

TOPICS FOR WOMEN.

When Widows are most Dangerous.

The second year is that in which the widow is really happy. The sombre depths of her mourning cast aside, she enters the world again and reopens her jewel case. Even with a very becoming widow's cap on life is more or less a blank to a woman if she cannot wear her jewels. Now, however, the diamonds, pearls and opals may reappear, and with what new delight are they now worn? Visions of dresses in delicate half tints, pearl grays, soft lavenders, mixtures of white and gray or black and white float before her mind, soon to be realized. Her year's absence from balls and parties and crowded rooms has renewed her beauty and the same retirement has brightened her eyes and tinted her cheeks with the freshness of enjoyment with which she prepares to re-enter the world. Now, indeed, is the fashionable widow a dangerous and seductive creature. She knows that she is prettier than ever, and the consciousness making her more certain of coming victories gives a genuine softness to her manner. Beware of widows in their second year! Always dangerous, they are then more so than ever. Light-hearted as a girl, she feels younger every day, and from her own point of view there is no more enviable being to be found in the world than a young, handsome, rich and lively widow, whose heart is not inconveniently soft, nor her feelings too acute to prevent her going through life "well pleased and carefree," and extracting from it as much of the pleasure and as little of the pain as may fall to the share of any mortal creature.

The Tapering Waist.

If the truth could be ascertained by statistics, it would be found that the corset has destroyed more females than the bullet and bayonet have destroyed males. The human eunuched butcher, called a hero by historians, can congratulate himself upon being a lesser destroyer, although there is no glory in being surpassed by the inventor of the corset. The noble, cone-shaped chamber in which the functions of life are chiefly carried on by the heart, lungs, veins, valves, and muscles, is not a hair's breadth too large. Fashion disregards the necessities of this citadel of life, and by lacing, the lower ribs are compressed until they meet and often overlap, and the sentinels of life are cooped up in a fortress where they can have no freedom of action. In young girls the ribs, particularly at the joints and hinges, are soft, and their greater part gristle, which is still softer, and the process of deforming the chest cavity is easy. The cone being reversed and nature defied, the silly victim of fashion goes forth into society with a taper waist, but her body is a hospital of disease. She unfit to be married, because unfit to be a mother. It is a costly experiment to wed such a fragile and deformed creature. The doctor and druggist will accompany her through life, and the undertaker come after a long, lingering struggle for continued vitality. If she has children they are likely to suffer mentally and physically for her folly, for in common with the organs of the chest cavity, the whole of the lower organs, held in place by the peritoneal sac, are pressed downward and inward, and incessantly suffer from incomplete functional action by tight lacing.

Ready Retorts.

The number of witty replies, ready retorts, and "good things" generally attributed to Swift, Foote, Sydney Smith, Sheridan, and other departed celebrities, would doubtless considerably astonish those gentlemen, were they to return to life. Happy thoughts are not confined to acknowledged wits, however. Most of us have sometimes had occasion to say: "What a good repartee such and such an answer would have been, had we only thought of it in time." But there is the rub. It is not given to every one, perhaps fortunately for the general peace, to be as ready at retort, for example, as the critic to whom the following question was addressed by an artist: "Don't you think it is about time I exhibited something?" "Yes; a little talent, for instance," was the reply.—To a grocer who had retired from business, a friend said: "My dear fellow, you are looking thin; idleness does not agree with you." "Well, no," instantly replied the grocer: "I don't weigh so much as I did."

Another tradesman, a Quaker, who sold hats, was asked by a rustic the price of one. "Fifteen shillings," was the reply. The intending purchaser offered twelve shillings. "As I live," said the Quaker, "I cannot afford to give it thee at that price."

"As you live!" exclaimed the countryman; "then live more moderately, my friend."

