

Fact and Fancy for Women.

BY ELLA HIGGINSON.

Let will the women take
As often than herself, so worse she to him.
So sways she love it her husband's heart.
—Shakespeare.

Margaret Lee and Rev. Philip T. Maxon have some "Final Words on Divorce" in the February *North American Review*. The former writes strongly and bitterly against divorce. She says: "Where are we drifting, when, among people with social position, a man wooes a maiden, and, having won her consent, tells her he can not marry her until he has forced his wife into obtaining a divorce from him? This is the simple statement of a fact." She then adds, finally: "The remedy is radical. Let divorce be abolished." She holds that marriage among Christians is a contract for life, which should never be broken under any circumstances.

If there was any probability that our law makers would do more than cursorily glance at Margaret Lee's argument, she must be accused of having made a grave mistake in writing this; for such a law would work evil to many innocent ones—for they are Christians, so called, with whom a saint could not dwell in peace or harmony. There is no denying that divorce is a rapidly growing evil; and the laws governing it should be made stern and stringent. But that divorce should be abolished completely—that a woman should be bound for life to a man who has broken his marriage vows, or vice versa—is drawing it too strongly.

The real evil is not that divorce is too easy, but that marriage is too easy. Few women begin to think before they are twenty years old; and no woman should marry—even, or perhaps I should say, especially, if she be homeless—before she is twenty-five. By that time her mind will be developed, she will be a woman instead of a girl, and she will have a shrewd idea that she must not expect too much of marriage.

Therefore, change your marriage laws first. If each couple who fancy themselves in love should be compelled to wait three or four years before they could be married, I am inclined to believe that the divorce laws might remain law. A man who patiently works and waits through four long years for one woman will be patient and kind after marriage; and a woman who is content with one lover four years before marriage will not be faithless after.

Mr. Maxon is more reasonable and sensible in his views, as a thinker should be. He admits, and regrets, that divorce is needlessly and dangerously frequent, especially in the United States, which is proven by statistics; also, that divorce is often granted for insufficient reasons. But he adds: "That divorce is sometimes a sorrowful and imperative necessity, in the present condition of society, can be denied only by shutting the eyes both to facts and to fundamental ethical principles." He is, furthermore, of the opinion that the innocent one should be allowed to marry again, but not the guilty one; and, while he deplures the facility with which divorces are now obtained, he proves that states and countries in which divorce is not allowed are not exceptional for social purity.

In a word, Mr. Maxon recognizes that there is much to be said both for and against divorce, and he says it, kindly and reasonably; yet, when he has finished, we do not see our way more clearly to a cure than we did before he began. While, as for Margaret Lee's remedy—"Let divorce be abolished" . . .

for these reasons: A republic owes its existence and its continuance to the personal purity of its people"—I ask simply: Is that home life pure wherein a sensitive woman is forced to live with a man who holds her "something better than his dog, a little dearer than his horse?"

Mormonism is supposed to have received its death blow in the recent election. Polygamy—that rank growth, deadly as the opus tree whose poison permeates the very atmosphere in which it lives—lies with its head forever crushed into the dust.

Is there a woman in this whole free country who has a woman's heart and a woman's soul, who does not thrill with an overpowering thankfulness that this blot and stain upon fair womanhood is wiped out?

What is woman in polygamy? She is not a home-maker; she is not an equal; she is scarcely even a wife. She is the mother of several children, it is true, but she is a slave; she is no better than the women of an eastern harem.

Who of us has not wept over the story of the youthful Mormon mother whose child was born a few months after its father had taken unto himself a new wife? In all those weeks of anguish and suffering the first wife had shed not one tear, so deep and so dumb was her sorrow. But when her little babe was born, it quietly, noiselessly, tear by tear, wept itself to death—thus giving expression to the grief that had frozen its mother's breast.

Think of it, mothers, with baby lips at your bosom, and a proud husband, true and faithful, bending above you, with no thought save for one woman and one home! Would you care to picture him at another fireside, bending above another woman, and smiling upon his child upon her bosom?

How cold, how indifferent we have been all these years to the sufferings of our sister women! When one we loved has died, we look at each other with dumb lips, and the great cry of our hearts is, "O, why was I not kinder to her while she lived?" So, now that this wrong is dead and we have had no hand in its death, we look at each other with wondering eyes, and our hearts cry out, "O, why did we not work for it? Why did not the talkers talk for it, the writers write for it? Why did not those best and truest reformers of all—the prayers—pray for it?"

Why, I wonder that the very winds that swept over that territory did not bear to us the unspeakable anguish of those Mormon mother-hearts! You and I have our sorrows? Yes. But we are free. We are independent. We are not bound down by any tenets of religion that teach us woman must be true and men untrue.

Let our hearts, that are ever tender to the sorrows and wrongs of others, blend in one mighty throb of gratitude that this terrible wrong to womanhood has been righted.

While a house can never be made home-like unless the wife and mother be a lover of domesticity, still it is not advisable or wise to remain so closely at home that one's manners grow rusty. Let us suppose that your income is modest and that you have not even one deft-handed little maid to assist you with your housework. You should still find time to keep up a pleasant acquaintance with those for whom you care. Two or three afternoons in each month will be sufficient to remember