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## THE ECONOMIC FUTURE OF THE NEW SOUTH.

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BY PROF. N. S. SHALER.

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IT has required a quarter of a century to show us how great was the influence of slavery in repressing the development of the Southern States of this Union. It was not a difficult matter for the economist to give many reasons to support the position that a servile state of the laboring class was inimical to the best interests of the population, but it is now evident that few if any of the critics of slavery had attained to an adequate conception of the magnitude of the repressing influences of that institution. It was almost as effective in keeping the commercial motives of our time away from the South, as the barrier which ages of systematic isolation had drawn around Japan. While men, it is true, found no difficulty in forming the arbitrary line which separated the two sections of the country, there was no real intermingling of spirit. The people of the North and South were centuries apart in all save the outward guise of culture.

For awhile after the Civil War, the troubles of that time of social overturning, misnamed the reconstruction period, threatened to reduce the conquered States to anarchy; but the civilizing instincts of the population swiftly brought order out of a chaos which with any other race would have endured for generations. Then began the true reconstruction which is now in such a marvellous way rebuilding from the shattered fragments of southern society, great States of the modern type. This process of rehabilitation has been singularly favored by the commercial spirit which characterizes the northern people. It is the habit of many idealists to condemn the business motives which so influence the conduct of men in our generation, but it is easy to see that the spirit of trade has proved in

## DOMESTIC INFELICITY OF LITERARY WOMEN.

BY MARION HARLAND.

THE opinion that women who make literature a profession unfit themselves for domestic life, antedates Dr. Johnson's dictum that "the study of Greek is incompatible with feminine delicacy." Milton's Eve, whose interest in the angelic visitant to her spouse was centred in the lunch *menu*, was a reproduced photograph, badly faded by time, of Solomon's wise woman. Molière's *Précieuses Ridicules*, and Paulding's *Azure Hose* are one-string symphonies in the same key.

Here and there, as the centuries roll, a woman is strong enough to withstand the deluge of popular prejudice. A Deborah judges the tribes for forty years, and leaves recorded as her proudest title, "A Mother in Israel"; a Sappho is remembered by her loves longer than by her songs; a Maria Mitchell and a Caroline Herschel pluck secrets from the stars, and remain very women in spite of the deteriorating influence of wisdom and genius; and — I may, and must add — without reversing the drift of the afore-named flood. The conviction that out of one material cannot be wrought learned or literary women, and good wives, and mothers, and housekeepers, may not be mighty because of oneness with truth, but it prevails. Less in degree than in the day when it was reckoned more disgraceful to read Latin than to spell badly, it is identical in kind with the leaven of Milton, Johnson, Molière, and Paulding.

Nor — and this is affirmed in the teeth of the stout contradiction of men of large mind and catholic sympathies, appreciative of large-minded people everywhere, irrespective of sex — is the sentiment these synonymize with prejudice, confined to the brutish illiterate. With the rank and file of masculine thinkers, and unthinking women, the conclusion that she whose "mind to her a kingdom is," must, of need, neglect the weightier matters of home affections, and homely duties, may be as illogical as to argue that, because a woman

has a pretty hand, she must have an ugly foot, — but the deduction holds its own, and the unreason is too common to be ignored. Women's congresses may moderate opposition to feminine progress, and the growing influence of women's clubs teach writer and speaker to veil sneers under the guise of gallantry. The unchanged belief works in the cavalier's system like the point of the broken needle that eventually makes its way to the surface with a prick as sharp as it is surprising.

Yet, educational journals quote at length, and *italically*, the saying of a college president that a university graduate can plough nearer to a stump without hitting it than the unlearned laborer. The majority of pundits and papers decline to explain how a knowledge of the Differential Calculus, or the ability to write one's vernacular clearly and forcibly hampers the woman who must season salads and sweep rooms. A few are magnanimous enough to reason the case. Let us, with responsive magnanimity, examine facts and deductions.

