

MAX O'RELL

RAMBLES IN
WOMANLAND

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PART I

RAMBLES IN WOMANLAND

CHAPTER I

THOUGHTS ON LIFE IN GENERAL

Cupid will cause men to do many things; so will cupidity.



I like economy too much as a virtue not to loathe it when it becomes a vice.



Many virtues, when carried too far, become vices.



Envy is a vice which does not pay. If you let your envy be apparent, you advertise your failure.



Nothing is less common than common-sense.



Whenever you can, pay cash for what you buy. A bill owing is like port wine – it generally improves by keeping.



There are people whose signature has no more significance at the end of a letter of insults than it has value at the bottom of a cheque.



The hardest thing to do in life is to make a living dishonestly for any length of time.



The harm that happens to others very seldom does us any good, and the good that happens to them very seldom does us

any harm. People who are successful are neither envious, jealous, nor revengeful.



Very often a man says, 'I have made a fool of myself!' who should only accuse his father.



A contract is a collection of clauses signed by two honourable persons who take each other for scoundrels.



Many people make a noise for the simple reason that, like drums, they are empty. Many others think themselves deep who are only hollow.



Never have anything to do with women in whose houses you never see a man. You may say what you like, but I have heard many women admit that the presence of a man adds a great deal of respectability to a house.



If you cannot prevent evil, try not to see it. What we do not know does not hurt us.



A self-conscious man is sometimes one who is aware of his worth; a conceited man is generally one who is not aware of his unworthiness.



Many a saint in a small provincial town is a devil of a dog in the Metropolis. Life in small towns is like life in glass-houses. The fear of the neighbour is the beginning of wisdom.



Great revolutions were not caused by great grievances or even great sufferings, but by great injustices.



Revolutions, like new countries, are often started by somewhat objectionable adventurers. When they have been successful,

steady and honest people come in.



The good diplomatist is not the one who forces events, but the one who foresees them, and, when they come, knows how to make the best of them. The good diplomatist is not the one who successfully takes people in, but the one who, when he has discovered who are his true friends, sticks to them through thick and thin.



I prefer unrighteousness to self-righteousness. The unrighteous man may see the error of his ways and improve. He may even be lovable. The self-righteous man is unteachable, uncharitable, unloving, unlovable, and unlovely.



You can judge the social standing of a woman from the way she sits down.



A woman may love a man she has hated, never one she has

despised, seldom one who has been indifferent to her.



A woman is seldom jealous of another on account of her intellectual attainments, but if her bosom friend has on purpose or by mere chance eclipsed her by her dress at a party, they will probably be no longer on speaking terms.



Scientific men are generally the most honest of men, because their minds are constantly bent on the pursuit of truth.



It requires a head better screwed on the shoulders to stand success than to endure misfortune.



The world is not ruled by men of talent, but by men of character.



A vain man speaks either well or ill of himself. A modest man

never speaks of himself at all.

CHAPTER II

OH, YOU MEN!

The Paris *Presse* had asked its male readers to mention which virtue they most admire in women. Here is the result, with the number of votes obtained by each virtue, and truly it is not an edifying result:

1. Faithfulness	8,278
2. Economy	7,496
3. Kindness	6,736
4. Order	5,052
5. Modesty	4,975
6. Devotion	4,782
7. Charity	4,575
8. Sweetness	4,565
9. Cleanliness	3,594
10. Patience	2,750
11. Maternal love	2,703
12. Industry	2,125
13. Courage	1,758
14. Discretion	1,687
15. Simplicity	1,580
16. Wisdom	1,417
17. Honesty	1,389
18. Amiability	1,273
19. Chastity	1,230
20. Propriety	969
21. Self-abnegation	868

Surely, here is food for reflections and comments. Economy, order, and devotion head the list; chastity and self-abnegation figure at the bottom. I should have imagined the last two virtues would have obtained the maximum of votes.

And is it not wonderful that the most beautiful trait in a woman's character – I mean Loyalty – should be altogether omitted from this list of twenty-one most characteristic virtues in women? Are we to conclude that loyalty is a virtue for men alone, such as willpower, magnanimity, energy, bravery, and straightforwardness?

And Sincerity, that most indispensable and precious virtue, which is supposed to make the friendship of men so valuable, is it not also a virtue that we should value in women?

Do men mean to say that loyalty and sincerity should not be or could not be expected to be found in women? Woman must be sweet, of course, and be economical. She must charm men and keep their house on the principles of the strictest order. Lovely!

I know men who allow their wives £1 a day to keep their houses in plenty, and who spend £2 every day at their club. Whatever the husband does, however, the wife must be faithful, and possess patience and self-abnegation. She must be resigned, and, mind you, always amiable and cheerful.

Poor dear fellow! the truth is, that when a man has spent a jolly evening at his club with the 'boys,' it is devilishly hard on him to come home at one or two in the morning and to find his

wife not amiable, not cheerful, but suffering from the dumps, and, maybe, not even patient enough to have waited for him. Sometimes she does worse than this, the wretch! She suffers from toothache or neuralgia. What of that? She should be patient, resigned, amiable, and cheerful; *c'est son métier*.

Yes, on the threshold of the twentieth century we find man still considering woman as a pet animal or a nice little beast of burden; sometimes as both. I really should feel prouder of my sex if they would only be kind enough to assert that men are not beings inferior to monkeys and birds.

For monkeys have but one rule of morality for the manners of both sexes, and birds share with their mates the duties of nest-building and feeding the little ones. The latter even go further. When the female bird does her little house duties in the nursery, the male entertains her with a song in order to keep her cheerful.

Marriage will be a failure as long as men are of opinion that fidelity, patience, devotion, amiability, cheerfulness, and self-abnegation are virtues expected of women only; marriage will be a failure as long as it is a firm, the two partners of which do not bring about the same capital of qualities, as long as what is bad in the goose is not bad in the gander.

Certainly I like to see in a man a more powerful will than in a woman; I like to see more sweetness in a woman than in a man. In other words, I like to see certain virtues or qualities more accentuated in a man, others more accentuated in a woman; but, so far as fidelity, kindness, order, patience, industry, discretion,

courage, devotion, self-abnegation, wisdom, honesty, sincerity, amiability, and loyalty are concerned, I absolutely deny that they should be womanly virtues only. They are virtues that a man should expect to find in a woman as well as a woman in a man.

Oh, you men, most illogical creatures in the world! You call woman a weak being, but, although you make laws to protect children, you make none to protect women. Nay, on that woman whom you call weak you impose infallibility. When you strong, bearded men get out of the path of duty you say: 'The flesh is weak'; but when it is a woman who does there is no indulgence, no mercy, no pity. No extenuating circumstances are admitted.

What you most admire in women is chastity. If so, how dare you leave unpunished the man who takes it away from them? How is it that you receive him in your club, welcome him in your house, and not uncommonly congratulate him on his good fortune?

I hear you constantly complain that women are too fond of dress, too careless of the money that you make by the sweat of your brow, too frivolous, too fond of pleasure, and that matrimony becomes, on that account, more and more impossible.

Let me assure you that there are many young girls, brought up by thoughtful mothers to be cheerful, devoted, and careful wives; but, as a rule, you despise them. You are attracted by the best dressed ones, and you go and offer your heart to the bird with fine feathers. You take the rose, and disdain to look at the violet.

How illogical of you to make complaints! You only get what you want, and, later on, what you deserve.

The law, made by man, and the customs exact virtue incarnate in woman. She is to have neither weaknesses, senses, nor passions. Whatever her husband does, she must be patient and resigned.

The laws and customs would be much wiser if, instead of demanding infallibility of women, they were to make women's duties and virtues easier by showing less indulgence for men, and by declaring that, in matrimony, the same conjugal virtues are expected alike of men as of women.

CHAPTER III

THE ROSE, THE LILY, AND THE VIOLET; OR, HOW DIFFERENT METHODS APPEAL TO DIFFERENT WOMEN

The man butterfly is the most dangerous member of society. He is generally handsome, amiable, persuasive, and witty. He may be in succession cheerful, light-hearted, poetical, and sentimental.

