For and About Women Folks

Women in the Business Field.

AN INSTRUCTIVE sidelight on the trend of the times is furnished in a recent report of the Massachusetts bureau of labor on the decline of marriage in that state. The number of single women in 1885 was 1,070,151. In 1905 the number was 1,068,169. There was an increase in the number of married women from 739,566 to 1,134,315. Ten years ago there were 330,565 more single than married women in the jurisdiction. Now the single women outnumber the married by 553,854. The head of the bureau characterizes the disparity as startling. He attributes it chiefly to the fact that women are entering the business field, and are therefore not so dependent on marriage for a livelihood as formerly. The official also ventures the statement that the independence which is becoming more and more prevalent among women is one of the causes of the great increase of divorce. In Massachusetts divorces increased from 2,956 in 1885 to 7,800 in 1905.

Sweat-Shop Women.

At a meeting of the New York State Charities conference the other day, Dr. Lee K. Frankel, manager of the Hebrew charities of New York, said that two-thirds of the cases coming before the societies of which he is the head are due to illness which is caused by long hours of labor, insufficient nourishment and disease. Out of 100 cases of families seeking aid, sixty were due to sickness on the part of the wage earners, caused by the conditions under which they worked. And yet of the many women who prefer these conditions rather than to work in comfortable homes as domestics, the majority are soon rendered unable to work and are likely to become a charge upon the community. The sweat shops do not have to improve the conditions under which their people work, for there is plenty of competition, and many are willing to work under such conditions who would scorn to work under such conditions 100 per cent better in every way in the homes of those willing to pay good prices for the work. Deliberately choosing the worst of two evils, if domestic work can be so called, it would seem merits little pity for the woman who breaks down under the load she has put upon herself. The scarcity of good household help is due to the fact that so many competent women are choosing between the factory and sweat shop on one hand and the position they would occupy in a domestic capacity in the homes of those able to pay for it on the other. It is a question of false pride to say the least, and instead of making so much effort in behalf of the young women who work under such unhealthy conditions, the best thing for them would be to refuse them sympathy or help as long as they are doing such work. The preservation of the ideals of family life is no longer an excuse, because thousands of families wanting help in their homes are perfectly willing that the women whom they seek to do it should go to their homes at night if they so wished and the wages paid would justify the extra expense even more certainly than that paid in the factory or sweat shop.

Victory for Woman.

The inalienable right of woman to pursue happiness in whatever manner her sweet will directs has again been vindicated, relates the Philadelphia North American. Rash, indeed, is the man who attempts to gainsay this sacred principle, rash or so ingenious that only the sweet simplicity of his soul can excuse his meddlesomeness.

This is undoubtedly the case of good Pastor Sonne of Green Castle, Ind., who got himself into a peck of trouble by trying to distate to one of his flock what kind of clothes she might wear.

Calling at her home in the course of his pastoral rounds he found good Sister Cammack attired in a set of aesthetic bloomers. Pastor Sonne demurred. He opined that the bifurcated garment was not a fitting habiliment for a member of the Ladies' Aid receiving her spiritual director.

Good, simple man! His untenable position cost him his church. It is not a matter of importance that the governing board accepted his apology and agreed to continue him in charge if he refrained from further criticism of the sartorial taste of his lady sheep. But it is of the highest importance that the American woman has again been confirmed in her right to do just as she pleases.

Making the Great Refusal.

The history of a famous phrase is recalled in the following, which is part of a letter written by her aunt to a girl who is considering the rejection of the attentions of a suitable young man whom she loves:

"Your vehement statement that you will never make a step toward your lover, lest he think you are bold, is too vain to receive a moment's serious attention. This is a much graver matter than in your youth and inexperience you can perceive. You are making 'the great refusal.' I don't suppose you know what that means. Girls nowadays are so busy studying angleworms and dissecting frogs that they don't know their Dante. It means 'the great refusal,' and Dante applied it to a certain pope who, at a crucial moment, lost his courage, refused his high office, and returned to the safe and ignoble life of a cabbage. Ever since the time that Dante characterized his action he has been scorned by all Europe. Any one who lacks a generous spirit and courage at a turning point in life—he makes 'the great refusal.' I know all about it—I speak from experience. You are surprised, possibly, but there is a memory in my life which I never have shared with any one. It has come up with singular vividness in my anxiety about you, and I have resolved to break my long reserve and make you, if possible, live through my own experience. I've set it all down here, rather than to try and tell you, for I've wished to make it clear and to leave out no detail so that you may for a moment feel with me. Try, Margaret, dear, to forget me as a white-haired old woman and think of me as a girl about your age, for it happened more than forty-five years ago, when I was a young lady 19 or 20 like yourself, that I made 'the great refusal.'"—Dorothy Caulfeic in American Magazine.

