Is the Good Woman Too Tame for Art?

A NUMBER of loving friends are joining with solicitous relatives to aver that William Watson, the English poet who wrote "The Woman with the Serpent's Tongue," is not mad—merely crazy.

Watson himself has been trying to prove he was neither.

The general public has been wondering whether he isn't both, and then some, largely along the lines of ingratitude and petty meanness.

But the Author's guild, of which his venomous effusion proved him so dangerous a member, being versed in the history of literature, has been seeing

"Leah Kleschna," Personated by Mrs. Fiske.

in him only a peculiarly callous genius with an eye to business.

Literature has seldom, if ever, made a shining success with the perfectly good woman, they say; and it is destined, ultimately, to match Mark Twain's monument to Adam with another to Eve, in gratitude for the frailties which make her descendants good material.

In their expert opinion, as in the observation of the critics generally, the good woman is too tame for art; and the fine frenzy of the poetic Watson, whether inspired by his pro-Boer sympathies, as he alleges, or by chagrin, over failure to achieve knighthood, as averred by the Asquiths, went straight to the oldest and the most interesting topic literature can handle—the frailties of a woman.

In the universal literary diatribe against lovely woman, Watson is so far from singing solo that his, although the latest, shriek of contumely is only part of the chorus.

What in the world can the other authors of our time have against woman?

ALL SEEM TO HAVE GRUDGE

MOST of them, it would appear, have the cruelest which any indictment can bring to the bar; and the authors of woman's own sex are no whit behind the others in that fatal accusation. In modern literature, at least, Caesar's wife cannot be wholly above suspicion and interesting at the same time—certainly not upon the grand scale that makes a novel the "book of the year."

One of those "books of the year" was Mrs. Humphry Ward's "Awakening of Helena Ritchie," in which the wilful Helena was very much indeed open to suspicion; the immortal Julius, for a hundreth part of her indiscretions, would have surely drawn his gladius and chased her all the way to the Temple of Janus. And some other thrilling novels of the same august English romancer depended for their thrills upon the self same theme.

In the United States, one of the strongest novels of recent years was Edith Wharton's "House of Mirth," where all American society was drawn upon for types of vain and ambitious, greedy and intriguing women, with Lily Bart, the heroine, weakest and most intriguing of them all, her virtue assailed and withheld from destruction only at the extreme verge, and death depicted as the only fitting close for the vacillating, greedy, humiliated self she carries about through the concluding chapters of the novel.

The most severe comment current literature, which embraces its criticisms, made upon woman was in the critical sequels to Mrs. Wharton's startling story, for the general verdict was as much in indorsement of her social facts as of her artistic skill. Criticism, joining forces with romance, left the modern society woman only patches of character, supplemented with a polite belief in her respectability.

When such heavy guns as Ibsen unlimber for action against that dainty butterfly, woman, the general effect comes pretty close to apparent annihilation.

That is what happens to unhappy Hedda Gabler, who managed, with every advantage of beauty and position in her own modest circle, to ruin the men who loved her, drive genius to its death and end in nothingness herself, all through her insatiable pride, temper, jealousy and selfishness. A heavy indictment indeed, but one which the ponderous and thunderous Ibsen found plenty of other butterflies to aim it at.

Merciless Dramatist.

Woman and her weakness furnish a dramatist so thoroughly up-to-date as Arthur Wing Pinero with his most effective topics, and the characters in his "Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith" are only selections from what seems to be an inexhaustible repertoire of observations, of which but a few, in the way of saving graces, are creditable to womankind.

When, occasionally, an American playwright succeeds in making his "female lead" worth worrying over from across the footlights, he finds it very, very hard to go further along the line of approval by emphasizing the saving graces.

There was C. M. S. McLellan, who

Mrs. Patrick Campbell as "The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith."

wrote that immensely popular drama, "Leah Kleschna." Leah was just a plain, out-and-out thief—a lady burglar, who starts the dramatic ball rolling by attempting a burglary, and is prevented from accomplishing it by being caught in the act.

Leah's noble nature comes out strong through all the complications that ensue, and she ends as the bride of the philanthropist who caught her stealing; but she, above any popular heroine of recent years, has a past that may be called record breaking.

There was one woman in English romance, however, whose past was worse than hers, because it is a fixed principle of morals in English literature that burglary and the other crimes of the calendar are mere peccadilloes in comparison with that one woman's sin as to which all Britain virtuously refuses ever to speak—and has been most ardently reading for the past generation.

Thomas Hardy's "Tess."

Thomas Hardy's "Tess of the d'Urbervilles" had committed that offense. Respectability proffered the saving hand in marriage, and Tess, believing she had cleared her conscience by confession, took the happiness that was hers, and Tess herself had the elemental passions which doomed her to be her evil destiny's toy.