If he comes to the rose, he says to her in his sweetest voice: 'You are beautiful, and I love you tenderly, ardently. I feel I can devote my whole life to you. If you can love me, I can reward your love with a century of constancy and faithfulness.'

'Oh!' says the rose, with an air of incredulity, 'I know what the faithfulness of the butterfly is.'

'There are all sorts of butterflies,' he gently intimates; 'I know that some of them have committed perjury and deceived roses, but I am not one of them. Of the butterfly I have only the wings, to always bring me back to you. I am a one-rose butterfly; if the others are inconstant, unfaithful, liars, I am innocent of their faults. I swear, if you will not listen to me, I shall die, and in dying for you there will be happiness still.'

The rose is touched, moved and charmed with this passionate language. 'How he loves me!' she thinks. 'After all, if butterflies are generally perfidious, it is not his fault; he is not one of that sort.'

The rose yields; she gives up to him her whole soul, all her most exquisite perfume. After he is saturated, he takes his flight.

'Where are you going?' asks the rose.

'Where am I going?' he says, with a protecting sneer. 'Why, I am going to visit the other flowers, your rivals.'

'But you swore you would be faithful to me!'

'I know, my dear; a butterfly's oath, nothing more. You should have been wiser, and not allowed yourself to be taken in.'

Then he goes in the neighbourhood of a beautiful, haughty, vain lily. Meantime an ugly bumble comes near the rose and tries to sting her. She calls the butterfly to her help, but he does not even deign to answer. For him the rose is the past and the lily the present. He is no more grateful than he is faithful.

WHEN HE MEETS THE LILY

With the lily, whom he understands well, he knows he has to proceed in quite a different manner. He must use flattery.

'Imagine, lovely lily,' he says to her, 'that this silly and vain rose thinks she is the queen of flowers. She is beautiful, no doubt, but what is her beauty compared to yours? What is her perfume? Almost insipid compared to your enchanting,

intoxicating fragrance. What is her shape compared to your glorious figure? Why, she looks like a pink cabbage. Is not, after all, pure whiteness incomparable? My dear lady, you are above competition.'

The vain lily listens with attention and pleasure. The wily butterfly sees he is making progress. He goes on flattering, then risks a few words of love.

'Ah!' sighs the lily, 'if you were not a fickle butterfly, I might believe half of what you say!'

'You do not know me!' he exclaims indignantly. 'I have only the shape of a butterfly; I have not the heart of one. How could I be unfaithful to you if you loved me? Are you not the most beautiful of flowers? How could it be possible for me to prefer any other to you? No, no; for the rest of my life there will be but the lily for me.'

The vanity of the lily is flattered, she believes him, and gives herself up to the passionate embrace of the butterfly.

'Oh, beloved one,' she exclaims in ecstasy, 'you will love me for ever; you will always be mine as I am yours!'

'To tell you the truth, my dear lily,' says the butterfly coolly, 'you are very nice, but your perfume is rather strong, a little vulgar, and one gets tired of it quickly. I am not sure that I do not prefer the rose to you. Now, be good, and let me go quickly. I am a butterfly. I cannot help my nature; I was made like that. Good-bye!'

THE MODEST VIOLET

Then he flies towards a timid violet, modestly hidden in the ivy near the wall. Her sweet odour reveals her presence. So he stops and says to her:

'Sweet, exquisite violet, how I do love you! Other flowers may be beautiful, my darling, but that is all. You, besides, are good and modest; as for your sweet, delicious perfume, it is absolutely beyond competition. I might admire a rose or a lily for a moment, lose my head over them, but not my heart. You alone can inspire sincere and true love. If you will marry me – for you do not imagine that I could ask you to love me without at the same time asking you to be my wife – we will lead a quiet, retired life of eternal bliss, hidden in the ivy, far from the noise and the crowd.'

'This would be beautiful,' says the violet, 'but I am afraid you are too brilliant for me, and I too modest and humble for you. I have been warned against you. People say you are fickle.'

'Who could have slandered me so? Your modesty is the very thing that has attracted me to you. I have crossed the garden without looking at any other flower in order to come to you straight. What I want is a heart like yours – tender, faithful – a heart that I may feel is mine for the rest of my days.'

And he swears his love, always promising matrimony as soon as a few difficulties, 'over which he has no control,' are surmounted. The poor little violet is fascinated, won; she loves

him, and gives herself to him; but it is not long before he goes.

'Surely,' she says, with her eyes filled with tears, 'you are not going to abandon me. You are not going to leave me to fight the great big battle of life alone, with all the other flowers of the garden to sneer at me and despise me! Oh no, dear; I have loved you with my modest soul; I have given you all I have in the world. No, no, you are not going away, never to return again! It would be too cruel! No, the world is not so bad as that; you will return, won't you?'

'I feel very sorry for you, dear – really very sorry; but, you see, I cannot. I am a gentleman, and I have my social position to think of. I am sure you understand that. You say you are fond of me; then you will put yourself in my place, and conclude that I have done the best I could for you. Good-bye! Forget me as quickly as you can.'

The little violet commits suicide; and the butterfly, reading an account of it in the following day's papers, has not even a tear to shed, no remorse, no regret.

A SHINING SOCIAL LIGHT

He is called by his club friends 'a devil of a fellow with the girls,' and that is almost meant as a compliment. As for the women of the very best society, he is thought rather enterprising and dangerous; but I have never heard that, for his conduct, he has ever been turned out of a respectable house or of a decent

club.

There is one drawback to the perfect happiness of the butterfly: he is generally in love with a worthless woman, who makes a fool of him.

CHAPTER IV

WOMEN LOVE BETTER THAN MEN

How many people understand what love means? How many appreciate it? How many ever realize what it is? For some it is a more or less sickly sentiment, for others merely violent desires.

Alas! it requires so many qualifications to appreciate love that very few people are sufficiently free from some vulgarity or other to be worthy of speaking of love without profanity.

Love requires too much constancy to suit the light-hearted, too much ardour to suit calm temperaments, too much reserve to suit violent constitutions, too much delicacy to suit people destitute of refinement, too much enthusiasm to suit cool hearts, too much diplomacy to suit the simple-minded, too much activity to suit indolent characters, too many desires to suit the wise.

See what love requires to be properly and thoroughly appreciated, and you will easily understand why it must be in woman's nature to love better and longer than man.

Men can worship better than women, but women can love better than men. Of this there can be no doubt.

Very often women believe that they are loved when they are only ardently desired because they are beautiful, piquant, elegant, rich, difficult to obtain, and because men are violent, ambitious, wilful, and obstinate; and the more obstacles there are in their way, the more bent they feel on triumphing over difficulties.

To obtain a woman men will risk their lives, ruin themselves, commit any act of folly or extravagance which you care to name. Women are flattered by these follies and extravagances due to motives of very different characters; but they mistake passion for love.

Yet passion is very seldom compatible with true love. Passion is as fickle as love is constant. Passion is but a proof of vanity and selfishness.

Woman is only the pretext for the display of it. Singers, actresses, danseuses, all women detached from that shade and mystery in which love delights in dwelling, women who give to the public all the treasures of their beauty, amiability, and talent are those who inspire in men the most violent passions, but they are seldom truly loved unless they consent to retire from the glare of the footlights and withdraw to the shade.

Passion excites vanity, noise, envy: it plays to the gallery. Love seeks retirement, and prefers a moss bank against some wall covered with ivy, some solitude where silence is so perfect that two hearts can hear each other beat, where space is so small that lips must forcibly meet.

The man who takes his bride to Paris for the honeymoon does not really love her. If he loves truly he will take her to the border of a forest in some secluded, picturesque spot, where nature will act as a church in which both will fervently worship.

Now, with very few exceptions, women understand these things much better than men. They are born with feelings

of delicacy and refinement that only few men can acquire or develop; they are more earnest, more poetical, better diplomatists, and of temperaments generally more artistic.

Besides – and it is in this that they are infinitely superior to men – whereas many men see their love cooled by possession, all women see theirs increased and sealed by it.

The moment a woman is possessed by the man she loves, she belongs to him body, heart, and soul. Her love is the occupation of her life, her only thought, and, I may add without the slightest idea of irreverence, her religion.

