

FACT AND FANCY FOR WOMEN

BY ELLA HIGGINSON.

THE LOST.

You may have your marble palace,
With its settings rare and fine,
But give me the simple cottage,
Where the sunlight used to shine;
You may have your sweetest music—
But O, for the lonely roar
Of the sea as it thundered landward,
And crushed its breast on the shore!

You may keep your gold and jewels,
Your poetry and your art—
Give me back the call of the robin,
And the love of that honest heart!

You may keep these velvet cushions,
Where my hot head toses now—
But O, for the strong, cool pressure
Of that palm on my burning brow!

A man may be a millionaire and his wife still be a supplicant and a beggar.

I pity the man who builds fine churches and turns the needy poor from his door.

It is no indication that a man is good simply because he loves animals. I know men who love animals, who treat inoffensive people like brutes.

I wonder how an infidel must feel when he looks at his first child at its mother's breast, and knows no God to whom he may turn with a great and holy and overpowering feeling of gratitude.

I know an old lady who is like a bunch of sweet violets—such pure delight does she bring to all who meet her. If God ever did let an angel slip down to earth unaware, it is she; and I am satisfied that never in her seventy years has she done one thing that her simple, tender conscience said was wrong. I was with her the other day on the street, when she stopped at a fruit stall. She looked all the fruit over carefully, as if each grape was a pearl of great price, and then she asked, gently: "How do you sell your grapes?"

"Two poun's fer a quarter, mum," was the brisk reply.

"Two pounds for a quarter," she said, meditatively; then, after a moment's hesitation, and nodding her neat, old head slightly: "I'll take two pounds."

The man filled a paper bag with the rich, purple fruit, gave the top of the bag a dexterous twist, and handed it to her. The old lady carefully drew a quarter from purse, examined it through her glasses and over them, and laid it in his outstretched hand. Then, while fumbling patiently for the pocket in her voluminous black silk skirt, she looked mildly, kindly and solemnly into that man's eyes and said—and as long as he lives that fruit vender will never forget her tone, manner and words—"Now, d'ye mind! I ain't complainin'; I never said a word till I got my grapes and paid ye my money, but now I'm goin' to tell ye I can get 'em for ten cents a pound the block beyond." If ever I saw a speechless and dumbfounded man, it was that one.

"I'm 'jewed down' a hundred times a day," he confided to me afterward, "but that's the first time any one ever 'jewed' me down for the pure good o' my soul."

"Educate a boy, and you educate a future man and citizen; educate a girl, and you educate not only a future woman, but a family yet unborn." That may not be the exact quotation, but it, at least, exactly expresses the idea put forth recently by a well-known writer. And how true it is! Is there a more pitiful spectacle on earth than that of a poor, untaught mother striving to answer intelligently the unexpected, and often puzzling, questions of the growing young souls about her? How often she falls into the error of answering at hap-hazard, hit-or-miss, feeling that she must assume a knowledge when she has it not, lest her child lose faith in her. A friend tells me how, when she was quite small and learning to read under home tuition, she was one day stranded upon the word, "alas," and went to her mother for explanation. "Why, that is the little girl's name—that is Alice," was the reply of the hard-worked, illiterate mother who, herself, could scarcely read. "And for two or three years," said my friend, with

tears in her eyes; "I puzzled my little brain over the story, unable to comprehend why its heroine should be 'Martha' in one paragraph and 'Alas' in the next." God pity the uneducated mother! and let the mantle of pity, divine and human, fall upon the children who are born to her, for they labor under a disadvantage that is almost inestimable; and which is altogether incomprehensible to the favored offspring of educated parents. Blest, indeed, is the child who can turn securely to mother in all mental, as well as physical needs; and thrice blest the mother who has never to quail before the wondering questions in her child's solemn eyes.

I know a man (whom I will call Brown, chiefly because that was not his name) who several years ago married an energetic, economical young woman. He was a railroad man and he took her to a rough, new town, where, through an African summer and a north pole winter, she kept boarders in a tent to add to their small income. She toiled early and late, giving breakfasts as early as five o'clock, and suppers as late as nine. Often she chopped wood, and in the dark mornings went fifty yards to the creek with lantern and bucket and hatchet, to cut a hole in thick ice from which to obtain water. She—now listen with close attention, please—paid all the family expenses with what she earned, and the husband put in the bank his monthly salary of \$150. By and by, he began to buy property and to speculate, and one day he awoke and found himself rich—but the riches were all in his own name, remember, and only in *Mrs. Brown's* mind! Well, one evening, several years later, Mr. Brown was calling upon some old friends and the subject of wills came up for discussion. Several of us expressed our opinions, and finally Mr. Brown leaned forward in his chair and said, in an emphatic and somewhat excited way: "Well, my will is made. Everything is in my name, and I have left every cent to my wife on condition that she remains single. But if—and I wish you could have seen his eyes snap out sparks of flame, and one fist (a tightly-doubled up hand is just a common, everyday fist, isn't it?) come down into the palm of the other hand, and his great 'I am' demeanor generally—she ever marries, it shall all go to my own family, mother and sisters, and no other man shall have the benefit of my money!" and he fairly thundered the words out, like (as *Amelie Rives* would say) stones shot out of a catapult. Then there arose in our midst a little woman not more than five feet three in height, with a scarlet spot in either cheek and a dangerous flash in her eyes; and said she, in a voice that was perfectly awful—so clear and so sweet and so low was it: "Mr. Brown, I remember when you first came to this town; I remember the old, soiled, shabby tent, open and wind-swept and God-forsaken, wherein your noble wife worked from four a. m. until ten or twelve at night; I remember how she economized and denied herself every comfort, because you were in a mad race after money—money—and she trusted you and wished to help you. In making a living you, Mr. Brown, did only what is a husband's duty; but your wife not only fulfilled her duty as housekeeper and homemaker as well as she could in the miserable hole provided for her, but she made the living for the whole family, Mr. Brown, beside! So, now, this money that you are talking of leaving to your mother and sisters in case your wife should, after your death, chance to find some husband as honorable and generous as yourself,—and I wish you could have heard the emphasis the little wretch put on the adjectives!—this money, I say, Mr. Brown—*may* I venture to ask who earned it?"

For a moment the silence was so vast we could almost see it; then Mr. Brown arose, and mumbling something about being insulted, went out and banged the door behind him. And every woman of us is waiting hopefully for his death, just to see if he has changed his will.

Who does not know the clerk who understands your own needs better than you do yourself? If you ask for a stripe, he elevates his pale eyebrows, and says with a languid accent of sarcasm: "A stripe! Er—didn't you mean a plaid? you know stripes are all out of style now. Of course you mean a plaid." If you ask for eight yards of dress goods, he immediately assures you that "it will require fully nine yards—that is," (with an air of condescension) "if you wish it made up in the *fashion*." If you ask for blue, he insists, with some severity, that a woman of your complexion should wear green by all means. If you want a number two square-toed, low-heeled boot, he is of the meditative, arched-eyebrowed opinion that you would really prefer a number 1, opera-toed, high-heeled affair if you knew a neat fit when you saw one. If you ask for a large button, he gives you a look of insolent pity and says: "Of course you mean a small one! They do not wear large ones now." I know there are ever and ever so many good clerks, and proprietors of large stores should appreciate them more and pay them better than they now do. It is wearisome and annoying work, and I do not think whimsical customers and the patent, automatic "shopper" should be humored or tolerated; but I do think that people who go into a store, knowing what they want and recognizing it when they see it, should be treated with sense and courtesy.