A tailor and his son were doing a day's work at a farmhouse. The prudent housewife, to secure a good day's work, lighted candles when daylight began to fade. The tailor looked at his son and said: "Jock, confound them that invented working by candlelight!" "Ay," replied young snip, "or daylight either!"—"You have no idea of the hard work there is in this business," said a canvasser to a shopkeeper. "I tell you it is either talking or walking from morning till night." "Beg pardon," replied the victim. "I have a pretty distinct idea of the talking part of your programme. Now, please favour me with an exhibition of the walking part."

A sarcastic question may sometimes do duty for the severest of replies. "I never consider a dinner perfect without soup," said one man to another; "I always have soup when I dine." "And do you ever have anything else?" returned the other.—A punning retort is also at times very effective. "I had no time to stuff the chicken," apologized a landlady. "Never mind, madam; it's tough enough as it is," quickly replied the boarder.—Another landlady, who tried to be smart, was as effectually silenced. "I think the goose has the advantage of you," she remarked to an expert boarder who was carving. "Guess it has, mum, in age," was the ready retort.

My son, you ask who or what a nobody is. Well, my dear young man, a nobody is a prominent woman's husband.

The Boston *Post* finds that the word "slugger" has a decent etymology. It comes from the German word "schulch," signifying "to pound," "to beat," "to maul." It is a singular fact, however, that few "sluggers" come from Germany.

EGYPTIAN NOTES.

The adventures of the *Orontes*, since she left Portsmouth with marines some three weeks since, are remarkable. On arrival at Gibraltar she transferred her cargo to the *Temar*, and then followed the latter vessel to Malta. On reaching there she was sent to Cyprus to embark troops for Alexandria, but on arrival she found none to embark. Finally, to the great disappointment of the hard-worked garrison of Alexandria, she reached there last week empty.

Round the lagoons of Suez, into which the waters of the Canal empty, the waters are shallow, and the bed is composed of mud and other refuse of the Red Sea; hence the harbour is built some 6,500 feet into the Red Sea, so as to keep the depth of 26 feet, which the canal has.

A London engraver has issued a cartoon representing Mr. Gladstone disguising himself as Lord Beaconsfield in order to terrify Arabi Pasha and the European Powers. He has already placed a primrose in his button-hole and a curl on his forehead, and is shown in the act of pasting a goatee to his chin. Under his arm he carries a rifled cannon, while in the background are placed a reserve soldier and a Sepoy.

There is a section of Illinois called Egypt. The other day an Arkansas man, whose son lives in that community, wrote as follows to the young man:—"Come out of that place. If they desire to have a fight there, let em' fight. Old Seymour, because he was beaten for the presidency, wants to take his spite out of the people of your district." Next thing you know old Tilden will fire on somebody. Come away from there before you get your blamed head shot off."

The ruse of hoisting a flag of truce to give time for evacuation is not without precedent, says a London paper in commenting upon Arabi's deceptive trick. The same ruse has often been played in war, and Napoleon I. won a battle by it during the Italian campaign of 1796, which first made him known as a great general. His army was in a position which almost certainly would have been fatal to it. He sent a flag of truce to the Austrian general, and during the negotiations, which he never intended to succeed, drew his forces out of their perilous position. Arabi fancies himself a Napoleon, and is very likely to copy the tricks of that famous soldier.

On dit that the nomination of H. R. H. the Duke of Connaught to command the brigade of Guards has not been well received, says the *London World*. It has been an old established rule that this brigade going on foreign service, should be commanded by the senior officer of the three regiments; and in this instance he is one who saw service with his regiment in the Crimea, and was badly wounded.

The *London World* asks:—Where, oh where, is the boasted improvement in all military arrangements, the good effect of which was to be seen on the first emergency? Our army ought to have been in the field long ago, and then the matter would soon have been ended. The mistakes of the Crimean War have been constantly appealed to in suggesting fresh rules; and it appears that they are likely to be repeated over again with very disastrous consequences. A troopship sent from Malta to Alexandria without any troops, a battalion of Maines landed without any ammunition, &c.