She ended very badly—and there was another woman indicted and convicted by an author who, thus far, hasn't shown the smallest prejudices against women in his private life, nor has ever been accused, like Watson, of regarding the whole adorable sex as being composed of any but perfect ladies.

The forbidden theme—and that at a time when the forbidding meant something—was the whole motive of Wilkie Collins' most human novel, if not, perhaps, his most complicated one. His "New Magdalen" took the vilest figure to be found in a great city's scourings, and exalted the true, womanly soul that lived under the hideousness of her manner of life.

Evil Characters Interest.

His readers, then and now, have always been free to admit that Collins, in that one story, at any rate, did succeed in creating a woman who could hold the interest to the end.

Thackeray, it is notorious, achieved his most conspicuous success with the most evil of his womanly characters, Becky Sharpe. There, if anywhere, was ample evidence that the author who paints an evil woman does it for sheer love of the job.

The great Thackeray could judge and condemn the shrewd, conscienceless, calculating Becky as mercilessly as though he were on the bench and she a criminal at the bar before him.

Yet he loved in his capacity of artist as a scientist might love a rare and perfect specimen of species-type; and every stroke and shading he put into his portrayal of the inimitable Becky Sharpe was done with almost loving kindness.

Both he and Dickens must ever remain monumental examples supporting the theory that the good woman is too tame for art rather than that the authors are indulging any prejudice against the sex. Both made repeated attempts to depict the perfectly good, lovable girl and woman; and it has remained that both scored repeated failures by presenting milk-and-water figures that had no more saliency and genuine life to them than so many marionettes.

Reade and Stevenson.

Even Charles Reade, of whom a woman critic declared he made all his women cats, left figures in his stories that seem to be alive, and did it purely because of their faults, not of their virtues.

It was that sense of the good woman's artistic futility, as many admirers of the late Robert Louis Stevenson believe, wich so long debarred him from introducing her in his romances, save as he could limn her in the faintest sketchings.

It was hard for Stevenson to believe, and harder for him to say, that every woman on earth failed to fill the specifications of a full-fledged angel, fit only for sinful and fallible man to worship. It was equally hard for him, as the born artist, to put his pen to any literary adventure whose ample picturesqueness of action threatened to be doubtful.

Between the inborn chivalry of the man and the acute perceptions of the artist Stevenson had to reach maturity before he could even dare attempt the drawing of a woman; and, when all is said and done with him, his successes have been exclusively with characters that are male.

Frenchmen Are Unfettered.

The English-writing author, generally hampered by an almost imperious tradition bidding him regenerate his women if he doesn't keep them quite within the dead line of respectability, seems to feel always some measure of the sense of futility that weighed upon Stevenson. But the Frenchman, and the continental author at large, can be as merciless in analyzing her as a vivisectionist with a frog. And oftentimes he creates an artistic triumph that is imposing in its repellant realism. The example of the august Balzac, which has so profoundly influenced all modern literature and that of France in particular, served to leave the authorial scalpel entirely untram-

Margaret Anglin as Helena Ritchie, Who Has Much to Atone.

meled, with the pitilessly pictured Sapho of an Alphonse Daudet to finish the encyclopedia of woman's shortcomings as harshly as the Madame Bovary of a Flaubert began it.

The one Englishman wha has dared parallel the whole indictment brought by the French has been Kipling, whose "Vampire," seeming to sum up everything that could reduce woman to Eve's original role as the means of man's ruin, has become internationally famed with the impressive Burne-Jones picture of the vampire at work helping to carry its malign significance around the world.

All the charges against this lovely creature, woman, can't, of course, be true; and so they must be classed as passing strange. But stranger than the prejudice the authors appear to cherish is the fact that those very books which most severely arraign her are the books that are usually most popular.

And stranger yet is the fact that, nowadays, most of the readers are women.

ZELAYA OFTEN IN DANGER

Navy Surgeon Tells of Attempts on the Life of the Former Nicaraguan President.

A young doctor in the United States navy was stationed not so very long ago in Nicaragua. Judging from what he says, life in that country could not have been of the quietest.

Zelaya isn't or wasn't much of a person to make public appearances, he says. Instead, he was very apt to stick closely to his palace and at one period almost two years elapsed before he graced any public occasion with his presence.

Then there was some formality in the cathedral of his capital town which he could not well avoid. It appears that some of the cadet corps, made up of sons of the good Nicaraguan families, conceived the idea that this would be a good time to abolish Zelaya. They formed a plan that certain of them who would be present in the cathedral should load their rifles with ball cartridges and on a signal should pepper the president.

