

THE NEW ORDER OF FRIENDSHIP.

That women have no talent for friendship is among those statements that have grown to be accepted and exchanged like small currency in literature and conversation.

The opinion, however, seems to be less the result of widely extended observation than of the compact and epigrammatic form in which it has been expressed by the various sages and philosophers who have done woman the honor to write frequently, knowingly, and in an accomplished manner about her.

"The friendship of two women is always a coalition against a third," writes Alphonse Karr.

"I never knew a tolerable woman to have a friend of her own sex," declares Dean Swift.

Eugenie de Guerin exclaims, "Orestes and Pylades have no sisters."

The summary, in brief, seems to be, that friendship with men is impossible, because nature, in making her a woman, made her also a siren; and that friendship with a woman is unlikely, because women, like other actors on the same stage, are rivals rather than allies. "Very pretty girls have no friends of their own sex, and they even find it hard to get another girl to keep them company," writes Schopenhauer. This La Bruyere but partially affirms, when he states that men are the occasion of women's dislike to one another; and Shakspeare intimates, in reporting the conversation of "those two lovely bodies on one stem," Hermia and Helena, a conversation that seems to end in a breach of the peace as well as of their intimacy.

And although Fanny Squeers and Matilda Price, after their quarrel about Nicholas Nickleby, were clasped in each other's arms, "the fifty-second time the impressive ceremony had taken place in a twelvemonth," the breach was finally made.

It is because of this widespread belief and confident and clever assertion of it, that the few historic friendships of women have been so much written about and extolled. The friendships of Madame de Stael and Madame Swetchine for Madame Recamier are among the best examples of friendship among women. Of this the two literary ladies have left abundant proof in their letters, although as some one has remarked, "Juliette was always singularly reticent concerning her side of these friendships."

Women have the reputation of placing friendship below love, depreciating it in misunderstanding it. Alphonse Karr relates that a lady being compelled to refuse an offer of marriage, offered her friendship instead.

"Oh, no, madame," the lover replied. "I love you. I want to marry you. It is enough. But to be my friend I must know you. I must respect you; we must have congenial tastes. One does not take a friend hastily. Oh, no, madame. Friendship is another thing."—Harper's Bazar.

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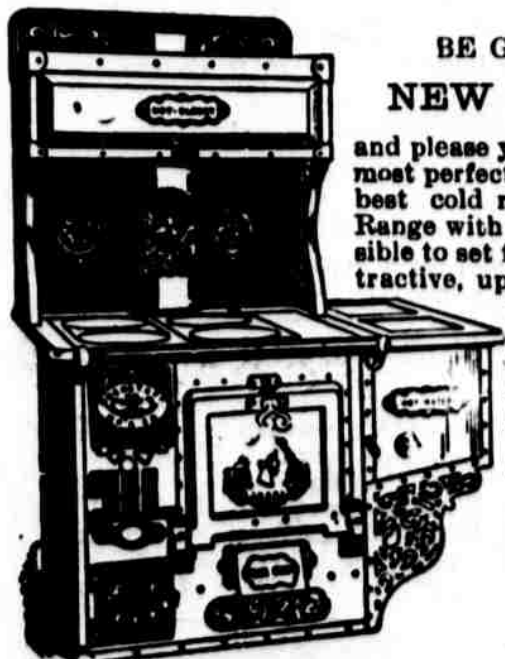
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