She loves that man as she does God. If all men could only be sufficiently impressed with this fact, how kind and devoted to women they would be!

CHAPTER V

IS WOMAN A RESPONSIBLE BEING?

There are nations still in existence where women are denied the possession of a soul; but these nations are not civilized. Now, Germany and England are civilized nations, yet I am not sure that some Germans and Englishmen really admit that women are beings possessed of a mind.

I have constantly heard Englishmen of 'the good old school' say: 'If a man steals my horse, my dog, my poultry, I have him arrested, and he gets a few months' imprisonment; if he steals my wife, he remains at large, unmolested. Yet, is not my wife my most valuable property?' And that good Englishman is absolutely persuaded that his argument is unanswerable.

The other day, in a German paper, I read the following exquisitely delicious remark: 'We have a treaty of extradition with Switzerland. If the man Giron had stolen the least valuable horse of the Crown Prince of Saxony, we could have had him arrested in Geneva and returned to us; but as he only stole the wife of that prince, the mother of his children, we can do nothing.'

From all this we are bound to conclude that, in the eyes of many Germans and some Englishmen, a woman is like a horse or any other animal, a thing, a 'brute of no understanding,' a being without a mind. In my ignorance I thought that when women left

their husbands to follow other men, they were, rightly or wrongly, using their own minds, acting on their own responsibility and on their own good or bad judgment.

In other words, I thought that they were thinking beings.

When a man steals a horse, he takes him by the mane or the mouth and pulls him away with him. He does not say to the animal, 'I like you; I will treat you better than your master; will you come with me?' He steals him, as he would an inanimate thing.

When a man asks a woman to elope with him, he says to her: 'I love you, I know you love me; leave your husband, who makes you unhappy, and come with me, who will make you happy.' She reflects, and, through feelings of despair, of love, of passion, she yields, and answers, 'Yes, I will.'

Now, her resolution may be most reprehensible, her conduct immoral; she may be a fool, anything you like, but she is not carried off by force. She acts of her own accord and free will, and is, I imagine, prepared to meet the consequences of her actions.

I have heard an English magistrate say to a man whose wife was accused of disorderly conduct: 'You should look after your wife better than you do, and, in future, I will make you responsible for what she does. To-day I will impose a fine of ten shillings. If you pay it, I will set her free.'

Now, this argument would be fairly good if the accused had been a dog. I should understand a magistrate saying to a man: 'Your dog is a nuisance and a source of danger to your

neighbours; if he causes any more damage, if I hear again that he has killed your neighbour's cat, eaten his poultry, or bitten his children, I will hold you responsible, and make you pay the damages, *plus* some compensation.' But a wife! – inasmuch that, mind you, when a woman has committed a murder in England, it is she who is hanged, not her husband.

I believe that women are quite prepared to accept the responsibility of their actions. The emancipation of woman should be an accomplished fact by the declaration that she can do evil as well as good. And I am sure that if she wants credit for whatever good she does, she is also ready to accept the consequences of the mischief, to herself or to others, which she may make.

CHAPTER VI

RAMBLES IN CUPID'S DOMAIN

Love performs daily miracles. It causes people to see with closed eyes, and to see nothing with open ones.



Women worship sacrifice to the extent of wishing us to believe (perhaps they believe it themselves) that, even at the altar of love, they make a sacrifice. Women in love have an irresistible craving for sacrifice.



I have heard of women being so much in love as to declare to their husbands that they would not want a new hat for another month.



The world of love can boast a roll of demi-gods, heroes, martyrs, and saints that would put into the shade those of Paradise and Olympus.



Love, after being conquered, has to be reconquered every day. Love is like money invested in doubtful stock, which has to be watched at every moment. Speculators know this; but married men and women too often ignore it.



In love the hand lies much less than the lips and the eyes. A certain pressing of the hand is often the most respectful and surest of proofs of love.



The language of the hand is most eloquent. Who has not been able to translate a pressure from a woman's hand by 'stay' or 'go'? How a woman can say to you with her hand 'I love you' or 'I cannot love you'!



Whoever says that two kisses can be perfectly alike does not know the A B C of love.



No two acts dictated, or even suggested, by love should ever be alike.



In love it is better to be a creditor than a debtor.



Think of the torrents of harmony which maestros have composed with seven notes; the millions of thoughts which have been expressed with a score of letters; think of all the exploits, deeds of valour, and crimes that have been committed under the influence of love!



Love is not compatible with conceit; the love of self excludes all other. Even injury cannot cure love; if it does, there was in the person much more conceit than love.



When a man and a woman have pronounced together the three

sacramental words 'I love you,' they become priest and priestess of the same temple. In order to keep the sacred fire alive, they must be careful not to stifle it by an excess of fuel or to let it go out for want of air.



When you are in love, do not be over-sensitive, but always imagine that the other is. Thus your susceptibility will never be wounded, nor will that of your partner be.



Woe to people in love who satisfy all their desires in a week, in a month, in a year! Two lovers, or married people, should die without having drunk the cup of love to the last dregs.



Absence is a tonic for love only when men and women love with all their heart and soul. When they do not, the ancient proverb is still true: 'Far from the eyes, far from the heart.'



A beautiful woman is jealous of no woman, not even of a

George Sand, a George Eliot, or of a queen; but a duchess may be jealous of a chambermaid.



All the love-letters of a woman are not worth one of her smiles.



If a woman wants to know the secret for remaining loved a long time, let her keep this recipe in mind: Give much, give more still, but be sure that you do not give all. Cupid is a little ungrateful beast, who takes his flight when expectations cease to whet his appetite.



For common mortals, desire engenders love, and love kills desire; for the elect, love is the son of desire and the prolific father of a thousand new desires.



To conquer a man is nothing for a woman to boast of, but to conquer a woman is a real victory, because it requires in a man, to

conquer a woman, far more qualities than it requires in a woman to conquer a man.



There is a touching exchange of amiable services between the sexes. The man of twenty often receives his first lesson in love from a woman of forty; and the woman of twenty generally receives hers from a man of forty.



The following are among the little tortures which people in love take pleasure in inflicting upon themselves:-

'Amelia has been coughing twice to-day. I wonder if the poor darling is consumptive? An aunt of hers died of consumption. She was an aunt only by marriage, but when those confounded microbes enter a family, no one knows the mischief they may do!'

'George did not notice I had a carnation, his favourite flower, on my corsage the whole of last evening. He loves me no more.'

'Do I love Algy – do I adore him as he deserves? Am I worthy of him? Shall I be able to keep the love of a man so handsome, so kind, so clever? This morning he did not kiss me with the same ardour. Perhaps he has not courage enough to confess that he does not love me as much as he used to.'

'I am too happy. Something tells me it cannot last. I have a

presentiment that a great misfortune is going to happen. Our love cannot possibly enjoy such bliss for long. I feel I am going to cry.'

And she bursts into hot tears.

'To-day Arthur met me at the appointed time to the minute. Formerly he used to be in advance – always. I told him so, and he said, showing me the time by his watch, that he was quite punctual. He ought to have been pleased with my remark, and have answered otherwise. I wonder if there is anything wrong?'

'He never notices my dresses as he used to. Yesterday I changed the bow I had on, and he made no remark. I know all his cravats, every one of them. I also know when he has tied them before a glass, and when he has not. He does not love me as I love him.'

'I am quite happy when my hands are in his, but he is not satisfied with that; he always wants to kiss me. He loves me with his senses, not with his heart. They say all men are the same. I thought George was different from all of them!'

'I have always heard that love is the most sublime joy on earth. I love and I am loved; yet I want to cry, and I don't know why. Oh, why?'

'Why do I find that Angelina looks better in gray than in red? I ought to admire her in whatever colour she has on. Should I make such a remark if my love was intense? Was I a brute for making it before her? She has been sad ever since. But why does she wear red? Red does not suit a blonde. Red is for brunettes. Yet, can I tell her that? Of course, I cannot. I must not imagine

that she does not know that herself, and besides, I should find her beautiful in anything. I am an ass, a silly ass!"

CHAPTER VII

WHICH SEX WOULD YOU CHOOSE TO BE?