This plan was not carried through very well. The secret got out just about at the last moment and the ball cartridges were removed from the rifles. A few of the cadets in their turn discovered this fact and they reloaded their rifles with ball cartridges. When the signal was given the devoted group arose and fired. The shooting was Central American and bad, and Zelaya's wound was one in the shoulder.

The punishment was prompt, according to the surgeon's story. The 300 or so cadets of the corps were lined up on the parade ground and one of Zelaya's trusted men simply told off every fifth boy in the ranks. Those checked off were shot.

A story is told too of another patriot who hired a room near the plaza in which the palace stands. The house in which the patriot was had the advantage of having the only available window that gave a clear sight of any of the windows in the palace. The patriot watched at his window off and on for about six months, until one day he got a view of the president passing by the palace window on which he was spying. He fired quickly and again Zelaya was slightly wounded in the shoulder. They got that patriot and shot him too.

ENJOYMENT A NATURAL RIGHT

Much Truth in Writer's Protest Against the Eternal Somberness of Things.

The child, with his unclouded vision, unbroken as yet by life and the greed and the cunning of humanity, has the inborn sense of man's right to joy. What are we here for? Surely not just that some malignant being, or some force of nature, may have the fun of hammering at us and seeing us writhe. The truth is, man, born into mortality, attempts first to make his own joy and invariably fails. The natural attempt is to get joy for ourselves. Whereas, as man grows, he knows that instead of dragging joy into himself he must initiate an entirely opposite process; he must expand himself into joy. The natural mortal vision sees joy in material things, in circumstances, in events, in personal possessions and aggrandizement, whereas joy is spiritual, essential, outgoing. Joy never leans on what happens, but on what is.

So long as the dull and the ignorant, the suffering and the diseased, look up to great possessions, to comfortable surroundings and irresponsibility, and fancy that joy lives there, and that if they captured the means they would capture the prize, so long poor exiled joy can do no more than drop at odd seconds upon a quiescent mind here and there. It cannot come to earth to dwell, to turn life into Paradise, until it comes equally to all. It would seem that only spiritual gifts could be equal. Matter is unmanageable. It heaps itself up in spots and draws away in others; it is eternal restless motion; it is the changing, floating unreality in which for the moment we are set. But the spirit is changeless, immovable, permeating all space. And at odd corners, here and

An Unnatural Pose in a Strained Character, Mme. Nazimova as "Hedda Gabler."

there, through life, eyes are opened and the spirit joins the spirit and joy is born.—Harper's Weekly.

Revised Wedding Service.

The revised service for use at weddings where the American heiress marries the titled foreigner should contain this amended line for the bridegroom to repeat:

"With all my worldly creditors I thee endow."

A BOY'S HARDSHIPS.

It's hard to always be polite,
And never bang the doors;
And not forget to take my cap
Right off to vis-i-tors.

And wait till I am spoken to,
Before I ever speak.
If I did that just every time
Why I might wait a week!

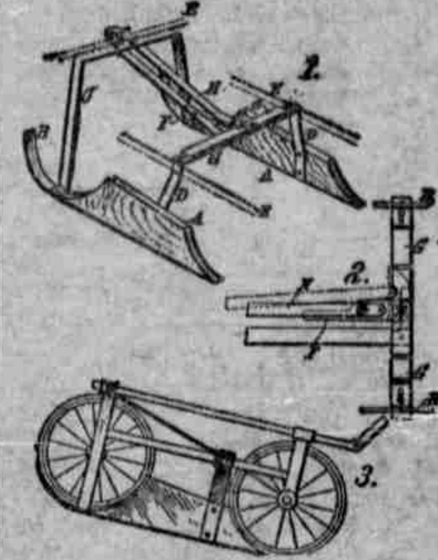
It's hard to let the girls be first
When cake is passed—I've found
The biggest piece is always gone,
When my turn comes around!

It's hard to study all the time,
Except when I'm at play,
Just because I'm going to be
Our president some day!

GO-CART WITH SLED RUNNERS

Construction Such That They Can Be Applied or Removed Within Very Few Seconds.

I made a pair of runners for his go-cart last winter which proved quite a success, writes Milton Stone in Scientific American. They were made of one-inch by one-eighth-inch iron, and weighed altogether six pounds. The construction was such that they could be applied or removed in a few seconds. Referring to the accompanying illustration, it will be seen that two wooden side pieces, A, were provided, to which the runners, B, were fastened. The wooden side pieces were cut out and grooved to receive the wheels, and the runners were curved up to fit against the front



Sled Runner Attachment for Go-Carts.

wheels. A U-shaped frame, C, of strap iron connected the runners at the forward end, while they were connected at the rear by a second and lower frame, D. The frame of the go-cart is indicated by dotted lines at E. A pair of sliding members, G, were fitted onto the U-frame, D, and attached to a lever, F, in such manner that they could be extended over the side bars, E, after the go-cart was fitted over the runners. A strap, H, extending forward to the frame, C, was formed with a hook, so that the lever, F, is moved to extend the members, G, the strap, H, is retracted, causing the hook to fit over the front cross piece, E, of the go-cart frame. In applying the runners to the go-cart, it is merely necessary to raise the front wheels so as to clear the side pieces, A, and then move the cart into position, after which the lever, F, is moved to lock the runners fast. One of the advantages of this system is that the runners at the rear are so short that when the cart is tilted backward the wheels rest on the ground, and in that position they can be wheeled over any bare spots.