First, — and frankly, — let us admit that a just sense of proportion and the management of perspective in the consideration of a subject in the abstract and in the concrete is *not* a characteristic of the feminine mind. The training, or rather the non-training of ages, has had much to do with this defect, but, to some extent, it is inherent. Judgment bends to sympathy; emotion shakes conscience from the balance, unless when the question is, to our apprehension, one of positive right or unequivocal wrong. Men like their chosen professions. A woman *loves* hers; informs it with her personality, and, holding it to her heart, minifies everything else. Her book is her bantling. The throes that gave it birth belong to the maternal side of her nature, and whatever other gender-traits she may overcome, she never gets away from the consciousness that she is of the mother-sex.

The critic's caustic gibe as to the message that ought to meet visitors at the slow poet's door, after a day of seclusion and tied-up knocker, — "Mr. Rogers and his little couplet are doing well," — has more of fact than fancy in it where the figure is applied to woman's mental work. The production is *hers*, soul of her soul, and heart of her heart. The passion of maternity that made Miss Ferris's Mrs. Fairbairn, after

becoming a mother, cease to be anything else, accounts for more with the literary woman than she or her censors suspect. The slave of society has less excuse for neglect of household duties than the pen-wright. Mrs. Jellyby and Mrs. Pardiggle, made conservative and Christian, have no more when the written thing is worthy. It is, in the author's sight, of more consequence to her kind that she should write a poem to elevate other souls, or an essay that may reform a wrong, than that the pie-crust should be short, or John's socks darned with pious respect for alternate threads. The health of his wife's mind ought to be of more moment (if he loves her) than the condition of his linen.

Now — John likes flaky pastry, and to have socks and linen looked after in his mother's way. The dear old dame who hardly read one book a year, bored the dutiful son sometimes. If the truth were told, the monotony of housewifely homilies impelled him to admiration of the clever woman he afterward learned to love. In maturer manhood, he hankers after more savory flesh-pots than those prepared by untutored Bridget, while Hypatia nurses a fine frenzy in the locked sanctum above-stairs. Poetry is estimable in its way, and Hypatia a glorious creature in hers, to whom he feels constrained to apologize in naming buttons, or the rip in a fellow's pocket. Dingy soup is, of course, more tolerable when he has read on his way up-town, what the critics are saying of his wife's last and best book; but if clear *consommé* and a high order of intellect were not incompatible, John would be a happier, if not so wise a man.

Which leads by an air-line to the second tenable reason why the household presided over by a "professional woman" is subject to peculiar disorders.

Second. The *exactingness* of husbands.

The word is coined — if it be coinage — in no captious spirit. A man has a right to demand that his home should deserve the name. In accepting the estate and title of wifehood, his elect partner pledges herself solemnly to the performance of duties pertaining to the position. She defrauds him when she is no more in his life than an exemplary and "capable" unsalaried housekeeper, although this aspect of their relation is seldom studied in the right light. It is the nobler side of his nature which is cheated by a mere domestic drudge or a vapid society doll, or a shrewish gossip; when

the talk and thought of the home-circle are narrowed down to commonplaces, or such frothy discussion of people and events as supplies excitement and variety when higher themes are excluded.

Nevertheless, the physical man must be built up and fortified daily to resist recurrent assaults from the outside world. He is an exceptionally robust, or an exceptionally phlegmatic American citizen who does not come home every night, "fit to drop." The homely phrase tells it all. The blooded horse is he who falls in his tracks.