I once heard a Frenchman say, 'My wife could do without me, but I couldn't do without her;' but, as a rule, the Frenchman who has had the good fortune of marrying an intelligent wife becomes so dependent on her, so much under her influence, that no general rule should be drawn from the remark. When a man and wife have lived happily together, I find, from my personal observations, that when one has gone, it is generally the woman who can better do without the man than the reverse.

Of course, the question is very complex, and one which I would rather ask than answer. If sexes could do one without the other, and resolved to do it for fifty years, the world would put up its shutters. May not the question resolve itself into the following: Of old bachelors and old maids, which are the happier?

Even this question is not a fair one, because it must be admitted that society, which is very lenient over the peccadilloes of unmarried men, frowns unmercifully over those of unmarried women. Shall we then say, Of old bachelors and old maids, who have led monachal lives, which have been the happier, and would be the more ready to decline matrimony if the opportunity were again offered to them? Now, can you answer the question more

easily? Well, if you can, I can't, and if you have anything to say on the subject I shall be glad to hear it.

Personally, I think the question practically amounts to this: Which would you rather be, a man or a woman?

Now, this is a question which my readers will find difficulty in answering, and even in speaking about, with authority, as each of them has only had the experiences of one sex.

Before answering it, we must indeed talk it over with some very intimate and trustworthy friends of the other sex, and compare their sentiments and sensations with our own. We must recall to our minds all the observations which we have made on the lives of men and women whom we have known. Let us not follow the example of the woman who would be a man 'because men are free,' and the man who would be a woman 'because women are admired,' for the reason that all men are not free, and women are far from being all admired.

I have interviewed on the subject many men and many women, and I have found an enormous majority of women who would elect to be men, and only a very small minority of men who would elect to be women. Conclusion: most people would elect to be men.

I am a man, and if I were to be born again and asked to make a choice, I would elect to be a man; but the reason may be that I possess many failings of which I am aware, and also a few qualities which the most imperfect of us must necessarily possess who are not absolute objects of perdition.

For let us say at once that sex suits character.

I love freedom and hate conventionalities; I am a man of action, and must always be up and doing. I do not believe that I am in any way tyrannical, yet I like to lead and have my own way. If the position of first fiddle is engaged, I decline to form part of the orchestra. Most of these characteristics are failings, perhaps even faults, but I possess them, and I cannot help possessing them, and they naturally induce me to prefer being a man.

I have made my confession, let my readers make theirs instead of taking me to task. I hate to feel protected, to be petted, but I would love to protect and pet a beloved one, whom I would think weaker than myself. I am a born fighter, and I don't care for smooth paths, unless I can make them smooth myself for my own use and also for the use of those who walk through life by my side.

But, leaving aside personal characteristics which would lead me to elect to be a man, there are many reasons which would cause me to make that choice quite independent of my character. Nature has given women beauty of face and figure, but there she stopped, and to make her pay for that gift she has handicapped her in every possible way.

And when I consider that there are in this world more ugly women than beautiful ones, and that an ugly woman is the abomination of desolation, an anomaly, a freak, I altogether fail to see why ninety women out of a hundred should return thanks for being women. I have no hesitation in saying that the woman

who is not beautiful has no *raison d'être*, and that only a few beautiful women are happy to be alive after they are forty.

Women have terrible grievances, many of which society and legislation (that is to say, in the second case, man) ought to redress. But the greatest grievances of women are, to my mind, against nature. These grievances cannot and will never be redressed.

In love woman has an unfair position. She gets old when a man of the same age remains young. In every race she is handicapped out of any chance of winning or even getting a dead heat. For these reasons especially I should elect to be a man.

Ah, what a pity we cannot decide our fate in every phase of life! in which case I would elect to be a beautiful woman from twenty to thirty, a brilliant officer from thirty to forty, a celebrated painter from forty to fifty, a famous poet or novelist from fifty to sixty, Prime Minister of England or President of the United States from sixty to seventy, and a Cardinal for the rest of my life.

CHAPTER VIII

RAMBLES IN WOMANLAND

When a woman says of her husband, 'He is a wretch!' she may still love him; probably she does. When she says, 'Oh, he is a good sort' – poor fellow!



After bravery and generosity, tact and discretion are the two qualities that women most admire in men; audacity comes next.



Speaking of his wife, a Duke says, 'The Duchess'; a man standing always on ceremony, 'Mrs. B.'; a gentleman, 'My wife'; an idiot, 'My better half'; a common man, 'The missus'; a working man, as a compliment, 'The old woman'; a French grocer, 'La patronne'; a French working man, 'La bourgeoisie.' The sweet French word 'épouse' is only used now by Paris concierges.



Women are roses. I always suspected it from the thorns.



In the good old times of poetry and adventures, when a man was refused a girl by her parents, he carried her off; now he asks for another. But, then, posting exists no longer except for letters, and there is no poetry in eloping in a railroad car. Oh, progress! oh, civilization! such is thy handicraft! Dull, prosaic times we are living in!



Woman is an angel who may become a devil, a sister of mercy who may change into a viper, a ladybird who may be transformed into a stinging-bee. Sometimes she never changes, and all her lifetime remains angel, sister of mercy, ladybird, and sweet fragrant flower. It depends a great deal on the gardener.



When a man is on the wrong path in life, it is seldom he does not meet a woman who says to him, 'Don't go that way!'; but when it is a woman who has lost her way, she always meets a man who indicates to her the wrong path.



The Lord took from man a rib, with which He made a woman. As soon as this process was finished, woman went back to man, and took the rest of him, which she has kept ever since.



The heart is a hollow and fleshy muscle which causes the blood to set in motion. It appears that this is what we love with. Funny!



Circe was an enchantress who changed men into pigs. Why do I say was? I don't think that she is dead.



Women were not born to command, but they have enough inborn power to govern man who commands, and, as a rule, the best and happiest marriages are those where women have most authority, and where their advice is oftenest followed.



There are three ways for a man to get popular with women. The first is to love them, the second to sympathize with their inclinations, and the third to give them reasons that will raise them in their own estimation. In other words, love them, love what they love, or cause them to love themselves better. Love, always love.



A woman knows that a man is in love with her long before he does. A woman's intuition is keener than her sight; in fact, it is a sixth sense given to her by nature, and which is more powerful than the other five put together.



Very beautiful, as well as very good, women are seldom very clever or very witty; yet a beautiful woman who is good is the masterpiece of creation.



A woman will often more easily resist the love which she feels for a man than the love which she inspires in him. It is in the most beautiful nature of woman to consider herself as a reward, but it is also, unfortunately for her, too often her misfortune.



We admire a foreigner who gets naturalized in our own country, and despise a compatriot who makes a foreigner of himself. If a man joins our religion, we call him converted; if one of ours goes over to another, we call him perverted. In the same way, we blame the inconstancy of a woman when she leaves us for another, and we find her charming when she leaves another to come to us.



The reputation that a woman should try to obtain and deserve is to be a sensible woman in her house and an amiable woman in society.



Frivolous love may satisfy a man and a woman for a time, but only true and earnest love can satisfy a husband and a wife. Only this kind of love will survive the thousand-and-one little drawbacks of matrimony.



Men and women can no more conceal the love they feel than they can feign the one which they feel not.



Love feeds on contrasts to such an extent that you see dark men prefer blondes, poets marry cooks and laundresses, clever men marry fools, and giants marry dwarfs.



God has created beautiful women in order to force upon men the belief in His existence.



Like all the other fruits placed on earth for the delectation of men, the most beautiful women are not always the best and the most delicious.



In the heroic times of chivalry men drew their swords for the sake of women; in these modern prosaic ones they draw their cheques.



Women entertain but little respect for men who have blind confidence in their love and devotion; they much prefer those who feel that they have to constantly keep alive the first and deserve the second.



A woman can take the measure of a man in half the time it takes a man to have the least notion of a woman.



There are three kinds of men: those who will come across temptations and resist them, those who will avoid them for fear of succumbing, and those who seek them. Among the first are to be found only men whose love for a woman is the first consideration of their lives.



Young girls should bear in mind that husbands are not creatures who are always making love, any more than soldiers are men who are always fighting.



