

Kitty Howard's Journal.—No. VI.

EDITED BY MRS. ELIZABETH OAKES SMITH.

JULY 20, 18.—I mean to write very calmly to-day, and, by writing, settle my impressions clearly in my mind. For I so entirely and devotedly love my dear husband, am so proud of him, and so in every way do I desire to do him justice in my deepest heart, that I can not knowingly wrong him. Then, too, my two beautiful boys are the pride and hope of my life. Having said thus much, I am going to write down honestly what I think and what has brought me to this state of thinking.

MEM.—Tom will not be pleased, but husbands and wives ought not to fear to face the truth honestly with each other.

These are my thoughts. The world is terribly n the wrong about many things. I, even I, Kitty Howard, with very moderate brains, but a loving heart, can see this, and can see that it will take the women to cure these wrongs. The men have had their hands full trying to please us; buying for us, and making for us all kinds of jimeracks, and we have been fed upon moral sugar plums and candies; so flattered and petted in our idleness and vanity, that we have lazily cast all the burdens of the world upon the other sex, who have a right to regard us as only "Cinthias of the minute," and "the weaker vessels."

In spite of all this weakness on our part, and folly on theirs, I think we women are the wisest of the two, and, give us a fair chance, we should soon be able to give even our lawgivers wholesome advice. Our true character can not be learned by what bitter cynics and satirists have said about us in times past; we are not all

"Fine by defect, and delicately weak."

I am fond of the society of my own sex, for it is pleasant to sit at the needle and chat with them, and learn all their secrets and ways of thinking, but never in my life did I ever see or hear of a woman, of whom it could be said,

"Narcissa's nature, tolerably mild,
To make a wash would hardly stew a child!"

Nobody but a hunchbacked old fellow without a wife, or chick, or child could ever think of such a thing!

But I am not saying what I designed, for somehow it makes me cry to begin it.

Well, then, this is how it was. I gave Hannah a slate and pencil to write and draw upon, and seeing David disposed to draw also, he had his slate and pencil, and sponge, with which he amuses himself and puts on airs in teaching Paul. This morning, Tom having a bad cold, did not go to the office, nor did he stay in the library, where I would have joined him, but needs must stay in the little room with the children, and the sewing, and the cat and dog, the canary and macaw, all of whom create, at intervals, a not unpleasant Babel to a mother's ears.

Not so to those of men. Now at the best a man in the house all day is a nuisance and an abomination, yes, all that; but a sick man is worse than all. He is sick, and won't be cured; won't be petted, and is cross if you do not pet him; is sullen, and mussy, and disagreeable. If he would give up to it, and go to bed, and be taken care of like a dear patient soul, all would go on very well, but no, he just dawdles, and frets, and is in every body's way, and disarranges all the economy of the household. Magnus Apollo himself, would be unendurable if hanging about the house all day. I think I am a little cross, just now.

Well, I gave Hannah her needlework (she is very nice in her person and uses her needle deftly), and David his slate, and Paul a doll baby, and Tom sat half snoozing in his dressing gown and slippers, while I went out in the kitchen to see to the dinner, and also to look after the refrigerator, which had not been kept quite nice. I had not been out half an hour, when Hannah rushed up to me, with her eyes streaming tears, crying,

"Oh! dear madam; poor little David! poor little David!"

Of course I rushed: of course I did. Before I reached the scene of action, I heard *slaps, slaps*, and Tom's voice, loud and excited, saying,

"Will you pick it up? will you pick it up, sir?"

I listened; there were heavy sobs, but no answer. Then came more blows and a very low, wailing cry from my poor little kingly David.

I could not stand it any longer, I opened the door, but did not speak. There was the slate lying on the floor, and the child was standing

over it, very pale about the ears and temples, but puffed and red about the nose and mouth.

"Will you pick it up?" asked Tom, giving me at the same time an awful look.

David stood stiff as a young bull dog, and eyed the obnoxious slate with stern defiance. Tom and David looked exactly alike, both obstinate and determined. David did not look at me at all; the darling knew that one dear look at his mother's face would subdue him.

Tom gave him another whipping, every blow falling upon my heart. I could not resist it, I could not. I put my hand upon his shoulder, and said softly,

"Can you not obey Papa, dear?"

Instantly the slate was lifted from the floor, and instantly he rushed into my arms. Tom was very angry, and left the room, and I burst into tears. Then Hannah knelt down at my feet and wept, and Paul threw back his head and cried with all his strength; while David stood up like a young martyr, the tears rolling down his cheeks.

I suppose it was all very ridiculous, indeed—Tom said it was, but somehow I could not help it, and I think we shall all be wiser for this scene.

After awhile Tom came back, and sat down with his great law book in his hand, and, I think, cured of his sickness. One day in the empire of home with its mishaps and trials, will be an awful warning to the dear man in time to come. I had said to David,

"I shall not kiss you till you beg Papa's pardon."

He went to his room and sponged his face, and brushed his disordered hair, stuck a geranium leaf into his buttonhole, and then walked in with a step so imposing, that it might have done honor to a judge on the bench. He walked directly up to Tom and, bowing stiffly, said:

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Howard."

"For what, sir?" asked Tom sternly, though I saw a suspicion of a smile upon his lip.

"For making you angry, sir," replied the young rebel.

"Go to your room, sir, till you can feel like a better boy," said Tom.

