

FACT AND FANCY FOR WOMEN

BY ELLA HIGGINSON.

LITTLE WHITE SINS.

It is only a little white sin, dear,
White as a rose is white,
Sweet as a lily is sweet, dear,
Light as a thistle is light.

So sweet, so white, so little—
Now, how could any one know,
When it was so small at beginning,
How fast little white sins grow!

It is only a little white sin, dear,
Idle and sweet and wrong;
But O, it will grow and blacken, love,
And flourish your whole life long.

Never mind the sins that look ugly, dear,
You will shrink from them in fright:
This simple song is to warn you, love,
To beware of the sins that look white.

I think I am beginning to understand how the Indians must feel as civilization, pressing ever forward, pushes them with a strong hand, step by step and inch by inch from the places they have so long loved and in which they have been happy—far happier, indeed, than any white man will ever be in the same places. Civilization is encroaching upon my pleasures—I had almost written rights—she is taking away my forests. She has no lingering tenderness for anything; with a firm, cruel hand she takes everything—my tall, slim fir trees, swelling with saps and shaking spiced sweetness through the air; the white, graceful alders that the birds so love; the spreading, whispering maples, with their blushing foliage; the cedars, the hazel trees, even my beloved dogwood, whose great, white eyes must look with dumb reproach at the hand that cuts them down. A year ago the forest was at my very door; now I have to go a mile or two to reach its dim line; in another year I suppose I shall have to go twice as far, and then all the trees, the luxuriant undergrowth, the broken logs and limbs leaning one against the other, all the tremulous climbing and falling vines—all the living, breathing things that speak to me in their own sweet language each morning as I pass—they will all be gone! Listen! I hear the clear, cold ring of the woodman's ax beating against the strength of some noble tree! The sound grows louder, clearer, keener with each step. It cuts through the sound of my horse's feet, through the roar of the wind in the tree tops, through the medley of bird voices that are fairly riotous with passionate glee this morning. O, the pity of it! To see God's lusty trees cut down like beasts of the plain, and to hear men whistling and singing at their cruel work! Suddenly the blows and the coarse rasping of the saw cease and there comes a warning shout; a moment's silence, during which every bird in the forest is dumb and every leaf motionless, and my own heart stands still; then a slow, crushing, crashing falling; a tremulous, forceful brushing of tree tops, a rasping grating of limb on limb; a noise, at first like wind, which gradually rises and grows into a terrible, thundering, deafening roar—then a second's utter stillness—now one heart-breaking crash and groan and it is all over; a noble monarch of the forest who, an hour ago reared his proud head into the clouds, lies dead and bleeding on the ground. Never again will the vines twine about him, and the ferns press broad palms against him, and the saps rush along his swelling veins; never again will the bird songs thrill him, and the cool winds still his passions, and the burrs, dropping softly through the twilight, tell his roary o'er and o'er. The whistling and singing have begun again, and the ax has cleft the quivering, helpless flesh of another tree—how he shivers, and yet how bravely he stands against it! Bah—poor fool! What does it matter that a tree is dead? Let your breath come freely again, and the blood pulse along your veins, and your heart throbs grow calm! Loosen your rein and let your restless horse leap on his way! Who are you that you should pity a tree that falls? Is not Death beating at your strength, and weakening your sinews, and drawing drop by drop, your life sap? In good time he will deal the final blow; there will be an instant's silence, and then—the birds will sing, and the flowers will bloom, and the whole dear world will be glad again; for you are no more to the world of men than one tree is to the forest.

Women can not vote, or, rather, they may not; and, indeed, many do not care or desire to do so. The men kindly allow us to retain our minds and our tongues, however, and as I take the liveliest kind of interest in several of those important mortals who do vote, I suppose I may at least offer a few suggestions in the very humblest manner—begging their par-

don and lenience at the end of every sentence, of course. Men are exceedingly earnest in their assertions that politics is "corrupt" and "shameless" and "disgraceful;" but when you ask them the cause—in your very smallest voice, too—they look at you haughtily, amazed at your desire for information, and gruffly mumble something about "bribery," "rings," "wire pulling," "schemes," and so on. Now, I am of the opinion women hold their rights in the palms of their hands—the hands that are "like pink, crinkly tissue paper," as Amélie Rives puts it—so all that I desire to tell you just now is what I consider the most shameless, the most corrupt, the most abominable thing connected with politics: It is the personal attacks that are made upon men's private affairs and home life! It is something that has never come near me, for—thank God!—I have never had even an intimate friend who was a politician; but it is something that has filled me with horror as long as I can remember. Criticise with all your power and strength a man's political life—his administration of public affairs—for that is of vital interest to the whole nation's welfare; but let his private affairs, his home life, alone, for they do not belong to you, but to himself and his God. Let us see if we have enough law makers who love honor and justice and right sufficiently to make it as heinous a crime to attack a man's private life, habits or convictions—where they do not affect his administration of public trusts—as it is to "stuff ballot boxes" and "buy votes."

The thistles are blooming, love. In a shaggy border around the low, green fields; across the pastures where the great trees bend in the sweet winds and cool-voiced streams flow through; along the yellow lanes where the cattle come slowly home in the dim twilight with clanking hoofs and mild, patient eyes; in the neglected fallow field, in many of the rich places and in all of the waste places, in great, feathery tufts of rich, royal purple, the thistles are blooming, love. See how the warm winds creep in among them and die of very love of them! How the sunlight trembles in little, broken flecks upon their swelling bosoms! How the happy rains drench them! By and by their souls, like the dandelions, will float away in down; but now they are lusty and swelling with vigor; here, down this hillside, they are like one undulating, purple sea. Come, let us go, hand in hand, as we used to do always, down the quiet paths among them—ah, kind heaven! My heart is so full of you, love, when I see this purple bloom, that I always forget you are dead. O, love, love! Your thistles a-bloom—and you not here!

Happiness is like the thistle-down which the children chase, open-palmed, through the air, but can never seize; or like the lovely color that flits across a pure cheek and is gone; or like a drop of dew that flames like an opal on a green leaf and dies at the kiss of the sun; or like the beautiful flower that blooms in our pathway and which we seize with eager hands, only to find, alas! its petals dropping away through our trembling hands.

Love is a plant of such peculiar formation and nature that although the first breath of deception that touches it kills its roots, the poor pale petals, which are alone seen of the world, struggle on tenaciously and try pitifully to remain green, that no one may guess that the whole beautiful heart of the plant is dead.

It is stated that the unmarried women of Massachusetts have \$29,000,000 on deposit in the savings banks of that state. What a temptation for men who want wives to go to Massachusetts! And what a temptation for women who are unmarried—to remain unmarried!

It is a bitter thing to be a plain and unattractive woman—especially, as it is she who most passionately admires beauty in others and craves it for herself; not for the empty vanity of it, but for the true pleasure that beauty gives, not only to its possessor, but to all the world.

William Dean Howells believes the American short story to be the best in the world, and that we have become a nation of rare story-tellers. He ranks Mary E. Wilkins and Sarah Orne Jewett among the first of the realists.

I have observed that the old threadbare advice about the "two bears," bear and forbear, of marriage is invariably given to the woman instead of the man.

Henry Ward Beecher was a man who thought in poetry and spoke in prose.

Men love to boast of the conquests they have not made.