A love affair will interest even a very old woman, just as the account of a race will always interest an old jockey. Habit, you see!



The friendship of women for women is very often less based on love, or even sympathy, than on little indiscreet confidences which they may have made to one another.



In order that love may be lasting, it must be closely allied with tried friendship. One cannot replace the other, but so long as both march abreast, living together, a man and a woman can find life delicious.



It is not matrimony that kills love, but the way in which many people live in the state of matrimony. It may be affirmed, however, that only intelligent diplomatists (alas! the select few!) can make love last long in matrimonial life.



Women who suggest to the mind notes of interrogation are more interesting than those, too perfect, who only suggest notes of admiration.



Constant reproaches do not kill love so quickly and so surely as constant reminders of what one has done to deserve gratitude. Why? Simply because Cupid loves freedom, and lives on it. To ask for love as a debt of gratitude is like forcing it, and the failure is fatal.



Women are all actresses. What makes actresses so fascinating and attractive to men is that they are women twice over.



Woman is weak and man is strong – so we constantly hear, at any rate. Then why, in the name of common-sense, do we expect to find in women virtues that demand a strength of which we men are not capable?



There are women in the world who love with such ardour, such sincerity, and such devotion, that, after their death, they ought to be canonized.



Love is a divine law; duty is only a human – nay, only a social – one. That is why love will always triumph over duty; it is the greater of the two.



Lovers are very much like thieves; they proceed very much in the same way, and the same fate eventually awaits them. First, they take superfluous precautions; then by degrees they neglect them, until they forget to take the necessary ones, and they are caught.



A man who has been married enters the kingdom of heaven ex-officio, having served his purgatory on earth; but if he has been married twice he is invariably refused admittance, as the

Sojourn of the Seraphs is no place for lunatics.



As long as there is one woman left on the face of the earth, and one man left to observe her, the world will be able to hear something new about women.



A man may be as perfect as you like, he will never be but a rough diamond until he has been cut and polished by the delicate hand of a woman.



Middle-aged and elderly men are often embellished by characteristic lines engraven on their faces, but women are not jealous of them.



A woman who marries a second time runs two risks: she may regret that she lost her first husband, or that she did not always have the second one. But, in the first case, her second husband may regret her first one even more than she does, and tell her

so, too.



Many men say that they marry to make an end; but they forget that if marriage is for them an end, it is a beginning for the women, and then, look out!



It is a great misfortune not to be loved by the one you love; but it is a still greater one to be loved by the one whom you have ceased to love.



Love is like most contagious diseases: the more afraid you are of it, the more likely you are to catch it.



Men and women have in common five senses; but women possess a sixth one, by far the keenest of all – intuition. For that matter, women do not even think, argue, and judge as safely as they feel.



Cupid and Hymen are brothers, but, considering the difference in their temperaments, they cannot be sons by the same wife.



The motto of Cupid is, 'All or nothing'; that of Hymen, 'All and nothing.'



Love is more indulgent than Friendship for acts of infidelity.



If men were all deaf, and women all blind, matrimony would stand a much better chance of success.

CHAPTER IX

WOMEN AND THEIR WAYS

I sometimes wonder how some women dare go out when it is windy. Their hats are fixed to their hair by means of long pins; their hair is fixed to their heads by means of short ones, and sometimes it happens that their heads are fixed to their shoulders by the most delicate of contrivances. Yes, it is wonderful!



Fiction is full of Kings and Princes marrying shepherdesses and beggar-maids; but in reality it is only the Grand-Ducal House of Tuscany, which for nearly three hundred years has exhibited royal Princesses running away with dancing masters and French masters engaged at their husbands' courts.



A man in love is always interesting. What a pity it is that husbands cannot always be in love!



Men who always praise women do not know them well; men

who always speak ill of them do not know them at all.



What particularly flatters the vanity of women is to know that some men love them and dare not tell them so. However, they do not always insist on those men remaining silent for ever.



The saddest spectacle that the world can offer is that of a sweet, sensible, intelligent woman married to a conceited, tyrannical fool.



The mirror is the only friend who is allowed to know the secrets of a woman's imperfections.



When a woman is deeply in love, the capacity of her heart for charity is without limit. If all women were in love there would be no poverty on the face of the earth.



The fidelity of a man to the woman he loves is not a duty, but almost an act of selfishness. It is for his own sake still more than for hers that he should be faithful to her.



Two excellent kinds of wine mixed together may make a very bad drink. An excellent man and a very good woman married together may make an abominable match.



Jealousy, discreet and delicate, is a proof of modesty which should be appreciated by the very woman who should resent violent jealousy.



When you constantly hear the talent or the wit of a woman praised, you may take it for granted that she is not beautiful. If she were, you would hear her beauty praised first of all.



It is slow poison that kills love most surely. Love will survive even infidelity rather than boredom or satiety.



Men study women, and form opinions, generally wrong ones. Women look at men, guess their character, and seldom make mistakes.



All the efforts that an old woman makes to hide her age only help to advertise it louder.



Of a man and a woman, it is the one who is loved, but who does not love, that is the unhappier of the two.



Women often see without looking; men often look without seeing.



I know handsome men who are bald, and there are not a few, but many, who derive distinction from this baldness. There are men – severe, stern types of men – who are not disfigured, but

improved, by spectacles. Just imagine, if you can, the possibility of a bald woman with spectacles inspiring a tender passion! So much for the infallibility of the proverb, 'What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander,' so often quoted by women when they are told that men can afford to do this or that, but not they. Lady women-righters, please answer.



In the tender relations between men and women, novelty is a wonderful attraction, and habit a powerful bond; but between the two there is a bottomless precipice into which love often falls, never to be heard of afterward. Happy those who know how to bridge over the chasm!



A woman never forgets, however old she may be, that she was once very beautiful. Why should she? The pity is that she very often forgets that she is so no longer. My pet aversion in society is the woman of sixty who succeeds in making herself look fifty, thinks she is forty, acts as if she were thirty, and dresses as if she were twenty.



I am not prepared to say that celibacy is preferable to marriage; it has, however, this decided advantage over it: a bachelor can always cease to be one the moment he has discovered that he has made a mistake.



Women are extremists in everything. Poets, painters and sculptors know this so well that they have always taken women as models for War, Pestilence, Death, Famine and Justice, Virtue, Glory, Victory, Pity, Charity. On the other hand, virtues and vices, blessings and calamities of a lesser degree are represented by men. Such are Work, Perseverance, Laziness, Avarice, etc.



It is not given to any man or woman to fall in love more than once with the same person. And although men and women may love several times in succession, they can only once love to the fulness of their hearts.



Love does to women what the sun does to flowers: it colours them, embellishes them, makes them look radiant and beautiful; but when it is too ardent it consumes and withers them.



There are two terribly embarrassing moments in the life of a man. The first is when he has to say 'all' to the woman he loves, and the second when all is said.



If a man is not to a certain extent ill at ease in the presence of a woman, you may be quite sure that he does not really love her.



A woman explains the beauty of a woman; a man feels it. A man does not always know why a woman is beautiful; a woman always does.



The sweetest music in the ears of a woman is the sound of the praises of the man whom she loves.



It is a mistake for a married couple to consider that marriage has made them one. To be attractive to each other they should

each preserve their personality quite distinct. Marriage is very often dull because man and wife are one, and feel lonely. Most people get bored in their own company.



Happiness in matrimony is sober, serious, based on love, confidence, and friendship. Those who seek in it frivolity, pleasure, noise, and passion condemn themselves to penal servitude.



The great misfortune of mankind is that matrimony is the only vocation for which candidates have had no training; yet it is the one that requires the most careful preparation.



On the part of a husband, violent jealousy is an insult to his wife, but delicate, discreet jealousy is almost a compliment to her, for it proves his lack of self-confidence, and that sometimes he feels he is not good enough for her, not worthy of her.



Most women have the hearts of poets and the minds of diplomatists. What makes a wife so useful to an ambassador is that she adds her own power of intuition to the five senses already possessed by her husband.



Love in matrimony can live only on condition that man and wife remain interesting in each other's eyes. Devotion, fidelity, attention to duty, and all the troop of domestic virtues will not be sufficient to keep love alive.



