine, O Lord," 6; "The King of Love My Shepherd Is," 5; "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," 5. The following hymns had four votes each: "O Love, That Will Not Let Me Go," "My God, My Father, While I Stray," "O Jesus, I Have Promised," "Come Unto Me, Ye Weary," "O God Our Help in Ages Past," "On the Resurrection Morning," "Take My Life and Let It Be," "There Were Ninety and Nine That Safely Lay."