

**Matrimonial Misfits.**

**SAVING AND SPENDING.**

The pecuniary prosperity of the family life is as important as any part of it, and living within one's means is an essential condition of the peace that should follow plenty. Uneasy lies the head that has debt for a pillow, and very uneasy must be the man be who knows that while he is saving money at the "spigot" his wife is letting it "run out at the bung." His devotion to her had need match his confidence in his own powers for him to face the future with equanimity.

An extravagant wife is a thorn in the side of the plodding man, and the marriage that might be almost perfect in other respects must necessarily be marred by this one failing, for he is for ever in anxiety as to what she is going "to let him in" for next.

I once heard a man say laughingly to his wife whom he was accusing of extravagance: "You cost me £300 a year more than you need, but, on the whole, you're worth it." Which was good philosophy, but not the best way of putting on the brake.

Perhaps it was his pleasant way of bowing to the inevitable, and perhaps he could afford it. So many cannot, and yet are dragged miserably into debt for the sake of doing like their neighbours, and having what others have. "They stunt and distort their true selves in striving to act up to some conventional standard of propriety."

**THE LIGHTING QUESTION.**

Extravagance is, of course, only a question of proportion, and the causes of friction vary from old china at Christie's to the odd halfpenny in the butcher's bill.

The Browns, whose electric light costs them about £30 a quarter, are looked upon with horror by the Robinsons, whose bill is never more than £6 17/6. But then Mrs Brown revels in a large income, and can afford the dazzling splendour of an Alhambra illumination, whereas the Robinsons, of humbler means, live practically in the dark, and are obliged to precede you upstairs to turn on the light.

"Never have electric light, my dear," said Mrs Robinson to me one day. "I've had more quarrels with my husband since we've had it the last six months, than in ten years of married life." The leak is generally in the everyday expenses of the house, however much the woman exclaims "Cigars!" or the man retorts with "Hats!" (How is it they always attack our hats?)

It takes almost a lifetime to thoroughly master the intricacies of domestic economy, without being mean and stingy. I stipulate for that. It is easy enough to do without things, and teach others to do without them, and to cut it so fine that you must go without. But to have everything you need, to buy it in the best market at the lowest rate, and use it to the best advantage, and use it all, is a triumph of management continually yearned after, but seldom attained.

Managing money is like playing golf. The best player will sometimes find himself landed in a bunker, and it is only his experience which enables him to get out of it without a bad loss.

**WHEN ECONOMY BECOMES EXPENSIVE.**

To save without suffering, that is victory. Economy becomes expensive when it means torment. I know a woman whose housekeeping ambition is to keep her weekly bills down to £3 5/, and her condition of mind when one of the children happens to lose sixpence on the way to the fruiterer's amounts to frenzy. Even with a very small income one should still continue to allow a margin for trivial losses, that one may be spared the wear and tear of penny vexations and two penny worries.

Many of us who have quite a comfortable margin to our incomes pinch and screw and save to buy luxuries that will really not make any difference to us.

Forgo a few odd things you can do without, and you will be able to go along easily without scraping and meanness; and you will not be so busy either laying down those fretful lines that disfigure the faces of those who are for ever wanting something. You will have money to spare for a little inevitable waste or loss, and you will be able to afford to wink at the contingencies which other folks dub extravagancies. Let them buy furbelows and kickshaws—you will have bought peace of mind. And you will escape the fate of the majority, who "eat their hearts out in a wearying struggle to copy those who have twice their income."

**Fortunes in Feathers.**

A French enthusiast has been collecting the statistics of the number of birds which are killed to decorate the hats of ladies on his own and our side of the Channel.

To begin with, he informs us that the craving for wing-feathers has resulted in the total extinction of swallows, kingfishers, and goldfinches in France.

They have all been hunted into other countries or exterminated.