Beauty is not the mother of Love. On the contrary, it is often love which engenders beauty, gives brilliancy to the eyes, gracefulness to the body, vibration to the voice. Love is the sun that hatches the flowers of the soul. The face which reflects all the inner sentiments of the heart betrays the love of its owner, and is beautiful.



Those who in good faith promise eternal love and those who believe in such promises are dupes – the former of their hearts, the latter of their vanity. Wine well taken care of improves by

keeping, but not for ever; it is destined to turn to vinegar sooner or later.



Love is a great healer. The worst characteristic traits of a man and of a woman have been known to be cured by it.



Men and women do not love before they are thirty, men especially. Until then it is little more than rehearsing. Fortunate are those who retain for the play the same company they had engaged for the rehearsal.

CHAPTER X

WOMAN'S MISSION IN THIS WORLD

Naturalists make little difference between women and the other females of the animal kingdom: they declare that the mission of woman is to be a mother. Napoleon I., who was a naturalist, being asked to give a definition of the best woman, answered: 'The one who bears most children.' And as for him man was mere 'cannon flesh,' I am surprised he did not say, 'The one who bears most boys.'

Moralists are kinder to women; they go so far as to grant that woman's mission is twofold: that she is intended to be a wife and a mother; that she is to be the guardian of the hearth, submissive and devoted to man, her lord and master; to look after her household, and be absorbed by her duties toward her husband and children.

No sinecure, this mission of woman, as you see – no joke either; but moralists have no sense of humour – not a particle of it.

No doubt this double rôle of wife and mother is most respectable; it is even sacred; but woman's nature demands something else. To restrict her circle of activity and influence to her family is to misappreciate her many faculties, her aspirations, her feelings, which, like those of men, are entitled to respect; it amounts to not recognising that her mission is not only familial,

but social also.

I will not dwell on the part she is called upon to play in the family as wife and mother. We men all know it, whether we are husbands or sons; but we have also to consider what the rôle of woman is in that society of which she is the great civilizing element as well as the greatest ornament.

The most noble part that has been allotted to woman is that of the flower in the vegetable kingdom. This rôle consists in throwing a spell over the world, in making life more refined and poetical – in a word, in spreading fragrance around her and imparting it to all who come in contact with her. A wag once said that but for the women men could have hoped for Paradise. Good! But what about this world? Is not woman the direct or indirect motive for all our actions? Is she not the embodiment of the beautiful, and therefore the mother of Art?

If she is sometimes the cause of a crime, is she not always the cause of the most heroic deeds performed by man? Can we for a moment suppose society without her? Why, without her it would fall into a state of indolence and degradation, even of utter abjection. Would life be worth living without the sweet presence of kind, cheerful, and amiable women?

Ah, my dear sir, make fun of woman in your club as much as you like; crack jokes at her expense to your heart's content; but acknowledge frankly that you are under her power – at least, I hope, under her influence – and that you could no more do without her than without the air which enables you to breathe.

Talk of woman's mission as wife and mother, as naturalists and moralists do, but let all of us artists cry at the top of our voices that woman's mission is to make life beautiful by the cultivation of her own beauty, beauty of body, mind, and heart.

It is the duty of woman to look as beautiful as she can; it is her imperious duty to charm the world by her sweetness and amiability. A woman who neglects this duty is guilty toward her fellow-creatures, even guilty toward her Maker, by not helping the destiny for which she was created. Countries are civilized in proportion to the influence that women have over men in them.

As long as gardens have flowers and the world has beautiful and amiable women, so long will life be worth living.

CHAPTER XI

IS WOMAN INFERIOR TO MAN?

Many, many years ago a great council was held to discuss the question whether women had souls. I forget the conclusion which that learned assembly arrived at; but what is certain is that now most men do believe that women have souls, although a great number of them are still of opinion that woman is a being inferior to man.

They hold that man is the lord of creation, the masterpiece, the last word of the Almighty.

Now, is this really the case? First, God made the earth, then light, after which He created fishes, birds, and animals of all sorts. Then He said: 'I will now create a being far above all the other animals.'

He took some mud; mark well, I say, some mud, and made Adam. In His wisdom He thought that mud was not good enough to make woman out of, and for her creation he took matter which had already been purified by His Divine breath, and He took part of Adam, and out of it made Eve.

Now, surely, my dear fellow-men, you must own that either mud is better stuff than yourself, or you must confess that woman has a nobler origin than you. You can't get out of it.

Please notice the order of creation: Fish, birds, animals, man and woman. If men do not admit that the Creator began by

the least and finished with the best, they will have to conclude that lobsters, eels, crocodiles, sharks, owls, vultures, and mere sparrows are beings superior to them.

If men do not recognise the superiority of these animals over them, they will have to come to the conclusion that the work of creation is one of improvement every day.

But man will say, woman is not so strong as we are. True enough; but horses are stronger than men; elephants by trampling on them can make marmalade of them. Stags are swifter than men. Camels can carry a weight of 2,500 lb. on their backs. Birds can fly, and men are only trying machines to help them do it.

Is man more intelligent than woman? Certainly not. Who ate the apple? I know that Eve was the first to be disobedient, but she had an idea, at all events before Adam had one.

Had he even the power of resistance? No. Did he even try to shield woman after the offence was committed? No, he didn't, the coward. He turned against her and accused her of being the cause of the whole evil done. Poor beginning, a poor show, and a sad lesson by which men have profited, and to this day they turn against the woman they have deceived, and often abandon her. Man is still true to his origin.

My dear sirs, the proof that God was satisfied that, in creating woman, He had said the last word of His Divine work, is that He entrusted her with the most noble of missions, that of bearing the future generations, of bringing children to the world, of guiding their first steps, of cultivating their minds and inculcating in them

the love of what is good and right. In intending woman to be mother, God proclaimed the superiority of women over the rest of the creation.

CHAPTER XII

WOMEN WHO ARE FOLLOWED AND ANNOYED IN THE STREET

I have constantly heard women complain, in Paris, in London, and in New York, that they can seldom go out in the street without being followed and annoyed by men, many of whom look like gentlemen.

And they express their complaint in tones of indignation not altogether free from a little air of self-satisfaction that seems to say: 'Of course a pretty woman like myself is bound to be noticed and stared at by men.'

Well, I hate to say anything unpleasant to women, but there is an illusion in which they too often indulge, and which I should like to dispel at once.

There are women beautiful as they can be, who can walk in every city perfectly unmolested and in perfect comfort and security, and who would be unable to tell you whether any man or woman had noticed them.

We men are not so bold as many women believe, nor are we so silly. We have instinct, and we know pretty well the woman who enjoys being noticed and looked at, and even the one who seeks that enjoyment for purpose of self-satisfaction or vanity.

I am over fifty years old, and any girl of twenty, I guarantee,

will make me feel as timid as she likes in her presence, not by words, but simply by her attitude of dignity and reserve.

And I believe that practically the same might be said of every man who is not an unmitigated scoundrel or blackguard.

In a word, I should like to prove that a woman, who is too often noticed and followed in the street, should be offended by it, and have enough conscience of her value to mention it as little as possible; she should also exercise more control over herself and pay great attention to the way she dresses, looks and walks when out in the street.

For if she is constantly followed, take it for granted that there is in her appearance something, just a little something, that gives a wrong impression of her.

Let women have simplicity in their toilette, dignity in their manner, a severe gracefulness in their general attitude, and I guarantee you that no man – I mean no fairly well-bred man – will ever turn round to look at them.

Women should not call it success. They should feel humiliated to see that some gloriously beautiful women do not obtain it. They should take advice and seek a remedy with the earnestness of that cashier who, returning home, could not even take notice of his wife and children, much less kiss them, until he had discovered the cause of an error of a penny in his accounts amounting to several thousands of pounds.

When a woman tells me that she cannot go out without men looking and smiling at her, I have always a mind to say to her:

'Perhaps you wink at them.'

CHAPTER XIII

DANGEROUS MEN

(A WARNING TO WOMEN)

Among the men who are the most dangerous for women must be reckoned those whose advances of love generally prove unsuccessful. Women have no idea of the harm that may be done to them by those parasites of their homes.