AMUSING GAME OF JUMBLES

Name of Some Bird, Fish or Animal May Be Selected and Confused to Spell Other Words.

Each person selects the name of some bird, fish or animal and quickly jumbles the letters so as to spell other words. Thus one choosing hippopotamus might make out of the letters map hoop sit up; a panther might become hen part, while porpoise might turn to o sire pop. When all are ready each player may in turn read his "confusion" to the rest of the party, and note carefully how long they are in guessing. Since the one wins whose puzzle it takes longest to guess, it is important to mix the letters as much as possible.

If preferred, sides may be chosen after each player is ready with his jumble. The first player on the left side then offers his puzzle to all the players on the right side to be guessed. Next the offer comes from the first player on the right side to those on the left, and so on alternately, giving each player his turn. A timekeeper marks the exact number of minutes and seconds for each guess. If there are only a few players, each may offer two or more jumbles. When all have been guessed the side whose total guessing time is least is the winner.

Just a Few.

On the Fourth of July last year a boy living in Lexington, Mich., set out to drink all the lemonade he wanted. In the course of an hour he drank 14 ice-cold glasses, and that's the reason his parents haven't got a boy named Frank now. It doesn't seem as if a few glasses of lemonade ought to hurt a boy, but you can't always tell.

ORIGIN OF THE VEGETABLES

Potato Was Not Introduced Into This Country from Ireland as Great Many People Suppose.

The potato was not, as is generally supposed, introduced from Ireland. It was already cultivated in America at the time of its introduction into Europe; but, as a matter of fact, the real birthplace of the potato was in Chile. It was sent to Europe in 1580 by the Spaniards in Chile, and almost at the same time the English colonists in Virginia were the means of introducing the vegetable to their kinsmen at home.

The sweet potato and the Jerusalem artichooke are supposed to have originated in America.

Turnips and radishes came in the first instance from central Europe. The beet-root and the beet, which have been greatly improved by cultivation, are considered as the same species by botanists. The beet, only the stalk of which is eaten, grows wild in the Mediterranean region, Persia and Asia Minor.

Garlic, onions, shalots and leeks have long been cultivated in almost all countries, and their origin is very uncertain. That of the scallion is better known. It grows spontaneously in Siberia.

The radish probably had its origin in the temperate zone, but from what wild species it is derived is not exactly known.

The lettuce appears to be derived from the endive, which is found wild in temperate and southern Europe, in the Canaries, Algeria, Abyssinia and temperate western Asia.

Cabbage, like all vegetables which have been cultivated from remote times, is believed to be of European origin.

The artichoke is the cultivated form of the wild cardoon, indigenous to Madeira, the Canaries, Morocco, the south of France, Spain, Italy and the Mediterranean islands.

Asparagus had its origin in Europe and temperate western Asia.

The origin of the egg plant is India, that of the broad bean is unknown, as also that of the lentil, the pea, the check pea and haricot. The last named appears to have grown originally in America.

The carrot grows spontaneously throughout Europe, Asia Minor, Siberia, northern China, Abyssinia, northern Africa, Madeira and the Canary islands.

Chervil comes from temperate western Asia, parsley from the south of Europe and Algeria, sorrel from Europe and northern Asia, the mountains of India and is also found in North America.

Spinach is supposed to come from northern Asia.

The tomato comes from Peru, the cucumber from India and the pumpkin from Guinea.

SKIPPING ROPE TURNS ITSELF

Attraction for Young People at Amusement Place in London Is Mechanical and Automatic.

This skipping rope, an attraction for young people at one of the amusement places in London, is not only mechanical but automatic as well. The rope

Mechanical Skipping Rope.

revolves when the skipper steps upon the platform, this action releasing the spring or clutch that regulates the mechanism. The faster the skipper jumps, the faster the rope revolves.

A Water Experiment.

Take three bowls and stand them in a row. In the bowl at one end put water as hot as your hand can bear, in the one at the other end put ice water; in the middle bowl, luke-warm water.

Now, hold your right hand in the hot water and your left hand in the cold, say for a minute or more; then suddenly place both hands in the luke warm water and notice the effect.

If the one tested is blindfolded, a good deal of amusement will follow.