I foresee, having heard and answered it so often, the objection that the housemother has labored as hard and is as weary as he. I grant it — with a difference. Except when she has office hours in the city, even the woman who writes for a living toils under the shelter of the home-roof. She is *on the inside of the barricade*. How much is typified, how much realized in the mere environment of roof and walls, few women know until the dear refuge has crumbled away and left them in the open field. It has been said that Deity alone can comprehend the infinitely great and the finitely small. A woman must be mentally broad, and, in feeling, deep and tender, before she can content herself to spread cement as well as to carve stone. It is a horrible surprise to discover that her husband cannot live by her intellect alone, whereas the lover swore that it was victuals and drink to his whole being. Leaving out of sight the trifling truth that in the days of that love-making, his mother or landlady had his bodily case in charge, she reads in his apparent contempt for the product of her mind-kingdom, disloyalty to herself as his spouse. She must lay to intellect, and to her pride in and love of the fruits of intellect, the line and plummet of common sense, and study in calm diligence her specimen of the *genus homo*. Doing this, she will learn that her hungry John is, inwardly, as savagely impatient of brilliant epigram and unanswerable logic, when dinner is late or badly cooked, as Irish Mick who caresses his "woman" in like circumstances with leather strap or lid-lifter, and her tired John as incapable of appreciating a sonnet as if he had never learned to read.

More "cases of incompatibility" grow out of non-appreciation of these trite and simple facts than husbands, wives, and the courts that divorce them dream of.

Furthermore,—and to quote St. Paul, “I say this of mine own judgment,”—the husband, be he never so noble, and fond, and generous, is fatally apt to love his wife less when he sees her tower above and overshadow him. She is a part, and a secondary division of himself, and her overgrowth is an excrescence. He may, according to Dr. Holmes, be the stately ship that, without the brave little tug beside him, “would go down with the stream and be heard of no more;” but he keeps the toiling little craft upon the seaward side, well hidden from the admiring crowd on shore. Should she enlarge in bulk and increase in power so as to threaten to surpass his dimensions, there would not be room for both in the widest harbor of the world.

This may all be wrong and in flat opposition to the law of natural harmonies and mutual balance; but since it *is*, our literary woman must weigh the odds of disturbing causes in married life, as she calculates those of friction and gravitation in physics. Precedent and native aggressiveness have begotten in man this sort of absorptiveness that is satisfied with nothing short of “heart, soul, and strength.” Man’s mind, we are taught, is many-chambered. Business, politics, philanthropy, art, literature, love, and home, each has an allotted and lawful territory. In insisting that his wife shall have neither thought nor interest which he does not regulate and pervade, he makes her soul and intellect into a big lumber-loft, without other plan or use than to hold what he chooses to store there. Such husbands are not infrequently men of education and refinement, who, in most things, follow justice and incline to mercy.

I have lately re-read the life of Charlotte Brontë, and could find it in my heart to be glad that her married life was brief.

“Mr. Nicholls was not a man to be attracted by any kind of literary fame,” says Mrs. Gaskell. “I imagine that this, by itself, would rather repel him when he saw it in the possession of a woman. He was a grave, reserved, conscientious man, with a deep sense of religion, and of his duties as one of its ministers.”

“I believe,” writes Charlotte of the parish-work her husband laid out for her,—“it is not bad for me that his bent should be so wholly toward matters of real life and active usefulness,—so little inclined to the literary and contemplative.”

The effort after wifely (and cheerful) submission to the commonplace autocrat who "did not like to have her write" and led her, as in a leash, through the very routine of cottage visitations, chapel tea-drinkings, and school catechisings that had chafed her mettled spirit to madness as the unmarried daughter of Haworth Rectory, is touching and praiseworthy from the Nicholls standpoint. Had she outlived the year, the struggle between duty and genius must have come. As it was, she wrote, secretly,—when the strong necessity of expression was upon her, and "dear Arthur" had carried his deep sense of religion to the other end of the parish—a few chapters of *Emma*, a posthumous fragment that tells the revolt had begun.

