

The Woman's Point of View

By "Verity"

Annotations of Annabel

Books

The Art of Dressing.

DEAREST:

With Evangeline—looking her brightest best in cunningly-built suit of black cloth, and severe tan jumper blouse of sublime style, high-collared and immaculate—I visited the Wellington Winter Show. In passing, 'tis not hard to predict the popularity this season, for the business girl, of the plain coat and skirt of good quality and cut. Sensible, suitable, and smart, one welcomes its return to favour.

THOUGH guiltless of brag, yet am I second to none in appreciation of the Dominion's prowess in production and manufacture. Industry and enterprise are illustrated wisely and well in many wonderful exhibits to be seen in the new Show Building, whither daily and nightly hasten a happy band of pilgrims questing the fun of the fair.

EVANGELINE is building a cottage—an anti-matrimonial one, be it said, as she scorns the way of a man with a maid—a fascinating equivalent to the once existent "but and a ben." Just three rooms in a small, quiet street, boasting most modern bath-room, quaint cupboard and shelves, with labour-saving inventions that shun laborious days. Nearing completion, furniture is, literally, on the tapis; and Evangeline wrestles with the problem with customary competence, excellent taste, and the not despicable funds at her command.

SO that she was moved to admiration of an exhibit exploiting the loveliness of our native woods, heart of kauri and New Zealand birch, cleverly treated, polished, and fashioned into bedroom furniture of the most beguiling. Clever designing was obvious in this suite, which included the most fascinating of dressing-tables, glass-topped, of elegant fashioning—long triple mirror a miracle of convenience and elegance, with no visible framing, but mysteriously screwed into three sheets of gleaming, lovely utility, of infinite appeal to the female of the species. Fain would I acquire it before it is borne off to its long home by someone backed by the power of the almighty dollar.

WE lingered also at striking exhibit of a well-known manufacturer, surely the last word of comfort in chesterfield and chair, and extraordinarily dignified in skilful upholstery of gold and black brocade. Hartpen floor covering was of putty hue, discreetly limited in decoration, with lampshades of the right rich glow; modish cushions seductively inviting

in golden satin; while the walls boasted excellent prints of rooms in Buckingham Palace, imparting aristocratic atmosphere to a delightful scheme of colour and comfort.

DENTAL, Nursing, Tourist and other exhibitions of Governmental activities are extremely cleverly organised and displayed; and much admired was an attractive oasis setting forth the delights of the mountains as holiday resort; complete with skis, big boots to climb, alpenstocks, a lovely lady in dashing, non-utilitarian sporting kit, and a photograph of the Hermitage, from which one turned with a sudden sigh of longing for remembered evening glow on Mount Cook, blue loveliness of some sweet, small lake amidst the hills of our desire, and cosmopolitan camaraderie of mountaineers and others who await return of the travellers with ower true tales.

WE noticed that good causes of Red Cross and Free Ambulance found capable exposition, as, bearing leaflets by the score, regretfully we looked our last on the intriguing throng. In slow passage towards the exit, we added to our store another word in season, in the shape of a recipe-book of wit and originality, extolling the Merit of Mustard; which also is the laudable purpose of an amusing stall, yclept the Mustard Club, where, by way of decoy ducks, are exhibited presentments of the best-beloveds of respective political parties. There, right debonair, smiles the Prime Minister, with, as body-guard, salubrious Mr. Sidey, reminiscent of long summer days; while the second from the left, shedding all malice and unkindness, is a prominent Labourite who broadly beams upon an admiring world. They are all devotees, one gathers, of that condiment without which British beef loses its savour; a fiery but innocuous taste, and one in which I entirely concur.

PARTISAN of measures, not men, one realises with detachment that titanic struggle of Olympians is at hand, the thrills and throes of divergent parties already making themselves felt; all rendered the more interesting by reappearance of our own Sir Joseph in the role of leader, refulgent glow of Liberal limelight upon his manly brow. Meantime there is much speculation and many dark doubts; but the end of the matter cannot be guessed till the numbers go up; and anyhow everyone can't win in the political game, or any other, as we all know to our cost.

