

(For Baldwin's Monthly.)
A BRIEF CHAPTER ON LOVE.
 (A Reminiscence.)

ELIZABETH OAKES SMITH.

"I am a bachelor, Mrs. Eva,"* said my friend, "and therefore am not able to comprehend that sentiment of married people, who expect to fill up and monopolize, each the whole soul and mind of the other. I, for instance, must be very large, or my wife very small, if I am to shut out from her mind all thought and sympathy with everybody else in the world."

"And yet," I replied, "you would not be willing to occupy a secondary place in her mind or affections."

"Women, as they exist, are very capricious. I worship an ideal woman such as Dante worshiped, and in a like spirit. She is my Angel, guide, friend! But when I cast my eyes around and see men and women, such as they really are, in the majorities, I think that each ought to be content with the particular corner which is reserved in the heart of each for the other. I think they ought to be content if sure that such niche is exclusively and sacredly reserved, and no Banquo ghost will ever rise up therein."

"Then each must be of equal aspiration, truth, and dignity, or the conditions would not be observed, even with your limitations," I observed; "but how is the fact?"

My friend laughed a laugh more sad than merry, and repeated, "how is the fact?" and then, after a pause, he continued:

"Our women poets, like those of the other sex, dream their ideals, and fret, like imprisoned birds, at the limitations, meanness, and insufficiencies of the actual. But the majorities of the sex never go beyond the idea of possession—to love and secure the object, and *settle down*. Dear souls! their highest system of duty is to keep a clean house, make nice jellies, good bread, and sew on tapes and buttons; and all this is so good and so comfortable, that I think a married man ought to be content with it, and hold his tongue, and not galivant and make the good creature uncomfortable."

"Then why do you not marry, and have all this and be content?"

"I am content, Mistress Eva, without it all; I prefer to pay for this commonplace service, and reserve my true self for what is highest and best in my view. I should spoil a good little wife, by being more of a lover than she could understand, and my children would be spoonies, from the same cause."

"Yet the true love is nothing less than the ideal. Did you never feel that the tradition is a pleasant one, that the ashes of Abelard and Heloise were permitted to mingle in the same sepulchre?"

"Very sad is the thought. I do not know that it pleases me. That must have been a vast agony which, after centuries, still vibrates in the human heart."

"And yet so great a passion, so unchangeable, so unadulterate, must have been its own exceeding great reward," I replied.

"Yes, it may have been based upon the earth, but it rose in majesty up to the throne of God. It is a great record. Our present modes of thought do not seem to me to favor the best hopes and aspirations of the human heart, Mistress Eva."

"If one were permitted to die, or could remove far from an ideal object, it would be well."

"Ah! Mistress Eva, you would place all true lovers, each upon vapory clouds, and set them to singing hallelujahs. Is not your love what the world calls friendship?"

"What passes for love among men and women is hardly deserving the name—a fitful, jealous passion, or a sensual, commonplace intercourse, with scarcely sentiment enough in it to redeem its utter grossness. Till women are eclectic, men will never learn how much there is divine in the attachment of a true womanly heart."

"Still, is it not friendship, rather than love, of which you speak?"

"Friendship is pure love on earth—divine love in

* My friends always called me Eva, after the appearance of my poem, "The Sinless Child."

heaven. What is so often called the unfortunate attachments of the poets, such as that of Dante, Petrarch, Tasso, and a host of others, seem to me in the highest degree beautiful and ennobling. I would not willingly see two persons who are ideal to each other married; such attachments are unadapted to every-day experience and contact, and are sufficient as an inner life—the 'bread the world wots not of.'

At this moment entered the Sybarite, and joined in the colloquy.

"I know, Mistress Eva, you are trying to make out women a great deal more devoted and more trustworthy than they are. I believe in holding a tight rein, and keeping ahead of the love a man may really feel for a woman, otherwise she will be sure to abuse it. No woman is worth the entire heart of a devoted man."

"You think she would feel her power too much, and at length despise her victim," said my friend.

"Assuredly she would."

"No, no; but she might fail to see the extent of her power till too late. Vain women imagine every man who pays them a compliment a lover, while a nobler woman is slow to perceive the depth of emotion she may really have inspired." This from Eva.

"I like a woman," resumed the Sybarite, "whom her sex are fond of pulling to pieces and finding fault with, and calling ugly in person and vain at heart, cold and selfish, and all that sort of thing. There is sure to be splendid material in such a woman, and though I am not one of the kind to get in love easily, I would put myself to some trouble to send a fine fellow to the feet of such a one."

Margaret Fuller lifted up her eyes with a glow of interest, and said, in her oracular way: "It is melancholy to witness the precocious coquetry of the young girls of the day."

"Coquetry is the natural weapon of the sex," said my friend. "We see it reproduced in the squirrel. Where a woman is unendowed with beauty in the high sense, and devoid of genius also, she must have recourse to her most available tools in order to *win*, where she might not otherwise attract."

"I think the skillful play of these feminine foils quite charming," said Mr. Tuckerman. "The sentiment such women awaken may be transient, but it is not unpleasant. It imparts a spice to daily intercourse. It is your great woman with tragic proclivities whom it is fearful to encounter. One such seals the destiny of a man, and renders all others tame and uninteresting."