Another and a contingent cause of the infelicity of the wedded woman-author is the shame and disappointment she endures, who sees that the development of what she esteems as her highest faculties acts upon him whom she loves as sun-heat upon an untilled field, drawing into the light noxious weeds of envy and spite. She may shut her eyes to the painful truth for a time, and try meekly to curb inclination and to shape taste according to his decree. The process succeeds well with some, if a gradual lowering of the whole nature be a success of the good. With more (ought we to say, "Thank God"?) nature and reason burst bonds, and the nobler of the two whom God and love have bound together, outstrips the other until the term "wedded pair" sounds like a bitter sarcasm.

The assertion that literary women are, as a class, ill-regulated as to nerve and temper, I repudiate as unworthy of notice here, or of grave mention at any time. On the contrary, I hold, after many years' study of the subject, that the temperate pursuit of any specific study not connected with the daily routine of domestic cares and labors, tends to prolong life and youth. In physique and longevity, in vivacity and endurance, the literary workers of this country, at least, compare most favorably with those of their sisters who never overstep the bounds of authorized "feminine pursuits."

Still it cannot be denied that the liveliness of imagination, and the finely sensitive organization that usually go with creative talent, predispose our author to intolerance of restraint from him who has been proven to be her inferior in everything except the accident of sex. As she grows

away from him, the disparity becomes more palpable to eyes that would fain remain blinded. In this pitiable case, the maternal instinct alluded to awhile ago, is the savior of both if it assert itself. That is, when the woman so tactfully adjusts herself to the changed relation that her appeased lord does not discover that he has lost a wife and gained a mother.

While gladly recording the fact that many literary women are excellent housekeepers and perfect homemakers, let me impress upon the admirers and also upon the censors of the guild the truth already hinted at, to wit: that there are cogent reasons why it is more difficult for her to bestow the needed amount of attention upon domestic affairs than she can whose specialty is cookery, fancy-work, or house-cleaning. The dual life of the writer is at once blessing and curse. Her mind, ranging through an ideal world, lifts her above some annoyances of the lower realm, and sets her right in the track of others. Conscience is her abettor when she has a message to utter, and no time in which to give it, unless she slight the tale of mint, anise and cummin. That she is often out of tune with the clank of household machinery does not justify her, perhaps, in shunning the workshop. That the higher duty outranks the lower would seem to be inevitable. What though the linen is not sorted and closets are not overhauled as such seasons as Czarina Grundy appoints? Is she or the world the worse for her preference for study or writing above the renovation of out-of-fashion garments for herself and "the girls"? Something must be crowded out. Why is not she, who has more brains and education than the whole Grundy dynasty, a better judge than they of what is fit and proper in the home over which heaven has appointed her to rule? If there is a time for dusting, there is also a time to refrain from dusting, and the family life consists not in the abundance of courses at dinner and the style of the garments worn by the immortal creatures who compose the band.

Rooms, seemly in arrangement and apparel, conventional in material and make, well-cooked and well-served meals, and wise attention to the frugalities of larder and kitchen, may not of themselves foster soul-growth, and neglect of one or all may be a trifle,—a trifle hardly more important than the pin dropped among the wires of the bedusted piano.



But, dear sister and co-laborer, *take the pin out!* If you have not the executive ability to arrange a systematic plan of daily labor, stand in your lot and do the duty that lies nearest your hand so well that the just Father will show you the way to the second. Another may write your story, or poem, or essay. Nobody else in all the universe can mother your boy, or be your girl's guide and best friend.

There *are* men and husbands — and not a few of them, — strong, true, brave, and good enough to be allied to women of genius without the risk of heart-break to one, and life-wreck to both. Husbands whose proud appreciation of the laurels won by wives is sweeter to the winners than the far-off praise of the nations; whose work runs in harmonious parallels with that of those whose mental endowments may seem greater than theirs; counterparts that make up the perfect, beautiful whole of man.

For them, let feminine toilers of the pen bless the Giver of all good, and take strength to show to the world what manner of wives and homes these shining ones deserve and have. Homes which weaker women, seeing, may gather heart again and imitate, for the glory of the sex and the redemption of humanity.