

## Fact and Fancy for Women.

BY ELLA HIGGINSON.

"II," says *Harper's Weekly*. "a youth sees that his lack of courtesy, for instance, in not offering his seat to a woman in a car is regarded as a matter of course and justifiable, the first and costly step is taken. All other similar courtesies, the nameless graces of deference which make the intercourse of the sexes charming, will naturally disappear, and the distinction of the American vanishes, that every solitary woman seemed to travel under the chivalric protection of every man in the country. This is a distinction worth retaining, because manners are closely allied with morals."

As women gradually but surely work their ways into the business paths, opinions and pursuits of men, just so gradually and surely will men's chivalric attentions to them lessen, not intentionally, but, as it were, unconsciously. It is one of the prices women must pay for the opening up of new avenues in which they may bravely walk and earn their livings side by side with men. Men—the very best and noblest ones—are but human, and I think the good ones are just about as good as they were an hundred years ago, and the bad ones just about as bad—no better, no worse. If they are—as the article quoted from touches upon—growing more lax in little daily attentions and courtesies to women, it is not the result of deliberate intention or willful lack of respect, but of the workings of that many-headed thing known as circumstances. Go out into a dim, quiet wood, and down in the shelter of some sturdy tree, push aside the clinging vines and mosses, and if you chance to find there a sweet, shy violet turning its head away from the glare of the light, you will be filled with rapture, you will thrill with tender reverence for the beautiful thing that is sweet as a dream of heaven. You may learn to love that flower, to shelter it from the winds, to guard it from the cold, to feel a keen delight in slipping away from the cares and the passions of the world to spend a little time with it, you may come to feel that it is a part of your very life, yea, of you, the best and purest part. But suppose that violet has feet and a voice, and that it comes out of its dim retreat and coolly informs you that it is tired of hiding its light under a bushel and that it proposes to be with you always, in the street car, on the train, on the steamer, in your office, on the street, in the legislature, at the crowded postoffice window when the mail is first opened, and even hints darkly as to your favorite club! Just stretch your imagination to that extent, if you can. Don't you think you would grow so accustomed to having it with you always that it would lose a little of its subtle charm, a trifle of its sweetness, its shyness, its rarity? Don't you think it would come to require something of an effort for you to thrill with rapture and tremble with delight at sight of that violet on every corner and in every office? It is very sweet, once or twice a day, to lay aside all cares and indulge in a dream of heaven when you see a violet, but, O, consider! Where would your bread and butter come from if you met a violet at every turn, and had to stop long enough to bow down in reverence before it each time? Well, it is just the same with women, although it does seem cold-blooded to say it.

"It requires only a second of time for a man to give a lady his seat in a car, to yield her precedence at the postoffice window, to lift his hat courteously each time he meets her, to assist her across a crowded street."

O, very true. But when a man must take his mind from business reflections twenty times in one hour to pay some little

courteous attention to women, it must grow to be an irksome duty, instead of the pleasure it once was when a woman traveling alone, or a woman forcing her way timidly through a crowd of men, was something seen only once or twice in a year. With all my heart I want to see women work and ferret out new and pleasant ways in which to earn their livings; and it must go without saying that every one likes to see men respectful and courteous to women. But you can not change man's nature, and you will not seem so rare and charming to him if he meets you on every corner and must show you some little courtesy each time, as you will if he only sees you once a day and then in the sanctity of your home. Truths are not pleasant; but, though we often cover them up and smooth them over so their rankling may not be so painful, they are always with us. It does not matter whether you are a working girl, a business woman or a society queen. As long as you respect yourself all men will show you, and really feel for you, respect. So don't go through life looking daggers at the busy men who forget some little courtesy to you. Ten to one, the man who forgets to give you his place at the postoffice window is the one who always carries a flower home to the woman who loves him; while the perfumed, immaculate one who overpowers you with his officious watchfulness for a chance to be polite, is the one who goes home and tilts his chair back while his patient slave-wife does the household drudgery.

The editor of the *Home Maker* advances the opinion that none but a purist can keep up with the constant changes in orthoepy, and relates the tale of a man who came to grief over the word "horison," as follows:

My father tells me that when he was a boy the old people said ho-ri-son, but at school he was taught that the emphasis was to be on the first syllable. He always said hor-ison, but when my school days came, the dictionary makers had changed back to ho-ri-son. How is a fellow to know how to pronounce, anyhow?

The question will find an echo—but not an answer—in many a heart. By the time a young woman has finished her education and become firmly possessed of a complacent opinion that she knows everything that is worth knowing, her little golden-haired imp of a sister or niece is liable to catch her up on her pronunciation, with "If you please, that word is pronounced so-and-so." At school I was taught to say pre/-son, but a few years ago a friend politely informed that the word was pronounced pre/-face. She was a teacher in a public school, and she was so positive about it that I yielded as gracefully as possible to her authority, forgetting, when I reached home, to consult my Webster. When I had occasion to use the word, I said pre/-face, and felt "right smart," as they say in Indiana, because I had learned something new. But one fatal evening I used it, so accented, in company, whereupon my twelve-year-old niece dealt me a look of such unmitigated horror that I almost fainted, and was certainly struck speechless in the middle of a sentence. When the guests had departed, the child looked at me with perfect daggers of reproof in her eyes.

"O, Auntie! Auntie!" she exclaimed in the tone I imagine King David used when he cried "O, my son! My son, Absalom!" "What possessed you to pronounce the word that way?"

And I meekly confessed that I didn't know. I have certainly learned by experience that, however modest your opinion