

A WOMAN'S DIARY: As A Man Would Write It

SIMPLY had to go to bed early last night because to-night the Moretalks are coming and they do take such a long time to say good-bye but was just washing the dishes when Mrs. Gabfat came in to do hers and it appeared that the woman downstairs had left her husband and he was there with a lot of bottles and was making a lot of noise. It was awful, and we just had to talk it over and I was as surprised as anything to find it was after 11 o'clock when Cecil came in to ask where his supper was and did I want the light left on.

To-day I was just tired out, and worse because the Moretalks rang to say they're bringing the Lessences, and the old cat reminded me in the cunningest way that the cream was sour in the puffs last time she came.

Now I'm too upset to sleep because that clever little mouse with the natural wave started us talking politics and, oh dear, the trouble there was!

I was just talking to Mr. Lessence about the man downstairs in the most harmless way possible when Daphne Gabfat said it ought to be stopped. Naturally, I thought she meant what we meant, that is, Mr. Lessence and me, and I said of course it should and that someone should do something about it, when Mrs. Lessence chipped in to say she was surprised, and couldn't imagine how I came to be thinking such things.

Then Mrs. Gabfat put in her spoke and said with a lot of Isaids and shesaid and wesaid and theysaid that they'd been talking about the price of Daphne's new hat. As far as I could make it out Daphne said she liked the look of Mr. Coates and Mrs. Lessence said she thought Mr. Jones looked sortofnice and it was here that Daphne said it ought to be stopped. What she meant I do not know and can't imagine, but perhaps she was talking about what Mrs. Tinselbutton and Miss Flurtlewoppen were saying in the corner near the servery where they always sit because it's the only space near there for the dumbwaiter.

I know I only sorted this out afterwards, remembering what I'd been hearing while Mr. Lessence talked about how a man he knew had once drunk himself out of a perfectly good job and

"THID'S" VERSION

To the Editor,
"The Listener"

Sir,—It is with no little interest that I have read the correspondence about women's diaries in "The Listener"—and the diaries themselves. Apart from my belief that any women nowadays who are capable of writing diaries are at the same time afraid to do so, I admire your courage in throwing your columns open to a sex which, in the main, is completely unprincipled, vain, unbalanced, feckless, and dumb. Courage will be of no avail against them. Whatever you do, whatever bribes you offer, you will find again, as you have doubtless found before, that the women's sections of magazines become the repository of all the bob-tag and raggie-tail that makes up woman's existence. It is no use kicking, no use taking to Martinis, no use going on the waggon, no use even offering them money for the job: the only way to have a good woman's section is to have it written by men. Assured as I am of these truths, confident as I am that the modern woman's hat is a fair illustration of the contents of the head it covers, I am honoured, sir, to present you with my own conception of a woman's diary.

Yours, etc.,
THID.

Somewhere in N.Z.,
August 17, 1940.

at that time all I could think was that I had a right to my opinions and Mrs. Lessence could be surprised if she liked but it made no difference. Of course I didn't put it just like that but everybody took it the wrong way and there was such a long silence that I had to go out and blow my nose and put the kettle on.

When I came back poor Miss Flurtlewoppen was red in the face and I just heard the tail end of Mrs. Gabfat muttering something about the fifth column and it appears that Miss Flurtlewoppen, who has a funny sounding name, had said that she wouldn't join the sewing party the next afternoon (for the troops) because old Mrs. Staystight (who runs them) had tricked them all into buying the wool in a lump sum from the one shop and she (Miss Flurtlewoppen) had found out that Mrs. Staystight's husband really owned the shop and had sacked one of his miserably paid girls because he heard her talking about his nose (it's a little Roman). Now Miss F. didn't know, but I did, that Mrs. Gabfat was a particular friend of Mrs. Staystight and that it was her husband who owned the shop and Mr. Staystight was just the manager, and inanycase Mr. Gabfat had that sort of nose too.

All I could do in the circumstances was pray for the kettle to hurry. Mrs. Gabfat wouldn't touch the cream puffs so I made sure Miss F. had plenty although that Lessence man kept the plate close by him pretending to be polite and pass them round but he only passed the plate when everybody had their mouths full.

All the time they cast glances at poor Miss Flurtlewoppen and Miss Tinselbutton moved over to sit beside the natural wave and they all left early, except Miss F., who came back when they'd gone and positively wept over my new tweed skirt and had to be asked to stay for tea. Then when Cecil came home from the office for his meal what did he do but start reading in the paper about the fifth column and Miss F. wept again on the tablecloth and Cecil didn't know what it was about and lost his temper and left the room, and now he's sulking in the living-room with the crossword puzzle and I think I'll have just a quiet weep myself. . . .

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