A woman, young, amiable, and cheerful, welcomes such men in her house without entertaining any suspicion. She invites them to her receptions, her dinner-parties; she often finds them pleasant, witty, and then they venture a few flattering compliments. She at first accepts them as the current coin of society, and pays no attention to them.

As she is amiable to her guests, she is not on her guard, and she treats them to the same smiles, which these fops of the purest water often imagine are gracious smiles conferred on them only. Thus encouraged, they go further, and venture compliments bordering on declarations of love, or, at any rate, on expressions of deep admiration. The young woman, used to compliments, takes no notice of our heroes, or pretends to have understood nothing.

Her silence is then taken for a tacit acceptance, and the fops, emboldened, make an open declaration of love. Now, a regular

flirt or coquette knows how to encourage or discourage a man with one glance, but a perfectly good woman is taken unaware; she feels embarrassed, and, thus apparently encouraged, these men get bolder and bolder, until the young woman has to show them the door.

Then her troubles begin. These parasites will go to their clubs, and, even in drawing-rooms, say that she is a heartless coquette who encourages men to make love to her just to amuse herself. They abuse her, watch her, and, if one day she should compromise herself in the least, woe to her if the secret should fall into such men's hands! There is no revenge of which they are not capable. A case of this sort was, not long ago, investigated thoroughly, and it turned out that an anonymous letter had been written to the husband of a most charming society woman by a cur whom she had to turn out of her house for offering her a worthless love.

CHAPTER XIV

THE MAN WHO SMILES

There is to be met in society a man who is particularly provoking and supremely objectionable and offensive. He is about forty, very gentlemanly, self-possessed, irreproachably dressed, well informed, interesting talker, with a somewhat patronizing air, and an eternal smile of self-satisfaction on his face.

This man has compromised more women than many a 'devil of a fellow.' If you say before him, 'Mrs. X. is very beautiful, isn't she?' he says nothing, but smiles complacently. So you look at him and add:

'Oh, you know her, then?' He smiles again. 'You don't say so!' you remark. 'I should have thought her a woman above the breath of suspicion.'

He smiles still. You become persuaded that he is, or has been, on the most intimate terms with the lady in question.

Mention before him the name of any woman you like to choose, and if the woman is in the least fashionable, or renowned for her beauty or position, he smiles.

If at a ball he asks a lady to give him the pleasure of her partnership for a waltz or a polka, he leans close toward her, smiling at her in such a strange way that people believe he is telling her words of love, or, worse, that he is granted permission

to do so.

If he calls on a lady on her reception day, he has a way to salute her, to kiss her hand, to look at her in a patronizing way that seems to say to the other callers:

'See how ceremonious I am with her before other people, and what a good comedian I am!'

And he smiles, smiles, and smiles.

Women are ill at ease in his presence. They hate him, but as he is content with smiling, and goes no further, what are they to do? They avoid him when they can, his smiles are so compromising.

And they are right. His smiles are more compromising than *bonâ fide* slander and calumny.

The men hate him, too, but they feel as powerless as the women do. They would like to slap his face, but you cannot say to a man:

'I slap your face because I saw you smile on hearing my wife's name.'

No, that would be too absurd. He knows it, and that is why he goes on smiling. He is safe.

When he hears a bit of gossip on a woman, he immediately takes her defence, but in such a weak manner, and with such a smile on his face all the time, that people immediately come to the conclusion that 'it must be all true.'

What is most provoking is that the man has not a bad reputation. He has never been openly mixed in any intrigue, and even his intimate friends have never heard of any love affair

connecting him with any woman. For some people he is an enigma, for others a clever comedian, a maniac, a bore, or a fop.

For men who justly hold that women should be treated with such respect that no act of man should cause anyone to even breathe a light remark on their character, the man who smiles is a cur.

CHAPTER XV

WOMEN AND DOLLS

The love of little girls for their dolls is a very serious love; it absolutely amounts to maternal tenderness. I have watched little girls nurse their dolls, and detected in their eyes that almost divine glance that you can see in devoted mothers tending their little children. For that matter a little girl is only a woman in miniature. A young boy has none, or very few, of the characteristics of a man; but a young girl has, at ten years of age, all the characteristics of a woman.

I have known little girls of ten and twelve who were perfect flirts, little coquettes, careful housekeepers, and, toward their dolls, most devoted mothers. I remember one who sternly refused to accompany us to a most tempting party, because her doll had a cold and she felt she must stay at home to nurse it. She was absolutely serious over it, and found even great delight in remaining at home all the time by the bedside of her doll. I remember another who had spent the whole morning cleaning her doll's house from top to bottom. When it was all over she drew a great sigh of relief. 'At last,' she said, 'the house is clean; that's comfort, anyway.' A good, dutiful, bourgeois housewife would not have expressed herself otherwise. Have you not, some of you, even seen little girls give medicines to their dolls, rock them to sleep, put them to bed, tuck them in most carefully, and

see that the bedclothes did not choke them and cause them to have nightmares? I have, many times.

A man very often shows inclinations, tastes, and all sorts of characteristic traits which his parents never discovered in him when he was a young boy; but a woman of thirty is what she was when she was ten, only a little more so. A bad boy may become a very good man, and I have known very good boys become very bad men; but a caressing, loving little girl will surely make a loving wife and a tender mother; a cold and uncaressing little girl will become a heartless woman, an indifferent wife and mother. A boy is a boy! a little girl is a little woman.

This is so true that women, many women at all events, who treated their dolls as if they were children, treat their children as if they were dolls. It is the survival of the little girl in the woman. I have known women allow the hair of their boys to fall down their backs in long curls because they looked prettier and more like dolls, although they must have known that the sap of their young bodies was feeding hair at the expense of other far more important parts of their anatomy. When you see a woman most attentive to her baby, insisting on washing it, dressing it herself, you say: 'She is a most dutiful mother; she would trust no one but herself to attend her little child.' But it is not only the satisfaction of a duty performed that makes that woman look so happy, it is also the pleasure she derives from it. And the odds are ten to one that this very woman will play at doll with her child a great deal too long, and that the day on which she will be compelled

to allow the child to have some liberty and become independent of her, she will resent it.

There is not, I believe, a single elderly woman that does not prefer the child of her daughter to her daughter herself, who has become now an unmanageable doll who dresses and undresses without the help of anybody. And if this daughter does not allow her mother to do with the grandchild just as she likes, there will be trouble, caused by jealousy. There will be two women now to play at dolls. Why does a grandmother indulge a young child, give it sweets and candies? Is it to give that child a good digestion? No; it is to play at dolls. Do they dress little girls like the 'principal boys' of pantomimes in the palace scene, in order to make them acquire modest tastes and sensible notions? No; it is to play at dolls.

Woman plays at dolls to the end of her life, with her toys, with her children, with her grandchildren, and with herself.

I have never heard women have a good word to say of daughters-in-law who had not given children to their sons. Poor, dear old ladies! They certainly were under the impression that their sons had only one object in view when they contemplated matrimony, that of presenting 'Grannie' with dolls to play with. I quite understand that grandmothers should be admired, that children should bless them, and even advise other children to 'get some,' when they have not got any, but I do not think that grandmothers should be held up to the world as models, because more than nine times out of ten they spoil children,

and derive pleasure not from duties performed to the child, but from the satisfaction of playing at dolls. I have very often met sensible mothers, but grandmothers seldom; they generally are incorrigible sinners – and proud of it, too.

Alphonse Karr, in his 'Reminiscences,' relates how he used to meet in society a young and charming woman who always behaved towards him in a very cool manner. Unable to understand the reason, he one day took a chair by her side, made himself particularly pleasant, and point-blank asked her why she did not seem pleased to meet him, and inquired whether he might have unconsciously done anything to cause her displeasure. For a long time she defended herself, assuring him that her coldness towards him was only in his imagination; but, as he insisted, she at last said to him: 'Well, I will tell you. It was thirty-five years ago. One afternoon you called on us, and I was in the drawing-room. Being invited to take a seat by my mother, you chose an arm-chair on which my doll was asleep. You removed it, and quite unceremoniously laid it on a table, head downwards, at the risk of hurting it. In fact, you damaged its nose. I conceived for you a perfect hatred, and, upon my word, I do not think that I am now capable of forgiving you altogether.'