The feathers with which ladies decorate their hats nowadays come mostly from Siberia and from the country where the Kergesse, Ostiacks, and Samoyeds abide and flourish. These tribes employ their interminable winter mainly in shooting and in snaring birds.

They eat the flesh and sell the skins, as well as the feathers.

At the market of Urbit, a town on the borderland of Europe and of Asia, this winter 3000 horned owls were sold at seven roubles (15/) a pair, and 4000 pairs of eagles fetched the same price. White owls were in great request, and 16,000 pairs were sold at two roubles (about 4/4) the pair. The ordinary grey owl is not marketable.

No fewer than 200,000 pairs of magpies fetched good prices, and 2000 grebes (a little crested bird which looks like a duck with the head of a hen) were run up to the price of half a crown a pair by the fur merchants, who were very keen on the feathers, which are much in request for muffs and the trimming of ladies' dresses, owing to the glossiness of their plumage.

Sixty thousand pairs of grouse tail feathers and of woodcocks' tails fetched only about 10 copeks, and partridge feathers were a glut upon the market. Thirty thousand pairs of partridge wings were sold for less than 2d the pair.

**Fashions in Proposals.**

**THE CONFESSIONS OF A MUCH-LOVED GIRL.**

Different ways of proposing are as numerous this spring as are the different men who propose. Some propose flippantly, lightly, as if they invited you to luncheon, instead of matrimony, preparing to hedge if they get "No," and to say they were only flirting.

Others there are, straightforward, manly and honourable, who take "No" with such serious grace that they win your respect and liking, if they cannot win your love.

Some men propose on their knees, some sitting right back in a corner of the sofa, and others standing up boldly; but whatever way it may be, they all always look funny. They have such a dazed and dazzled expression, as if they had been struck right between the eyes, and I believe science asserts that Cupid strikes somewhere on the left side. I have only had one man ever get on his knees to propose to me. This one had on white duck trousers, and he knelt down in the dusty path in which we were walking. His mother would have spanked him had she been there. When he got up there were two great dirt spots, one on each knee, of his otherwise immaculate ducks. He might just as well have put on a placard, saying, "I've just proposed." It was really pathetic. Next to seeing a man on his knees a girl loves to see him cry, after he has proposed.

The length of time it takes a man to propose, after he has first met the girl, depends upon the nature of the man, the climate, the weather, the surroundings, the moon, the state of his mind, and a little bit on the way the girl treats him. Sometimes they propose all of a sudden, without any treatment at all beforehand. If the moon is full and the man is not, the average man should be expected to propose within fifteen days after he has first met the girl. If he sees her three times a day, for three hours at a time, he can usually become well acquainted with her nature and all her little characteristics in that time, provided the girl is simple, as is apt to be the case. Very few women are complex. It isn't so important whether the girl understands the man's nature or not. But, anyway, she can learn it in no time at all, because all men are alike. They mostly all are brainy, and can smoke and

love with equal ease. There are men who say very fiercely, as if they were really desperate, "Will you, or won't you marry me?" That sort of men are not much good, because you can't flirt with them and keep them dangling. They make you say either "Yes" or "No" right away. You can't fool them.

There are many ways in which a girl can tell that a man is going to propose, before he does. First, there is the tone in his voice. Then his eyes always follow you about the room in the most admiring, adoring way. He looks at you with a vague, far-away gaze, as if he really saw a vision, or an angel; but he thinks he does, so let him alone. At this stage of the game he wouldn't even dare to call you "darling." But he has other ways of showing how he likes you. Sometimes he drops little hints about his ideal of a woman. He says he never met her—until now. Again, he makes allusions to his income, and says he supposes it seems so little to you. Some men propose by showing you their bank books, and saying, "Will that be enough?"

The only way to propose is the old way—the way Adam must have proposed to Eve, before there was any money, or reason, or anything in the world but—Love. Go to her and say, "You've got to marry me because I love you and you love me, and I can't live without you." And that style of proposal is always in fashion.

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