Forgets to Put Him In.

Mrs. Maud Miller Hipple, whose advocacy of a course in "motherhood" for young matrons already has begun to bear fruit, was talking of the duties of young mothers.

"And no young mother," she said, "no matter how many her millions nor how high her station, should trust her little one entirely to a nurse's care. A nurse may be most intelligent, most conscientious; but to rear a baby properly is a difficult task, and only one person is sufficiently interested in this task to perform it well. That person is the baby's mother."

Mrs. Hipple smiled. "A young mother," she said, "was walking with her husband on the Atlantic City board walk. Suddenly she gave a little cry of pleasure.

"'Oh!' she said; 'there is nurse—nurse wheeling baby.'

"And she ran lightly to the luxurious coach of leather, with its swan shaped carriage and its rubber tired wheels, and she pushed back the parasol that shaded the occupant from the sun. Then she gave a great start.

"'Why nurse,' she cried, 'Where is baby?'

"The nurse gasped. 'Goodness gracious, ma'am! I forgot to put him in.'"

Women Orators in New York.

Sixteen years ago, writes Mrs. Clarence Burns in the New York World, when I started in New York club life, it was quite difficult to get women speakers. Today women speakers are plentiful. Many of them are interesting and effective, and not a few are eloquent.

Not only do women speak at their own meetings, but no meeting or convention of men where matters pertaining to education, sociology and medicine are discussed is now considered complete unless women speakers take part in the proceedings.

Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Lease is the Bourke Cockran of New York. Mrs. Lease is the speaker par excellence on political, educational and literary subjects. She is forceful, easy and graceful, with remarkable resource and sharp sense of humor.

The woman whom President Roosevelt has just appointed to look into children's and women's industrial conditions, Mrs. J. Ellen Foster, is one of the most forceful political speakers in the country. Mrs. Foster has spoken on the same platform with many of the best men speakers in the country, and has been the means of getting a large number of votes for the republican party, especially in the woman suffrage states.

No patriotic gathering is complete without Mrs. Donald McLean, national president of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Mrs. McLean can weave the most beautiful sentences about the flag and the duties of American citizenship that I have ever heard.

Mrs. Frederick Nathan, president of the Consumers' league, is not only one of the finest speakers in this country, but one whom London paid a high tribute to when she addressed the big meetings of the woman's council there.

Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt, one of the leaders of the suffrage movement, has made thousands of suffragists by her persuasive oratory, and is in great demand as an after dinner speaker.

Mrs. Stanton Blatch, daughter of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, is a very able speaker.

There are many women known in club life for their wit, among whom are Mrs. Philip Carpenter, president of the state federation, and Mrs. Dore Lyon, Mrs. Belle Devereaux, Miss Helen Boswell and Mrs. Harry Wallerstein.

Nearly all the best women speakers talk without notes.

Unconscious Irony.

A New England man relates in Harper's Weekly that one night last winter when the thermometer fell below zero, his wife expressed her concern for the new Swedish maid who had an unheated room.

"Elsa," said she to the girl, remembering the good old custom of her youth, "as it is bitterly cold tonight you'd better take a flatiron to bed with you."

"Yes m'm," said Elsa, in mild and expressionless assent.

In the morning the girl was asked how she passed the night. With a sigh she replied:

"Wall, m'm, I gat the irron most varm before morning."

New Collars Are Smart.

"Have you seen the new linen colors?" said the girl in the gray plaid suit to the girl in the braided blue cheviot as they stopped for a moment to look in the shop window. "There's one now on that green plaid waist. Isn't it just the smartest thing yet to wear in the morning with a simple silk or woolen shirtwaist?"

And it really seems as if the great majority of women were in thorough agreement with the girl in gray, for these collars are selling so fast that if one has anything like an average-size neck that number is always "just out."

