

Graham Harry

Misrepresentative Women



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«Public Domain»

Graham H.

Misrepresentative Women / H. Graham — «Public Domain»,

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Publishers' Preface

Gentle Reader, who so patiently have waited
For such viands as your poet can provide,
(Which, as critics have occasionally stated,
Must be trying to a delicate inside,)
Once again are opportunities afforded
Of a banquet, or a *déjeuner* at least,
Once again your toleration is rewarded
By a literary feast!

You may think that Rudyard Kipling's work is stronger,
Or that Chaucer's may be rather more mature;
Byron's lyrics are indubitably longer,
Robert Browning's just a trifle more obscure;
But 'tis certain that no poems are politer,
Or more fitted for perusal in the home,
Than the verses of the unassuming writer
Of this memorable tome!

Austin Dobson is a daintier performer,
Andrew Lang is far more scholarly and wise,
Mr. Swinburne can, of course, be somewhat warmer,
Alfred Austin more amusing, if he tries;
But there's no one in the world (and well you know it!)
Who can emulate the bard of whom we speak,
For the literary methods of *our* poet
Are admittedly unique!

Tho' he shows no sort of penitence at breaking
Ev'ry rule of English grammar and of style,
(Not a rhyme is too atrocious for his making,
Not a metre for his purpose is too vile!)
Tho' his treatment is essentially destructive,
And his taste a thing that no one can admire,
There is something incontestably seductive
In the music of his lyre!

Gentle Reader, some apologies are needed
For depositing this volume on your desk,
Since the author has undoubtedly exceeded
All the limits of legitimate burlesque,
And we look with very genuine affection

To a Public who, for better or for worse,
Will relieve us of this villainous collection
Of abominable verse!

Eve

I always love to picture Eve,
Whatever captious critics say,
As one who was, as I believe,
The nicest woman of her day;
Attractive to the outward view,
And such a perfect *lady* too!

Unselfish, – that one can't dispute,
Recalling her intense delight,
When she acquired some novel fruit,
In giving all her friends a bite;
Her very troubles she would share
With those who happened to be there.

Her wardrobe, though extremely small,
Sufficed a somewhat simple need;
She was, if anything at all,
A trifle *underdressed*, indeed,
And never visited a play
In headgear known as “*matinée*.”

Possessing but a single *beau*,
With only one *affaire de cœur*,
She promptly married, as we know,
The man who first proposed to her;
Not for his title or his pelf,
But simply for his own sweet self.

He loved her madly, at first sight;
His callow heart was quite upset;
He thought her nearly, if not quite,
The sweetest soul he'd ever met;
She found him charming – for a man,
And so their young romance began.

Their wedding was a trifle tame —
A purely family affair —
No guests were asked, no pressmen came
To interview the happy pair;
No crowds of curious strangers bored them,
The “Eden Journal” quite ignored them.

They had the failings of their class,
The faults and foibles of the youthful;
She was inquisitive, alas!

And he was – not exactly truthful;
But never was there man or woman
So truly, so intensely *human*!

And, hand in hand, from day to day,
They lived and labored, man and wife;
Together hewed their common way
Along the rugged path of Life;
Remaining, though the seasons pass'd,
Friends, lovers, to the very last.

So, side by side, they shared, these two,
The sorrow and the joys of living;
The Man, devoted, tender, true,
The Woman, patient and forgiving;
Their common toil, their common weather,
But drew them closelier still together.

And if they ever chanced to grieve,
Enduring loss, or suff'ring pain,
You may be certain it was Eve
Brought comfort to their hearts again;
If they were happy, well I know,
It was the Woman made them so.

.....

And though the anthropologist
May mention, in his tactless way,
That Adam's weaknesses exist
Among our modern Men to-day,
In Women we may still perceive
The virtues of their Mother Eve!

Lady Godiva

In the old town of Coventry, so people say,
Dwelt a Peer who was utterly lacking in pity;
Universally loathed for the rigorous way
That he burdened the rates of the City.
By his merciless methods of petty taxation,
The poor were reduced to the verge of starvation.

But the Earl had a wife, whom the people adored,
For her kindness of heart even more than her beauty,
And her pitiless lord she besought and implored
To remit this extortionate “duty”;
But he answered: “My dear, pray reflect at your leisure,
What *you* deem a ‘duty,’ to *me* is a pleasure!”

At the heart of her spouse she continued to storm,
And she closed her entreaties, one day, by exclaiming: —
“If you take off the tax, I will gladly perform
Any task that you like to be naming!”
“Well, if that be the case,” said the nobleman, “I’ve a
Good mind just to test you, my Lady Godiva!

