

CHARACTER SKETCHES.

NO. 10.

ONE of the greatest charms in a woman is a sweet voice. It is not a common virtue. Englishmen, of a critical turn of mind, have said that one of the chief points of difference between the English and the American girl is that while the former has often a low, musical voice, the latter's is generally shrill and harsh. Certain it is that in this country practically no attention is given to voice culture for purely conversational purposes, and the girl who pipes and elevates her voice is much more often met with than the girl who shows her refinement in her voice, and talks to you in well modulated tones, low and musical.

Culture is manifested in no way more clearly than in the voice.

It is difficult to imagine that the woman who shrieks and whose voice sometimes batters the drums in your ears and sends a tingle along your spinal column, is a person of any considerable refinement. Though there are women of this sort who talk of books and pictures and landscapes. A woman who has no control over her voice has omitted one very important lesson in the school of culture.

It is easy, on the other hand, to believe that the woman who expresses herself clearly and forcibly in low, resonant tones, never allowing her voice to ascend to the treble, is refined and cultivated in things other than the voice.

The voice may not be an unfailing index to character; but is it not infrequently a strong indication—in women particularly. The woman whose voice is soft is quite likely to have the concomitant graces. She will, in many cases, be found to have, if not an equable temper, at least strong self control; amiability, gentleness, kindness, sympathy; all these without in any way detracting from her force of character. The woman who talks in a loud manner, who has a harsh, discordant voice, may be nervous, excitable, easily irritated, head-strong.

I have in mind a young woman whom I have known for seven or eight years. I have seen her under trying circumstances, and when the incentive to excitement was strong; but her voice was always under perfect control. It is soft and rich, intensely musical in laughter, and never, under any circumstances, is it harsh or jarring. It is a pleasure to hear her talk. She has great strength of character and wide culture, and a mildness of manner that varies just enough to give piquancy. With her everything, apparently, goes smoothly, and it is a pleasure to witness the ease with which she meets the bugbear people call trouble. She takes life thoughtfully and calmly and brings her intelligence to bear on all the emergencies that spring up in the pathway along which she glides easily and gracefully.

But it is of her voice and manner of talking, particularly, that I wish to speak. All of the grace and sweetness of her character seem to be reflected in the refined and gentle tones of her voice. When she speaks things seem to soften. If there is any discord where she may happen to be, she strikes the note of harmony and brings peace. She laughs in a whole hearted way, but always in the most musical manner. She talks earnestly and spiritedly, but the flexibility of her voice never betrays any evidence of a lack of thorough culture. Friendliness and sympathetic interest and sincerity are evident in her voice. If you could not see her face or eyes you could tell her character when she spoke, and you would trust her. Her voice is tuneful with all of her womanly traits, and no one would ever doubt her truth who heard her speak. TEYN.

Money may be tight, but it is not whooping things up.

"Six days shalt thou labor," says the great lawgiver. To do good work man must be at his best. This condition is attained by the use of Ayer's Sarsaparilla. It overcomes that tired feeling, quickens the appetite, improves digestion and makes the weak strong.

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THE VALUE OF A WIFE.

EVERYTHING has a value; but the value of some things is exceedingly difficult to determine. A wife, for instance, has been generally classed among those articles, which, although properly regarded as necessities of life, are commonly supposed to be incapable of definite valuation in dollars and cents. Value, we are told, means worth, and this, of course, all our wives have; but like other commodities, it fluctuates. There are times when a wife is worth more to us than all the world beside—when she is priceless, invaluable. This is when the domestic horizon is clear, the household relations pleasant, and the environment auspicious—when our heated brow is soothed by the good wife's caressing touch on our return from a day's toil, and when the cooing of the dove is not followed by a smiling demand for opera tickets, or a couple of "tenners" for a new bonnet. Under these circumstances it would be impossible to fix a value on our better half. Under other conditions, however, there is a visible decline in value. When after a day of worry, we wend our weary way to the domestic fireside and are met with a reproach for being late, and then a chilling reminder that tomorrow is the first of the month and that the dry goods store will want the money for that new spring outfit—then we would sell out cheap. There are also, it must be admitted, different kinds of wives, and difference in quality means or should always mean a difference in value. A wife who is the only child of a dyspeptic old money bags is apt to tip the scale on the one who is the eighth daughter of poor but honest parents. This is another difficulty in the way of fixing her value. Then a wife who is priceless to her husband might not be worth a song to any one else and, alas, there are cases where this is reversed. All these things, and sundry and divers others, have made it impossible to arrive at anything like an equitable valuation of a wife. The court of appeals of Virginia, however, in its superior wisdom, has risen above all of these considerations and has given us a standard. The jury in a lower court not long ago rendered a verdict of \$6,000 for a loss by accident of a "superior" wife, and this finding was affirmed by the court above. So we can have no hesitancy, if we have a superior wife, in adding an extra \$6,000 to our assets when making our report to Bradstreet and Dun. The court, in commenting on the case, said: "If the wife be loving, tender and dutiful to her husband; thrifty, industrious, economical, prudent—as the evidence in this case proved Mrs. McConnell to be—then 'her price is far above rubies,' and the loss of such a wife, of such a helpmeet, of such influence, of such a blessed and potent ministry and companionship, is a proper element of damages to be considered by the jury in fixing the solatium to be awarded to the husband for tearing her from his heart and home."

POTPOURRI.

ESTABROOK told the preachers, when they met in national convention in Omaha, that this was a climate where more religion would flourish on less theology than could be found in the world. Estabrook's a prophet.

There's any amount of religion in Lincoln that isn't labeled at all, because there don't appear to be any creeds tacked onto it. Religion all the same.

The kind that the Master dealt out to the woman to whom He said, "Neither do I condemn thee."

The kind that whispered to the sorrowing, words of comfort so divine, that their beauty has made them eternal; the kind that was never blind or deaf to sin, or weakness, or suffering—that never forgot its own. The pure, unadulterated love of Christ, showing in the kindly hand and heart, reaching out to recognize the universal brotherhood of man.

Upon reflection is it not true that consistency is the most perfectly inconsistent thing in the world?

The artists who paint the devil in his blackest dyes, are generally the ones whose own lives would stand a few high lights to good advantage.

AUGUSTA L. PACKARD.

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