These collars are in the stiff laundered style, but are beautifully embroidered in the front, sometimes in designs of tiny flowers in high French embroidery; sometimes there is one big blossom in each corner or perhaps a cutout effect similar to eyelet work. Very elaborate ones even have a cut-out design filled in with heavy lace stitches, while simpler forms are decorated only with rows of ornamental hemstitching and a few French knots.

A most dainty little collar is of pique, mounted on a high collar band of linen that is entirely concealed and scalloped all ground and buttonhole stitched in heavy linen thread. The two ends in the front are decorated with a conventional vine with high raised berries like tiny polka dots. Of course all this embroidery is done with white.

The shape of these collars is the same as the linen turnover collar of last summer, but as the new models are intended for winter they are much higher, but are perfectly comfortable and do not cut the neck, as they are much softer than a man's linen collar.

The proper tie with this neckgear is either the new shaped string tie or plaid or plain silk—the former is the smartest—the Windsor tie arranged in a soft four-in-hand knot or the narrow four-in-hand itself. But whatever the necktie chosen it must be one that can be tied by the wearer—makeup ties are very bad style for women.

The well dressed girl with a small income has a clever trick of making these collars at home and thereby saving a pretty penny. She buys one that suits her fancy in the shops and uses it for a pattern for a future stock.

Why Sororities Cost.

The recent excitement in regard to high school "frats" and sororities recalls to certain amused students of Chicago educational conditions the remark last year made by the brilliant young daughter of a well known Chicago writer.

The young lady was in attendance at the Hyde Park High school, relates the Record-Herald, and her sorority dues, dances, etc., in the course of the school year attained such a surprising total that her father felt compelled to remonstrate.

"Do you know, my dear," he said, gravely, that your sorority has cost me more this winter than your Aunt Grace has paid for her membership in the Woman's club?"

"I know it seems a lot of money, father," was the girl's deprecating reply, "but you must remember that we have to keep quite a surplus on hand, because we never know when we may be called upon to fight the Board of Education!"

Catching Lobsters for Market.

Up on the bleak shores of Fisherman's Island in Hancock county, Maine, works Mrs. Kate Wilson, lobster catcher.

Since that dreadful day in the middle of December three years ago when she saw the waves close over her husband and his little schooner almost within hailing distance of his own home the rising sun has found her toiling over her lobster pots.

Here is a labor of love brought on by starvation's specter. In all that region, where little regard is wasted on material things and where the hardy inhabitants find only time enough to wrest a modest living from the sea, she has become a figure of unbounded sympathy and praise for the able manner in which she has carried on her husband's business and brought up her three little children, a girl of 8 and two manly boys of 5 and 6 years of age.

Mrs. Wilson is comparatively a newcomer to Fisherman's Island, where most of the inhabitants are fairly rooted to the soil. She is the daughter of Joseph Harwood of Franklin, N. S., and her early life was spent upon a modest little farm just near enough to the rolling ocean so that she could see it.

At the age of 22 she married John Wilson and came to live with him in the old Wilson homestead on the island. John was the last of his family and had inherited from his people not only the family roottree, but also one of the biggest lobster schooners on Fisherman's Island.

For a time their lives ran smoothly and the three children born to the young couple were the best dressed of any in the neighborhood. John Wilson was industrious and he prospered accordingly. No matter how bitter the day or threatening the storm, as long as the sea was not running too high to lift the lobster traps, he was willing to breast the waves in his little craft and to make a haul.

His daring became proverbial in that section and it eventually cost his life. On December 14, 1903, he started to make his customary round of the lobster traps, although the sky was murky and the voice in the sea held a warning. Older men who had watched the sea and its moods for many years shook their heads when they saw him making ready for his daily trip. They went to him and warned him, but he laughed at their fears. He was not used to brooking the fury of the seas, so he launched his boat into the waves as soon as a slight calm showed.

For a time all went well. He worked within sight of his wife and a number of others, who peered from their windows over the sea. Suddenly a squall blew up and he started to drive his little craft shoreward. The power of the wind increased in fury and he lost control of his craft, which overturned him into the sea, where he sank before the eyes of his wife and children.

With the breadwinner of the family drowned, Mrs. Wilson did not know where to turn for aid, for relatives she had none. There were left to her as assets, however, her husband's sloop and the family homestead. Nothing daunted, she set to work for herself.