“To your wishes, my dear, I will straight acquiesce,
On the single condition – I give you fair warning —
That you ride through the City, at noon, in the dress
That you wear in your bath of a morning!”
“Very well!” she replied. “Be it so! Though you drive a
Hard bargain, my lord,” said the Lady Godiva.

So she slipped off her gown, and her shoulders lay bare,
Gleaming white like the moon on Aonian fountains;
When about them she loosened her curtain of hair,
’Twas like Night coming over the mountains!
And she blushed, ’neath the veil of her wonderful tresses,
As blushes the Morn ’neath the Sun’s first caresses!

Then she went to the stable and saddled her steed,
Who erected his ears, till he looked like a rabbit,
He was somewhat surprised, as he might be, indeed,
At the lady’s unusual “habit”;
But allowed her to mount in the masculine way,
For he couldn’t say “No,” and he wouldn’t say “Neigh!”

So she rode through the town, in the heat of the sun,
For the weather was (luckily) warm as the Tropics,
And the people all drew down their blinds – except one,

On the staff of the local “Town Topics.”
(Such misconduct produced in the eyes of this vile one
A cataract nearly as large as the Nile one!)

Then Godiva returned, and the Earl had to yield,
(And the paralyzed pressman dictated his cable;)
The tax was remitted, the bells were repealed,
And the horse was returned to the stable;
While banners were waved from each possible quarter,
Except from the flat of the stricken reporter.

Now the Moral is this – if I’ve fathomed the tale
(Though it needs a more delicate pen to explain it): —
You can get whatsoever you want, without fail,
If you’ll sacrifice *all* to obtain it.
You should *try* to avoid unconventional capers,
And be sure you don’t write for Society papers.

Miss Marie Corelli

A very Woman among Men!
Her pæans, sung in ev'ry quarter,
Almost persuade Le Gallienne
To go and get his hair cut shorter;
When Kipling hears her trumpet-note
He longs to don a petticoat.

Her praise is sung by old or young,
From Happy Hampstead to Hoboken,
Where'er old England's mother-tongue
Is (ungrammatically) spoken:
In that supremely simple set
Which loves the penny novelette.

When Anglo-Saxon peoples kneel
Before their literary idol,
It makes all rival authors feel
Depressed and almost suicidal;
They cannot reach within a mile
Of her sublime suburban style.

Her modest, unobtrusive ways,
In sunny Stratford's guide-books graven,
Her brilliance, lighting with its rays
The birthplace of the Swan of Avon,
Must cause the Bard as deep a pain
As his resemblance to Hall Caine.

Mere ordinary mortals ask,
With no desire for picking quarrels,
Who gave her the congenial task
Of judging other people's morals?
Who bade her flay her fellow-men
With such a frankly feline pen?

And one may seek, and seek in vain.
The social set she loves to mention,
Those offspring of her fertile brain,
Those creatures of her fond invention.
(She is, or so it would appear,
Unlucky in her friends, poor dear!)

For tho', like her, they feel the sway
Of claptrap sentimental glamour,
And frequently, like her, give way

To lapses from our English grammar,
The victims of her diatribes
Are not the least as she describes.

To restaurants they seldom go,
Just for the sake of over-eating;
While ladies don't play bridge, you know,
Entirely for the sake of cheating;
And husbands can be quite nice men,
And wives *are* faithful, now and then.

Were she to mingle with her ink
A little milk of human kindness,
She would not join, I dare to think,
To chronic social color-blindness
An outlook bigoted and narrow
As that of some provincial sparrow.

But still, perhaps, it might affect
Her literary circulation,
If she were tempted to neglect
Her talent for vituperation;
Since work of this peculiar kind
Delights the groundling's curious mind.

For while, of course, from day to day,
Her popularity increases,
As, in an artless sort of way,
She tears Society to pieces,
Her sense of humor, so they tell us,
Makes even Alfred Austin jealous!

Yet even bumpkins, by and by,
(Such is the spread of education)
May view with cold, phlegmatic eye
The fruits of her imagination,
And learn to temper their devotion
With slight, if adequate, emotion.

.....

Dear Miss Corelli: – Should your eyes
Peruse this page ('tis my ambition!),
Be sure that I apologize
In any suitable position
For having weakly imitated
The style that you yourself created.

I cannot fancy to attain
To heights of personal invective
Which you, with subtler pen and brain,
Have learnt to render so effective;
I follow dimly in your trail;
Forgive me, therefore, if I fail!

Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy

Have you a pain all down your back?
A feeling of intense prostration?

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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