David was about to turn away, when the blood rushed to his face and the tears to his eyes. "Dear Papa!" he ejaculated. Tom folded him in his arms, and was again my dear Tom.

It seems that David was trying to draw a boy, which would look too much like a cat, and in his supreme disgust at his own lack of skill,

he had flung the slate upon the floor, from whence his father had ordered him to take it up; and David, not seeing the propriety of the demand, had obstinately refused to bend his sturdy little back to the required duty; and, hence, father and son had struggled for the mastery.

No wise, tender-hearted mother would have fallen into a like mistake. A childish peccadillo of the kind would have been lightly slurred over, rather than have been magnified into a grave offense, and the young offender would himself have seen the folly of the act. The same spirit which my dear, good blundering Tom showed in this case, by which a trifling mistake became magnified into a heinous and punishable offense, may be traced all through the spirit of our laws. Women have been needed with their penetrating, sympathetic hearts to soften and mitigate the errors of the wrong-doer, and present its many extenuating aspects.

There is a case in the English criminal records where a child of nine years was hung for theft. He was so small and so weak that he was placed in a chair for the convenience of the executioner, who deposed afterward, that when he was adjusting the rope about his neck, the little creature whispered and said, "Please, don't hurt me!"

Poor lamb! more fit to be taken to some warm, motherly bosom, than exposed to chains, dungeon, and death?

I told Tom I only wondered the laws were not still more cruel than they now are, since no womanly judgment had been consulted in making them, and Tom replied,

"O Balm! a few women like you will turn the world upside down! I am learning every day from you."

I have adopted a practice with the children, which I think serves to fix just ideas upon their young minds. Every night they come and kneel down before me, including the dear, good child Hannah, and little Paul, who imitates every thing he sees the others do; and it is comical to see him try to shut his funny eyes, winking and peeping all the time. I then review the day, and own up honestly to all my own mistakes, and any lack of patience or thoughtfulness on my part is presented in its true light. Then each child makes a confession also, and it not unfrequently occurs that petty delinquencies are brought to light, which otherwise would have never been known. Hannah sometimes will have fallen into some of her old habits of falsehood, and from the cowardice

engendered by her former cruel treatment, she is very likely to conceal her misdemeanors, but at these periods of confession, it is very touching to witness her sorrowful remorse and religious efforts, at entire candor and at any cost.

To-night when David came to our little confessional he became very red in the face, and rising from his knees he stood up and said,

"I was a bad boy to dear Papa: cross, bad, bad!" and he struck his little hand heavily on his cheek. I shook my head gravely, and told him he must not strike himself, but be manfully resolved to do the right thing always.

After confession we repeat some simple form of prayer, sing some childish song, and then the children are kissed and put to bed. I always go and kiss their sleeping cheeks before I retire. To-night when I did this, I lifted David's robe, and beheld the prints of every blow upon his white delicate flesh. It pained me to the heart, and I wept many, many bitter tears, not without a rising anger against Tom. I knelt down and buried my face in my hands, and prayed with stifled sobs and groans, and here poor Tom found me. The sight of him increased my anger, and I showed the bruised child to him with flashing eyes.

Tom took my hand and led me to our room, and sat me on his knee, and wiped my tears tenderly. Of course I put my arms around his neck and cried a great deal harder.

"Kitty, don't cry any more, dear. Let us talk it over."

This from Tom, and I replied,

"Tom, you are a cruel, bad-hearted man, to beat a poor little child in that way. I never shall love you as well again, never, Tom."

"I think I was cruel, Kitty, but I did not mean to be so. The young rascal is awfully obstinate, and *shall* mind me."

"He's just yourself right over, Tom."

"I know it, Kitty, and the worse for it. I am not wise and thoughtful as you are, dear; and I shall leave the boys while so young altogether to you, for I think you know better how to treat them."

"Of course I do, if this is the way you begin, Tom," and I dried my eyes, and I think, inside, I was mean, it must be in a woman's bones to be a little so, for this concession of Tom's quite appeased my ill temper.

"Now kiss me, Kitty," said Tom, "and let us forget it all."

"No, Tom, I am not in a kissable temper. I think you ought to be sorry, and ashamed, and humble, and penitent, and promise better fashions. Do you?"

"All right, my little wife, I'm humble as a dog," but he did not look so. He only looked proud and saucy, and kissed my hands, and said I was a vixen. And I told him, "It was time for women to make the laws, and protect the men from cruelty and injustice; beginning at the cradle and ending with the gibbet. Men had ruled the world till they were a terror to each other, and now it was time for women to have a finger in the pie."

Modern Romancing.

BY NATHAN UPHAM.

"A H! how is this, dearest, the novel I gave you last night—
Three ponderous volumes—are you now reading the *third*?
Why, surely, such hast'ning will speedily ruin your sight!
One, *one* in a day! Let reading of this be deferred!
Or are you but skimming the cream, and care not to tarry
Till volume the third you have read, *to find if they marry?*"

"Why, Husband! how little you know of novels and tales,
All artists of genius write *now* to keep pace with the times!
The modern romance, if complete or approv'd, never fails
To sound, volume *first*, the peals of the wedding-day chimes!
And *then* the plot *thickens*! *Why* I am glancing in this, is
To see if he *killed her with poison*, or *smothered with kisses!*"