"I knew," she said, "that it would not do for me to sell out and move away when there was a good living right here, if I could only contrive to haul those lobster traps of John's."

So she sold her sloop and purchased a smaller boat, in which she had installed a four-horse power gasoline engine. To this she added a revolving drum worked by motor power. She hired a competent man to teach her to operate the machinery and then she set out to catch lobsters for herself.

Household Hints.

To revive the luster of morocco, or any other leather, apply the white of an egg with a spongue.

The difficulty in cleaning gas globes is largely due to the ornamental roughness of the glass, and it is often hard to clean them with soap and water, even with the addition of soda. A little salts of lemon added to the soapsuds will make the task easy.

If you get paint on woolen or silk goods you can easily remove it with spirits of turpentine. Soak the spot in the spirits and let it stand for some hours, then rub the fabric between the fingers and the paint will fall away without injury to the goods.

Nothing so detracts from the appearance of good linen as starch. One should be careful to rinse the piece thoroughly in good, clean water and then give it plenty of light and air. It should be ironed damp, so as to get the fine sheen characteristic of well-laundered linens. If linen is ironed dry or nearly so it gets fuzzy.

If you are leaving your house for a few hours, and want the fire to keep, instead of throwing a lot of coal on, it is much better and safer to put two or three pieces on, and then throw a handful of table salt over them. This will insure a good fire at the end of four or five hours.

Rust must be removed from nickel plating by covering the spots with mutton tallow and letting it stand for several days. If this treatment is followed by a rubbing with a good metal polisher and then by a thorough washing with strong ammonia, succeeded by clear water and a final polishing with dry whiting, stubborn cases will yield.

Vases and ornaments should be dusted carefully, particularly those with rough surfaces, as the dust is apt to get into the crevices, and, once in, it is very difficult to dislodge. For the latter work a stiff tooth brush will be found to do the work as well as could be wished, and ought to be always kept for this purpose.

Kitchen paint invariably has a shabby, dull look from the frequent cleaning that is necessary in this room. The use of soap increases the difficulty, especially if the paints are varnished. The best plan is to boil a pound of bran in a gallon of water for an hour, then wash the paint with bran water, and it will not only be kept clean, but bright and glossy.

Oilcloth should never be scrubbed; if this course be followed the paint will quickly be worn off. It should first be carefully swept with a soft brush to remove all the dust and fluff and then wiped with a large soft cloth, wrung out in tepid (not hot) water. If it is very dirty, it may be necessary to use a little soft soap, but this should be done rarely, and on no account must soda be used. When it is dry wipe over with a cloth or sponge dipped in skim milk, which will brighten and preserve the colors and give it a polish. After sponging with the milk dry with a cloth.

Leaves from Fashion's Notebook.

Another fascinating buckle is a large gold crescent, set with pearls and brilliants; this is attached to a shaped belt of gray suede, with jewel points scattered profusely over it.

Characteristic features of the present fashions are the preservation of simple lines through any amount of elaborate detail, and a tendency toward Empire effects. The Empire, simon pure, has thus far been considered too extreme by American women, but it is not improbable that our women may become educated up—or down—to it before the season is well under way. As it is, however, modifications of the Empire are seen everywhere in coats, suits, frocks and all the accessories.

The reign of the elbow sleeves has made gloves an important item in the list of dress accessories, and as long as short sleeves are fashionable the gloves are not likely to be lowered in price; indeed rumor has it that they are going even higher.

It is well to have some sort of a suspender or pinafore waist made with the skirt suit. They have many variations, none of which require much extra material and give the effect of quite a distinct toilette when the coat is removed.

For visiting wear, velvet blouses, ponies, and even fitted effects are noted, and it is the rule to have two coats with one's tailor suit, if one has to consider economy at all. One of these is, of course, of the suit material and the other of velvet.

Long capes are gaining favor every day over the coats and with their large, silk-lined hoods are much more picturesque, not to say convenient. There is, too, an entirely new form of wrap which at least has the charm of novelty to recommend it. It is fashioned much on the order of a Roman toga or a Grecian tunic.

The fitted pony coat is one of the newest and most attractive models, and one much more likely to stay in fashion than the very loose ones, which depend upon their jauntiness for style. Plaited skirts are almost invariably worn with them, the kilted effects, it is asserted by those who are supposed to know, gradually superseding the more complicated designs.

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