Owing to the war and general disturbance it is believed that half of the wheat and the bulk of the cotton crop of Egypt will be a loss.

The Egyptians have the newest patterns of English guns in their forts. English military authorities require about two years to decide whether they will accept a gun of new pattern. Wherefore inventors offer their guns to other nations, who accept them.

A curious coincidence is noted by a foreign journal. It was on the 16th July, 1881, that the French fleet successfully bombarded Sfax, a town which was then given over to the flames. It was on the 16th of July, just one year later, that the English fleet bombarded Alexandria, which has also been burned.

"Is the Turkish Civil Service em," asked a traveller in the Orient of a traveller, "is the Turkish Civil Service like ours. Are there retiring allowances and pensions, for instance?" "My illustrious friend, and joy of my liver," replied the pasha, "Allah is great, and the pub. func. who stands in need of a retiring allowance when his term of office expires is an ass! I have spoken."

The saw-dust that this country threw away for seventy-five years is now valued at \$12,000,000 per annum, outside of what is used to make mattresses for hotel beds.

A New York critic says that Mrs. Langtry's form is perfect. That means a bustle, hip pads, patent skirt, tight shoes, stuffed calves, shoulder puffs and small corset.

France used 30,000 barrels of cider in making wines last year, but a French bottle of cider with a cobweb twisted around it will always catch the American wine-bibber.

A Key West shark, captured the other day, had among the contents of its stomach a half-dollar with a hole in it. The shark is supposed to have taken it at forty-five cents.

The only conference which the Sultan never delays nor begs for more time on is when he meets the female selected for his last wife. He was never known to postpone a marriage.

A lazy man near Fort Smith, Ark., abandoned a well after digging four feet. The man who bought the farm dug down another foot and struck a vein of coal worth thousands of dollars.

If you want to know what Russia needs, what England should do, or how the United States should be run, get a horse and buggy and drive out to the first country store. The men on the steps can tell you all about it.

If you are the person at whom a young man points an unloaded gun in order to see you shiver, break his nose by a straight blow. That won't cripple him nor prevent his going to Parliament, and he will never look into a glass without thinking what a fool he used to be.

Khedive Ismail's Faults.

Living in luxurious exile Ismail Pasha has now leisure to meditate on the present state of affairs in Egypt brought about by his stupendous sins. Like all exiles he is said to indulge the vain hope of some day returning to his country, by virtue of the powers, by command of the Sultan, or by some special interposition of Providence. He believes he will again reign at Cairo over the country his extravagance has brought to absolute ruin.

The ex-Khedive's ideal was France, or rather Paris, under the second empire; Napoleon III. was his model sovereign. The great improvements effected by Haussmann in Paris, the Khedive longed to imitate on the banks of the Nile; he was enthusiastic about everything French, but, as is frequently the case with imitators, he succeeded in copying the defects only. For the solid virtues of the French character, which lay beneath the surface, and gave the nation the strength and elasticity to bear the strain of one of the most terrible crises through which any people ever passed, he had little admiration and less sympathy.

While he was dreaming of founding a throne and extending an empire, the Sultan refused to see in him anything but a vassal. It is true this vassal had more money than all the other Turkish vassals together, and so the Padishah was fain to grant concessions which replenished his ever empty coffers. Now that everything has come to light, it has transpired that \$140,000 wandered to Stamboul in this manner, exclusive, be it remembered, of the annual tribute of \$3,000,000. Ismail, it is true might have easily avoided such enormous payments, but his restless vanity, which he mistook for ambition, urged his recklessly on the path of extravagance; he thought it necessary to extend the bonds of his territory, to increase the strength of his armies, to secure the inheritance of the vicerealty in his family, at last to secure himself almost sovereign rights by the firman of 1873, all concessions which cost millions.