Moral. – If you want to get into the good graces of a woman, praise her baby; if you want a little girl to love you, admire her dolls and treat them with respect.

CHAPTER XVI

MEN AS A RULE ARE SELFISH – TWO KINDS OF SELFISH MEN

There are in the world men who are devotion and self-abnegation personified; there are women who are the embodiment of selfishness. From this we cannot lay down a rule any more than we could if, in landing in New York, we saw a red-haired woman, and said at once:

'The Americans are a red-haired people.'

But as, during my life, I have known more men who are selfish than unselfish, and more women who are unselfish than selfish, I am prepared to conclude that man is more selfish than woman.

I have known men of small income (and in their way good men they were) belong to two or three clubs, dine at expensive restaurants, and smoke excellent cigars all day long.

Their daughters had to give lessons in order to obtain the money that was necessary for dressing decently, and the house had to be kept on most economical lines.

I have known others, not worse than those I have just mentioned, allow nothing but water on their family table, and take champagne for dinner at the club or the restaurant.

I could divide selfish men into two classes: the man with good redeeming features, and the execrably selfish man.

The former is good-hearted and fairly sensitive. He hates nobody, because hatred disturbs sleep and rest. He avoids emotions for his own comfort; he is learnedly selfish.

If you are unhappy, in distressed circumstances, don't bother him about it. He is sorry, he cannot help it, and he would rather not hear of it.

If you are ill, do not expect a visit from him; the sight of pain or grief affects him. If you are in want, he may send you a £5 note, but he does not want to see you. He seeks the company of cheerful and happy people only.

He has an income of £6,000 a year, and will tell you that nobody dies of starvation except in novels.

He turns his head from wretches shivering with cold in the street, and is of opinion that a good Government should suppress paupers and all sorts of people who disturb the peace and happiness of the rich. His friends call him 'a good fellow.'

The other type is execrable. The miseries of other people increase his happiness. When he sees a starving-looking man or a sick one, he returns thanks that he is rich and healthy.

He does not avoid the unfortunate: he almost seeks them. The more horrible tales you tell him of poverty, sorrows, disease, wretchedness, the happier he is to feel that he runs no danger of ever encountering such calamities.

Well wrapped up in furs in a good carriage, the sight of a beggar, benumbed with cold, sitting on the stone steps of an empty house, doubles his comfort. He finds his carriage better

suspended, and his furs warmer.

He almost believes that the abject poor were invented to make him appreciate his good fortune better. He is not unlike those fanatics of a certain school who believe that the greatest bliss reserved for the elect in heaven is to see their less fortunate brethren burn in hell. As I have said, this type of selfish man is execrable.

CHAPTER XVII

EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

THE RIGHT AND WRONG IN THE

CASE OF A ROYAL PRINCESS

Since the escapade of the Royal Princess of Saxony with the French tutor Giron, many have asked me, 'Do you approve or forgive her? Do you not think that a woman who can no longer endure life with a sullen and unsympathetic husband has a right to break away from the social conventionalities of life and go her own way in search of happiness?'

The question is not easy to answer. There may be, or there may not be, extenuating circumstances in the conduct of a woman who deserts her husband, or a man who leaves his wife.

First of all, let me say that I place the consideration of duty far higher than that of personal happiness. Therefore, a man or a woman who abandons a home where there are children of a tender age, children who require the protection of a father and the affection of a mother, which no one can replace, is a coward that should be placed under the ban of society.

I don't care how much a woman may fall in love with a man, or a man with a woman, the duty of either is to remain by the side of their children, to watch over their education, and to see them launched in life. If they shirk this duty, there is no excuse,

no atonement for their conduct, which closely borders on crime.

When there are no children, I admit that there may be circumstances in which I would forgive a man or a woman who leaves a home in which life has become unendurable, in order to seek happiness in the company of a partner who has given proof of love, devotion, and disinterestedness. I might also be prepared to forgive if the children were grown up and able to support themselves.

On no account, however, could I approve, or even forgive, a man who leaves a wife with whom life may have become as intolerable as you like without duly providing for her comfort, even if by so doing he should have nothing left for himself, and be obliged to start life afresh.

I do not admit that anyone, man or woman, has a right to shirk responsibilities imposed by solemn promises. Let them set this right first of all. After that, let them solve the problem of happiness as best they can.

No doubt there are drawbacks in holding royal honours, but I believe in the old motto, *Noblesse oblige*; and if *noblesse* does, surely royalty should. Royalty nowadays is not of much use, except when it gives to the people over which it rules the example of all virtues, of all domestic virtues especially.

When people are born in the purple, they are born with responsibilities. If they fling them to the four winds of the earth, there is no use for royalty: the reason for its existence has ceased to exist.

CHAPTER XVIII

AMERICAN WOMEN IN PARIS

Every year in Paris, in springtime, we see the American women reappear with the regularity of the swallow. We expect them, we watch for their arrival, and we are delighted when we hear them say, with their singing voices, that they have come for our season, which begins in April and goes on till 'The Grand Prix' is run during the second week of June.

The American woman is not only received, but eagerly sought in our most aristocratic society. Her amiability and brilliancy have forced open the doors of our most exclusive mansions. She affords so much pleasure that she is indispensable. We are dull without her, because she is not only beautiful and a feast for the eyes, but she is bright, brilliant, witty, unconventional, and a feast for the mind. It is thanks to all these qualities, far more than to her dollars, that the American woman is to-day part and parcel of what is called 'Tout Paris.' And, indeed, there is no woman in the world so attractive as the fair daughter of Uncle Sam. Her physical, moral, and intellectual charms make her the most interesting woman one may wish to meet.

The English woman is very often beautiful. Her freshness is exquisite, her figure excellent when she knows how to enhance its beauty by well-made garments. She is, perhaps, beyond competition when she is really beautiful, but her beauty is too

often statuesque, and lacks lustre and piquancy. The French woman is supple and graceful, but she is more fascinating by her manner, by her chic, than by the beauty of her complexion, the regularity of her features, and the proportions of her figure. The German is often fine, but generally heavy, compact, and lacking elegance.

The American woman is an altogether. She has the piquancy, the fascinating manner, the elegance, the grace, and the gait of the Parisienne; but, besides, she often possesses the eyes of a Spaniard, the proud figure of a Roman, and the delicate features of an English woman. If, during the Paris season, you walk in the Champs-Élysées district, where all the best Americans are settled, you will admire those women looking radiant with intelligence, cheerful, independent, who, you can see, have the consciousness of their value.

The education which she has received has developed all her faculties. The liberty she always enjoyed, the constant attentions she has received from father, brother, husband, and all her male friends, have made her feel safe everywhere, and she goes about freely, with a firm step that stamps her American. Thanks to her finesse, her power of observation, her native adaptability, she can fit herself for every station of life. If one day she finds herself mistress of the White House or Vice-Queen of India, she immediately feels at home. She may be ever so learned, she is never a pedant. She is, and remains, a woman in whose company a man feels at once at his ease; a sort of fascinating

good fellow, with all the best attributes of womanhood; a little of a coquette, with a suspicion of a touch of blue-stocking – but so little. She loves dresses, and none puts them on better than she does. English women, even the most elegant ones at home, seldom favour us, when they visit us, but with all the worst frumps and frippery they can find in their wardrobe. The American women are considerate enough to try and do their best for us, and we appreciate the compliment. And thus they brighten our theatres, our promenades, our balls and dinner-parties, our fashionable restaurants, and Paris, which loves them, could not now do without them.

CHAPTER XIX

WOMEN WHO WALK BEST

A few weeks ago I was watching the church parade in Hyde Park, London, between the statue of Achilles and Stanhope Gate, when I met an American lady of my acquaintance. We walked together for awhile, and then sat down in order to watch the fashionable crowd more closely.

It is said that, although Americans and Englishmen think a great deal of one another nowadays, you seldom hear American women praise the women of England, and more seldom still hear English women say a good word of American women.

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