

left in his discovery. Then he must find something else.

"On his part the dressmaker has to make the best use of the stuffs at his command, not according to his own taste, but according to the character of the material. But the skill and genius of the dressmaker dispose of the materials at command in the best possible manner. It is as much a matter of practice as it is of taste. In March the models are ready for the commercial travellers. They are not for the summer wear, but for the winter following, and the dressmaker at that period of the year already regards the new gowns which will be on view in May to September as out of date."

"Then the fashions are really set nine months in advance?"

"Yes; but there is always a steady current which begins, extends, and ends. And who makes the start? It may be an heir-apparent who fancies a particular necktie, or a princess who prefers a particular material or colour. In a lesser degree every well-dressed woman sets the fashion. Sometimes the dames of fashion get woefully taken in. In Paris the great desire is to wear something which someone else has not got."

At What Age Should Lovers Become Engaged?

It is a proud moment in the life of the average young man when the girl he professes to love consents to wear his engagement ring. And it is quite safe to affirm that one of the happiest periods in a girl's life is when she is able to exhibit the little hoop of gold on her finger, which proclaims the fact that there is someone who considers her the best and dearest little woman in the world.

This, perhaps, accounts for the fact that no sooner do two young people become attracted toward one another, and indulge in lovers' walks, stolen interviews and kisses, than the young man makes all haste to purchase the best engagement ring he can afford, in order that he may be able to feel that the girl is pledged to him alone. The thought as to whether he and the one who has captivated his heart are old enough to plight their troth is a matter which probably both of them think of no consequence whatever.

The young woman, as a rule, is quite willing to wear his engagement ring, in spite of the fact that their combined ages do not, perhaps, exceed thirty-four or thirty-five years, and her lover's salary is such that some five or six years must elapse before they can think of getting married.

To say the least of it, such an engagement is somewhat dangerous to the happiness of both concerned. Sometimes their patience and love are tried and not found wanting during the years of waiting, and the reward of their faithfulness to one another is many years of happy married life. But more often than not, after the first glamour of love has worn off and the engagement is a

year or so old, they discover that there are serious failings between them. They unhappily find that what they thought was love in the first place was purely boy and girl fancy, and probably by the time they reach the age of twenty-one or twenty-two each of them meets some one else who wins their real love.

It more frequently happens, however, that one is true to his or her youthful vows, the other being rendered doubly miserable by the fact that he or she fears to bring unhappiness into the other's life by confessing that someone else had gained his or her heart's affection. Under such circumstances a young man has often felt himself in honour bound to continue his engagement to the girl who has loved and trusted him for so long, although he knows full well that his real love is bestowed elsewhere. And so it may happen with the woman.

Such unhappy situations would undoubtedly be avoided to a great extent if couples would wait until they were twenty-one or twenty-two years of age, or even older, if the marriage day is far distant, before pledging themselves.

It is far better that an acquaintance between two young people, even if they do love one another, should continue without any binding attachment until they are both of age. If their love for one another is true and sincere it will not lose any of its value because of the absence of any outward sign. The practical girl will perhaps say that it is not fair for a man to occupy two or three years of a young woman's life without something definite being settled between them, and an engagement ring is necessary in many cases to keep him to his promise of love and marriage.

A man, however, who would not remain sincere and true to the woman he professed to love unless held to his pledge by the sight of an engagement ring upon her finger would not be worth a moment's thought.

The Network Girl.

She wears a network waist. Her stockings are network, too; I look at her openwork sleeves and see Her soft arms gleaming through. When she raises her fluffy skirts A little way, ah, me! I see the dainty bits of white That peep through filigree.

You say it is rude of me To look through her network waist, Or to gaze below when she lifts her skirts. So dainty and eke so chaste? Nay, say not so! It were rude If I should neglect to see. For why is she wearing her network things If not to be seen by me?

"New York Herald."

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Who is an "Old Maid"?

The old maid limit has been fixed. For many years there was nothing settled or definite about it. Everyone was well aware of an age line, beyond which an unmarried woman was an old maid, and within which she was a young one, but just what that age was remained a mystery.

From a woman's viewpoint it was very apt to vary with her own age. In both masculine and feminine minds it was a line purely imaginary, like the Equator and the Tropic of Capricorn.

But now comes a decision upon the subject from no less an authority than the French courts, fixing the limit at 30 years. So far, at least, as France is concerned, it is not only definite but final. At 29 years 11 months and 29 days a woman is still a young maid; forty-eight or twenty-four hours later and she is an old one. The way that the matter happened to go to court at all, and so become settled, is as follows:

A certain "Old Maids' Home" in France found itself overrun with applicants of all ages and sizes, the term "old maid" seeming to have no terrors for them when it comprehended so much in the way of leisure and shelter that was to be had for nothing. The managers of the home, in order to protect themselves, were therefore obliged to fix an age limit, and that this might be accomplished definitely and authoritatively, the courts were asked to determine it. After weighty and due consideration this body put the limit at 30 years.

Fat and Famous.

It is a curious fact that among women fame and fatness appear to be almost synonymous terms. For instance, the greater number of the most celebrated sovereigns, both of past times and of the present day, have been, to put it mildly, anything but living skeletons.

To begin with, the fair Cleopatra, according to the testimony of cameos and statues, was decidedly stout, while both Maria Theresa and the Empress Catherine of Russia were equally remarkable for their bodily and mental development, which, in the case of the Russian Empress, ultimately degenerated into downright monstrosity.

Equally stout was our own "Good Queen Anne," while among later monarchs may be mentioned the late Queen Christina and the ex-Queen Isabella of Spain, and, with all respect be it added, our own late Queen, Victoria.

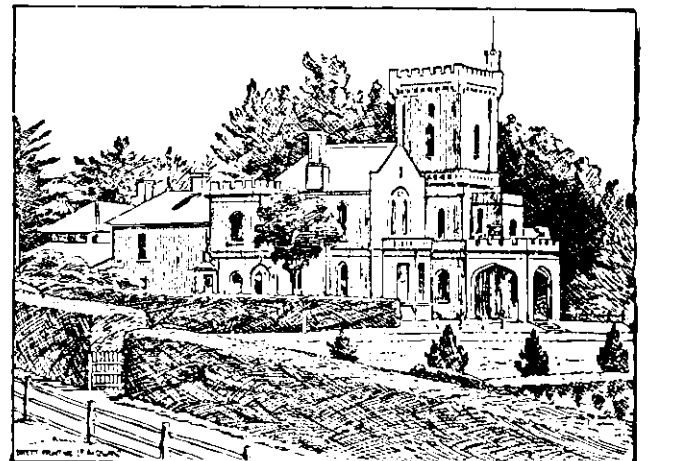
The same rule applies to literature, to science, to art, and to society. Thus "George Eliot" the novelist was stout, as were "Georges Sand," Hannah More, Mme. de Staël, and Mme. Blavatsky. So, too, was Rosa Bonheur, the celebrated painter.

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