The world was astounded. Here was at last something new under the sun—representative government in the East, a Parliament in the land of Pharaohs. Venal journalists announced the unprecedented event to Europe, and all the papers printed the speech from the throne. Then came the building mania, preceded by demolition on a gigantic scale, in the insane endeavor to convert Cairo into an Oriental Paris. In the centre of Ismailia a little "Bois de Boulogne," which certainly cost more than its prototype in Paris was laid out with artificial lakes and cascades, and rockeries, and kiosks, and pavilions, and a Chinese pagoda wherein musicians played French and Italian airs, particularly the inspiring strains of Offenbach. Opposite the park was the opera house, which cost the Khedive \$500,000 a year, not counting viceregal devoirs to the singers and dancers. Mlle. Schneider, who was a great favorite at court, is said to have received over \$50,000 in a single season.

For the benefit of the pashas and ladies of the Harem who did not understand French, a translation of "La Belle Helene" into Arabic was printed at the government offices at Bulac. Then there was a hippodrome and a French theatre, the directors of which—one of them a runaway hair-dresser, although a nephew of the celebrated physiologist, Theard—all duly became along with the Khedive, cooks and grooms, knights and beys, and even pashas. Mewson the scale of the imperial stables on the Quai d'Orsay were projected, and remain like many others, half built to this day in Cairo, a monument of fallen greatness. From Paris, too, came the state carriages, of which the Khedive had twenty. The finest, which attracted all eyes at the Paris Exhibition of 1867, cost over \$22,000. On one occasion, when there was a double wedding in the family, and all these coaches were turned out with their freight of lovely women bearing the dowry of princesses on their necks and arms, driving through the crowds of the half-naked, hungry populace, the festivities lasted for a week, and the bill for candies alone amounted to \$55,000. But all these items are mere trifles compared to the gigantic extravagances of Ismail's building operations. Palaces were run up like suburban dwelling houses. In Alexandria they were numbered like ordinary houses—palace number two, palace number three, etc. Rameh, the principal palace, was a small town in itself. But even the magnificence of Alexandria was overshadowed by the gorgeous structures of Cairo. The palace of Gezireh is like a residence in fairyland. The Empress Eugenie, accustomed to the pomp of Paris and the festivities of Compiègne and St. Cloud, wrote from there in 1869 that the luxury and splendor of her surroundings surpassed all she had ever seen or dreamt of, and that her abode seemed to her like a chapter of the "Arabian Nights." Of such palaces Ismail built twelve—half a dozen for himself, for, as he had four wives each must of necessity have a separate harem, then more palaces for his sons and married daughters, and so on. But even these boundless extravagances pale before the ex-Khedive's last undertaking, which he was compelled to leave unfinished. At Gizeh, between the Nile and the Libyan Desert, he seemed determined to erect buildings which should dwarf the neighboring pyramids. A plot of ground fully one French square mile in extent was to be walled round with sixteen feet of solid masonry; the waters of the Nile were to be inducted, and water works on a colossal scale erected. Four palaces of large dimensions even than those of Rameh and Gezireh were projected to adorn the inclosure. Some years ago a traveler looking through the railings gazed on what seemed to him a half finished palace. He was informed by the engineer that what he was regarding with astonishment was only the engine house for the water works. This is a brief indication of some of the ways in which the Khedive managed to spend the best part of \$1,000,000,000.

The Mystery of Memory.

Coleridge dared to maintain that we do not really forget; that thoughts and events only seem to be lost from recollection; and that if the intellect were quickened a little the whole past existence would be brought to view again. In illustration, he gives at length the story of the ignorant servant girl who repeated whole psalms in the original Hebrew when deranged of which she could not recall a word in her sane moments. She seems to have learned them from an eccentric minister's repeating them aloud as he paced the kitchen floor. DeQuincey tells a little better than many others of a drowning friend reviving his whole experience which is that of nearly all men, showing that the past still lives. Many of our German immigrants seem to lose their native tongue, but in the weakness of the last hour nothing is more common than its return, with other thronging recollections of childhood.

