



THE MAD HOUSE.

Cold, dark and gaunt, it looms against the sky.
 Its chimneys looking like thin arms outflung
 To violet depths wherein gold moons have swung.
 The night-winds scream about its shrill and high.

Bare fields stretch, ploughed and black, on every side;
 No sound except a night-hawk's lonely cry,
 An old man, heavy-laden, stumbles by,
 His body bent—no living thing beside.

Dull waters slide along this western wall,
 Noiseless; wild eyes peer at them in their dreams.
 A slow cloud bares the moon—and now it seems
 I hear a lost soul's frightened, pleading call.

And while I stand beneath the pale, sweet stars,
 Three fearful shrieks are outward borne to me;
 And in the calm moon's peaceful light see
 Horrible, grinning faces through the bars.

If we had lived with Eve, we would probably have considered entire nudity as proper and desirable as some people now consider semi-nudity.

The violet does not care whether it is plucked by beggar or by king, so long as the hand that plucked it is gentle and the bosom it is placed within pure.

I would rather stoop to the coarse manners of some of God's lowliest laborers for hire, than to lower myself to the loose morals of some of His bluest-blooded princes.

There is only one thing more insufferable than the aggressively conceited man, and that is the good naturedly reminiscent one; you may snub the one cheerfully, but how can you have the heart to hurt the other's feelings?

"O, dear! I want somebody to pity me," writes a disheartened friend; "my nice garden, into which I have put so many weary hours of toil and care, was totally destroyed last night by a neighbor's cow." Of course I sympathize with her, and I have told her so; but I told her also—on the principle that misery loves company—that, looking backward (with apologies to Mr. Bellamy) I could see, scattered all along my twisting and turning pathway through life, the waste places of gardens that I have made for some neighbor's cow to desolate and destroy. Is it not so with all of us? Our gardens, perhaps, are not always composed of such homely, wholesome things as lettuce, radishes, pease and squashes, but the neighbor's cow is always somewhere around, and sooner or later puts her nose between our palings, and peers at us with inquisitive eyes, and finally plants her hoof in the center of our most cherished bed of blossoms. And now that I come to think of it, I wonder if my cow ever goes around poking her nose into other people's gardens.

If your lines have fallen into some quiet, unpretentious place, do not complain that it is dull and commonplace, and that "there is nothing to live for here," as I have heard so many do. Why, dear heart, there is no place on God's earth so bleak and barren, so quiet and lonely, so wind-swept and rain-beaten but that there is a great deal to live for right there, and when you have grown a little older you will see it with clear eyes; and you will, perhaps, look back to the country village and wish—O, how you will wish!—that you had been happy and content in that simple life. You will know, then, that it is nobler to live well a humdrum life, than to wear out body and mind and soul in a fever of gaiety and frivolity and to stretch out your empty hands always to something you can not seize. Better to sing babies to sleep in the soft twilights that fold down over a cottage home, than to loll in velvet carriages and laugh at the brainless nonsense that men of the world whisper into your jeweled ears. And better—far better—to dwell forever away from the lights, and the roar, and the temptations, and the sins of the city, with a clean heart and a pure soul, than to let the city's passionate unrest creep into your pulses and set them to beating in a mad chase after—death.

All trades have their tricks, it is said, and I find that there are a good many little tricks to the trade of authorship. For example, have you noticed how impossible it is lately for any writer, old or new—but especially

the latter—to say "there was a time?" It is invariably "time was," "Time was when these mountains were green with trees," et cetera. I might be persuaded that it is caused by a love of brevity, were it not that, on the very next page, we are confronted by "what time," used in place of that dear, old word "while." It is "what time the tempests on their heeling wings lag," instead of "while the tempests"—and so on. It is rather effective at first, but by and by, one grows pale at sight of it. It is like a black velvet bonnet trimmed with a spray of gold and red autumn leaves: the first one you see is ravishingly lovely, the second looks familiar, the third old, and the fourth baggard and unbearable. Now, if while reading a book or a magazine article, I stumble unexpectedly upon "time was" or "what time," I fold the covers of that book or magazine firmly together, and I say very softly and politely, but with the grimmest kind of determination: "No, thank you; I don't want any more of you!" You do not have to put on a flimsy silk and a paste diamond to prove to the world that you are a true woman; nor do you have to employ high-sounding and effective phrases to induce people to read what you write, if you have something to write which is worth reading.

"He is highly educated, a polished gentleman, and a charming conversationalist," they told me; so I felt rather in awe of him when he was presented to me. For fifteen minutes everything went on swimmingly—which I do hope is not slang. There was no need for me to say a word; I had only to lean back in my chair and look interested, surprised, amused, or consolatory, as his "charming conversation" required, and he did all the rest. He was "an eastern man," and he was quite sure that what he didn't know was not worth a thought, and our beautiful west was a "howling wilderness" to him. In his "highly educated and polished" way, he pitied all who dwelt in this heathen land. At the end of twenty minutes I trembled on the brink of an awful yawn, but recollecting in the nick of time how intensely interested I was, I conquered the temptation valiantly, though it cost me some tears and a dilation of the nostrils which I sincerely hope he did not observe. He seemed to recognize at a glance that I needed information and he gave it to me—O, right manfully and freely. There was no denying that he talked beautifully; but by and by, it did occur to me that I should love to hear the sound of my own voice once in a while. When, finally, at the end of an hour, he went away, beaming, I was convinced not only that he was a "charming conversationalist," but also that he was an unbearable egotist and a plain, common bore. And since that dreary day I have fought shy of "conversationalists," and cling to the good, old-fashioned "talker."

It is said that when a woman tips a waiter, she does it before she has been served, while a man always waits until after the service. This proves how deep and subtle is woman's wisdom. Waiters and Pullman car porters are specially attentive to men because their imaginative minds always see a possible tip in the near future, while they are usually unattentive to women unaccompanied by an escort. Therefore, if a woman wishes to secure extra service and attention, she should give the attendant to understand beforehand in a quiet, dignified way that she means to pay him. At the same time, there is something repulsive to a refined woman in the very thought of slipping fifty cents into the black palm of a burly negro, merely to persuade him not to be indecently rude to her when she is traveling alone. It would be more sensible and modest, I think, for each woman who is not treated politely and attentively by employes who are paid by a company for such service to quietly put in a complaint at headquarters. If each woman would do this, it would soon become safer and pleasanter for women to travel alone. No company wishes to get such a reputation for careless attention to women that they will hesitate to travel alone over their lines. About a year ago a gentleman tried to engage a stateroom for his wife on a Puget sound boat, but could only secure one berth, as the purser informed him that he must put two ladies in each room. When the gentleman's wife entered the stateroom late at night, she found the lower berth occupied by a woman of bad repute. She immediately returned to the cabin, and sending for the purser, requested him to remove the woman from the room. He became very indignant, and tried to crush her with his lordliness and high-mightiness, sneeringly informing her that her husband had understood that another "lady" was to occupy the room with her. Then she looked him, quietly and modestly and unflinchingly, straight in the eye, and said she, very low but sternly: "Did my husband give you permission to insult me? Either you remove the woman from my room, or I sit here in this cabin all night, and when we reach our destination, report your conduct at headquarters. We will see if the company wishes it known that a woman can not travel on its boats without receiving insult." In twenty minutes she had full possession of her stateroom, and was treated with the most obsequious politeness for the remainder of the trip—and without giving anybody any "tips" too. And when, a month later, she returned on the same boat, the purser came to her courteously and asked her to designate which of the ladies in the cabin she preferred to share her stateroom. And she smilingly "designated."