Your

ANNABEL LEE.

DAUGHTERS OF INDIA.

"LO, the poor Indian" has been the theme for many writers in recent years. Comparatively lately Mr. E. M. Forster, in his brilliant "Passage to India," achieved extraordinarily lucid delineation of the creeds and castes of this elusive people; while we are still aware of the storm of protest that greeted the revelations of American Miss Mayo, who, with courage of conviction, raised the curtain of ignorance and indifference in her unpromising portrayal of the cruelty and horror of the gorgeous and gruesome land.

In "Daughters of India" Miss Wilson has undertaken a "large order," in the vernacular of the man in the street; for it would appear a superhuman task truthfully to describe but one small facet of the conglomerate life of teeming millions of that Dark Land, with its menace and magnificence, its pomp and pageant, festering corruption and tortuous travellings of the soul.

Full of interest is this story of an American woman missionary, aided in her good work by a few white colleagues and a handful of saintly, selfless native recruits; who endeavour to make contact with and help in some small measure the poor, the halt and the blind, by bringing a modicum of physical and spiritual hope and healing into the lives of the corrupt, the down-trodden and despised. A groping, bewildering crusade at its best; for they are kittle cattle to handle, queer fish, these Indians of all kinds and conditions; the whole effort calculated to bring despair to all save the stoutest-hearted spreader of the Gospel of Christ.

"How could He come to a land like this?" in bitter discouragement cries a noble old native woman worker in the spiritual vineyard. "Could He come as a Hindu, so that the Moslems would despise Him? Or as a native Christian, so that they both would spit on Him? Or a Jew, so that the three would crucify Him? Or an Englishman, so that everybody could revile Him altogether?"

Of intriguing simplicity of narration, we get an impression from Miss Wilson's book of an unexaggerated statement of fact, and attention is enchaind by what is apparently a plain tale of day-by-day existence in a foreign country, the insistent quest of the Grail, and a striving to plant in barren ground some flowering seed of truth and beauty. Elusive beyond Western understanding is the sliding, slipping mind of the dark and hopeless Indian outcast, possessing no glimmer of equity or straight dealing; suspicious, dirty, the scum of the earth, yet here and there with some saving quality of generous grace.

THE business of dressing well and cleverly is worth while from all points of view. It saves women from many a minor sin. It teaches them to know themselves, to spend their money more wisely than they would if they dressed in ignorance, to avoid all slackness, sloth, self-indulgence, those ugly little sins of middle age.

The moment a woman begins to lose interest in her appearance she should pull herself together by remembering that she is a part of the stage scene of life, and has her little part to play. In youth a little carelessness in dress may be admitted; in maturity and declining years, no.

The middle-aged woman has to bring all her wits to bear on that question of clothes if she would remain pleasing to the eye, as, indeed, it is her duty to do. It can be done, and no one helps more towards making it easy than the clever dress designers, who know from experience that it is not only a pretty face and youth which carry clothes well, but experience in life and its lessons, and character formed by the use of brains and heart.

The Real Sex Problem.

*Should women have careers?
Why not, the pretty dears?
Could we endure their tears
Did we refuse them?
Nay, they must all be free,
Though of frivolity,
Aye, and inconstancy,
Cynics accuse them.*

*Some our best sellers are
Fame as a movie star;
Or at the (legal) Bar
Nobody grudges.
And when the years have rolled
On for a bit, I'm told,
We may at length behold
Feminine Judges.*

*Yet each material care
Makes it more hard to share
Triumphs by land or air
Still with their brothers.
Yes, there's one fact to face
Since in a little space
There'll be no human race
If we've no mothers.*

"For ways that are dark and tricks that are vain," as Bret Harte once said of an equally wily nation, one looks to the Dark Land of India; but, whatever the personal point of view, we pay homage to the Christ-like spirit of those who walk in poverty for sweet Charity's sake, although it may be we close the book with an unregenerate sigh of satisfaction that our individual lot is cast in a more pleasant place.—R.U.R.