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The Egyptian as a Soldier.

A not unimportant element in the consideration of the Egyptian question is the value of the Arab as fighting material. Of the courage of the wretches who beat out the brains of so many Europeans caught by surprise and unarmed in the late Alexandria riots, one may judge by an incident which took place in the course of them. On the great square of Alexandria some two hundred of these patriotic protesters against the rule of the foreigner were engaged in hunting Europeans, when four attendants of the tribunal rushed out of their sanctuary with drawn swords, and the whole two hundred took to precipitate flight, leaving the square empty of all but the dead and wounded, and the four messengers of justice. Without some firm assurance of the support of mustafiz or nizami, it is quite certain that none of the rabble would ever have dared to raise a hand against a foreigner. A kourbash is quite enough for the courage of the Egyptian on any ordinary occasion. As a soldier the bloody regime of Mehemet Ali has given him a prestige which, like the "scent of the roses," lingers long after the organization is shattered. It is true that that once Egyptian soldiers defeated Turkish; but the latter were in a much lower state of discipline than now, while the former were ruled with a vigor of which the following incident, related by a veteran who remembered Mehemet Ali, will give an example: A milk-woman came to the Pasha one day complaining that one of his soldiers had robbed her of the milk she was bringing to the camp. The soldier was identified, and denied having taken the milk. "What did he do with it?" asked the Pasha. "Drank it," was the reply. At a sign the man's head was off his body, and his stomach, being opened, was found full of milk. "Go," said the Pasha to the horrified milk-woman, paying her the value of her milk; "but if he had not taken it, your head would have paid for it."

Needless to say, the Draconian rule has long passed away, and the Egyptian soldier of to-day is perhaps the most cowardly and degraded regular in existence. In the late Russo-Turkish war they could not be brought to face fire, and were kept in reserve for depot duty. In the Cretan insurrection of 1866, the Viceroy's guard was sent to the island to aid in the subjugation of the Christians, but on the first encounter 4,000 of them, attacked in an entrenched position by about 1,500 ill-armed Cretans, were driven into their intrenchments, their access to the water sources was cut off, and they surrendered unconditionally after the defeat of another division, which marched to their relief, the total being 8,000 men, with artillery, and considered the best troops in the Egyptian army. In a subsequent affair, under Mehemet Kirtilly Pasha, when the Egyptians were to cover the retreat of the main army, they broke and fled precipitately at the first attack of the insurgents, and squads of them, lost in the complicated by-ways and broken ground of the pass of Krapi, threw down their arms, and were butchered without resistance by the Cretans. At the assault of the Convent of Arkadi, the only use the Egyptians could be put to was to be put in front with the bayonets of the Turkish regulars behind them, and no alternative of safety. They were in this way driven into the breach, covering the Turks by their bodies. This was the testimony of one of the Italian officers in command of them, and nothing was more common than for the Cretans to send an Egyptian prisoner away contemptuously, saying that it was like butchering sheep to kill the Egyptians. They are capable only of the simplest evolutions, and their officers know little more of the science of war than the privates.

A Romance of the Pocrago.