"And yet a man would willingly encounter the contingency, for the sake of evolving this diamond dust of life; it is the one experience to lift him above the commonplace world," resumed my friend.

"Love is always a tragedy," said Eva, "and there are more martyrs and heroes in the world than those recorded in books. Life is a poor farce to the majorities—a tragedy to the intensely passionate, and a sublime epic to those who are serene and noble."

"Now, do not be so solemnly earnest," said the Sybarite, opening wide his handsome eyes. "Life yields little to justify it. Give me a pretty woman—not a beauty, not a genius. Let her coquet to her heart's content before marriage—after that she does it at her peril."

"If coquetry be inherent in her, the condition of marriage will not affect her character," said Margaret Fuller.

"Perhaps not," responded my friend, "but a deep passion, developing all the strength of her character, may raise her above the folly or necessity of coquetry."

"Nothing will cure a coquette but a regular heart-break," answered the Sybarite. "That popular song tells the whole story of the shallow sex, and how a man must emasculate himself if he would be understood by them;" and he hummed in a fine voice:

"Then drink to-night, with hearts as light,
 To loves as gay and fleeting
 As bubbles that swim on the beaker's brim,
 And break on the lips while meeting."

"Aye," responded Mr. H——, with a sigh, "that song was not lightly written."

"I heard it sung in the harbor of Wampoa, and by a

soldier leaning over the ramparts of Gibraltar," said young Oaksmith, with enthusiasm.

"Let me make the ballads of a people, and I care not who shall make their laws," quoted Major Downing. (Seba Smith.)

"I do not think these pretty women, with their enticing coqueties, at all harmless," resumed Mrs. Embury. "They are despots after marriage, and jealous and exacting just in proportion to the decay of their charms."

"Jealous and despotic with weak men," replied Mr. H——. "Your pretty woman has a make less generous than fine. Finely-textured creatures are apt to be cruel, like the humming-birds, which dip their pointed beaks into the very heart of the blossom, intent to suck out its every essence of life; and with all this delicate sensibility, we know they are the most vindictive and pugnacious of birds."

"Your largely endowed woman is far more easily managed than a little one," said the Sybarite; "but they are apt to lack pith and fire."

"I suppose," rejoined Eva, "the concessions of a superior woman are more grateful to the self-love of a man, than the flatteries of a weak one. Prettiness is genteel and tasteful, but beauty is that undefined something which is felt and appreciated more by an internal spiritual sense, than an external one."

Poe's dreamy eyes lighted with a fine fire, and he replied: "Yes, I like that style of woman, where beauty is like the glinting of a Winter sun over a frozen lake."

"Look at the photographs of pretty women," I continued, "they are all surface, and evolve neither admiration nor interest, while that of one woman may enchain your admiration for hours. The sun is a great artist, and paints what few else see."

"Give me pretty women," said Mr. Tuckerman, "they do not overtax the sensibilities, nor go too deeply into the heart; and they render social intercourse less oppressive than your great women."

"If that is the general sentiment of the sex," replied Eva, "the majorities of men are likely to be well content, for the aloe blooms only once in a century."

"Yes," rejoined Mr. H——, "the opinion of Mr. Tuckerman is a comfortable one. Most men are content with the pretty flatteries of pretty women, and they install them upon mushroom pedestals, bedight with gossamer, like trick fairies, till we get weary of their vapidness, and hunger in the very soul for a noble intercourse."

"If men did not so admire vapidness and folly, it would not exist in so painful a degree," said Margaret Fuller.

"The world is not ideal, Miss Fuller. These pretty women often settle down to very nice, tender, submissive wives. The majorities desire nothing better, and so society jogs on—not very high, but slowly improving. The rank which you hold in it testifies that you are exceptional."

Margaret's clear eyes, generally hidden under the heavy lid, beamed forth upon his face with a bright, and almost beautiful look.

At the junction of Seventy-second Street with Fifth Avenue, James Lenox (the millionaire) is erecting a magnificent building, which he intends as a gift to the people, and it is to be called the Lenox Library.

PRAYER is the simplest form of speech
 That infants' lips can try;
 Prayer, the sublimest strains that reach
 The Majesty on high.

ABOUT CHINS.—A good chin should neither project nor retreat. A retreating chin denotes weakness; a projecting one, harsh strength; a pointed chin means acuteness; a soft, fat, double chin, a love of good things; and an angular chin, judgment and firmness. A fat chin denotes coldness; a round, dimpled one, goodness; a small chin, fear; sharp indentings, a cool understanding.

HOW TO PLEASE.—"One great secret of pleasing others lies in our wish to please them." Said William Wirt, in a letter to his daughter: "I want to tell you a secret. The way to make yourself pleasant to others is to show them attention. The whole world is like the miller at Mansfield, 'who cared for nobody—no, not he—because nobody cared for him.' And the whole world would serve you so if you gave them the cause. Let people see that you do care for them, by showing them what Sterne so happily called the small courtesies, in which there is no parade, whose voice is too still to tease, and which manifest themselves by tender and affectionate looks and little acts of attention, giving others the preference in every little employment—at the table, in the field, walking, sitting, and standing."