There was recently offered at Messrs Christie, Mason & Wood's, at the same time as the plate belonging to the late Lord Chief Baron was sold, a quantity of silver plate, of which the history is somewhat curious. The plate in question is described in the Catalogue issued by the auctioneers as "formerly the property of Mary Ann, formerly Countess of Portsmouth," and, in fact, the bulk of it is impressed with the Portsmouth arms. The Countess of Portsmouth, whose maiden name was Miss Haron, was one of the Court beauties in the reign of George IV., with whom it is said she was an especial favorite; and, on her marriage to the third Earl, his Royal Highness presented her Ladyship with several silver dinner-plates bearing the Royal arms, which are included in the sale. At the wedding, in 1822, Mr. Alder, of Horncliffe, Northumberland, the estate now belonging to Mr. H. E. H. Jerningham, M. P. was groomsmen, along with Lord Byron, the latter of whom also presented other of the articles comprised in the catalogue. Five years after the marriage the Countess was divorced, and subsequently became the wife of Mr. Alder, who, becoming embarrassed in his affairs, was obliged to make an assignment for the benefit of his creditors. This assignment embraced the plate referred to; but, according to the terms of the deed, it was not to be realized unless the remainder of the property assigned was insufficient to pay the creditors. The plate not being required for the purpose of the trust, the trustees under the assignment deposited it in a bank in Berwick, where it has lain for the last fifty years; but recently proceedings were instituted on behalf of the only son of Mr. and Mrs. Alder, now a farmer in the state of Michigan, with the result that the plate was ordered to be given up by the bankers in whose custody it had remained so long. The quondam Countess and her second husband, after the collapse of the latter, fell very low in the social scale; so reduced, indeed, did they become that a single room in the fishing village of Spittal, at the mouth of the Tweed, had to suffice for the habitation of this lady, once the wife of an Earl, and her husband, the associate of Byron. On the death of Mr. Alder, thirty years ago, the Countess, with her son, the only issue of the marriage, left this country for Canada and ultimately settled in the town of Chatham in that colony, where she lived in obscurity until the time of her death in May, 1870.

The worst swearer in Cairo, Ill., is a woman. Being a woman is enough to make anybody swearing mad.

Bob Burdette says that Mrs. Langtry can't pass herself off for a Jersey lily when she comes over here unless she smells of apple-jack, and we are afraid if she even smells of applejack she will want to drink some of it.

SNICKERS.

Ananias was doubtless a bass fisher. A melting story—No ice for butter. Saving the froth is a great moral lesson.

Byron said: "Caprice is in woman the antidote to beauty."

The polka spot, like sin, mars almost everything on earth.

When the skipper halloos through his trumpet he becomes a hoarse marine. When does a man have to keep his word? When no one will take it.

What I have been taught I have forgotten; what I know I have guessed.

We are gradually learning who Arabi's "backers" have been all along.

When a man's views are grounded in common sense, what on earth is the use of argument?

'Tis better to have bet and lost, if it induces one not to bet again.

Look upon the faces of the dwellers by the seaside if you would see some fine water color painting.

Not only is the "whereabouts" of some men a puzzle, but also their whyabouts and whatabouts.

Never insult a milkman by asking him what watering place he is going to this summer.

"Slow but shoe'r," was the advice that a blacksmith gave to his apprentice.

It is the father of twins who knows what it is to be up all night with the boys.

An undertaker may know nothing of the science of pugilism, but he can lay out a fellow beautifully.

Butter was not so firm last week as it has been. Still those who had lots of it on hand had a soft time.

Large trout sometimes swim in small streams, but the average lie remains the same.

It is rumored in diplomatic circles that Arabi has telegraphed to Utah for a brand new Khedive and harem.

St. Louis boasts of a man who has not laughed in twenty years. He is probably an interlocutor in a "first-class" minstrel troupe.

"How do you identify him?" asked the morgue-keeper; "what are the marks?" The dead man's friend looked up, astonished that his ability should be questioned, and said: "Why, he was dead."

A German professor claims to be able to tell a man's character by feeling of his nose. It is possible to tell some men's character—or absence of character—by merely glancing at their nose.

"What a nice-looking young man!" simpereed a lady to her friend, as a youth in the omnibus deposited her nicker in the safety-box. "Yes," was the reply, "I see he is passing fare."

A piece of whalebone fifty inches long, ten inches wide and seven inches thick, has been dug up on the line of the Canadian Pacific Railroad. It is supposed to have belonged to the corset of an antediluvian belle.

"I declare!" exclaimed Mrs. Tidnicke, "I never saw a gal like our Sary Jane. I worked enamost two hull days on her new bathin' dress, and don't you think, she got it wringin' wet the fust time she put it on!"

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