

## Kitty Howard's Journal.—SECOND SERIES.

BY ELIZABETH OAKES SMITH.

FEBRUARY.

WE have had a disturbed and anxious household for many, many weeks. Somebody, some old honest battle-man, who thought lightly of civil life, considering war the normal state of the race, never heard of any disaster or crime of any kind, without asking, "who is she! who is she!" for he believed a woman to be always at the bottom of all the trouble in the world. Indeed I begin to think he was right; I begin to see my sex through no false medium, and through none of that *esprit de corps*, so much lauded, and so often false in principle. Men and women are to be judged from a human stand-point, and not from the stand-point of sex. Lady Montague, used to say that, "all that reconciled her to being a woman was the fact, that she would not be obliged to marry one of them."

**Men.**—The only women that the feminine woman admires, are those distinguished not for masculine, but *manly* qualities, such as generosity, sincerity and tenderness, coupled with courage.

But to the discomfort in the household, to which I referred above. A woman is the cause of it all, and that woman, that handsome, artful, husky Blanch Runyon. It seems that David, dear impassioned soul! pressed his suit upon the girl with such earnest, tender solemnity, that she grew awe-struck, and perhaps remorseful, and confessed that she was already engaged. Poor boy! He had been accustomed to a home where truth was the great and pervading element, and instinctively thought all respectable households were governed by similar principles.

Once I had remonstrated with him upon his infatuation, and assured him that Blanch was both vain and treacherous; boy-like and man-like too, as to that, he replied, "Women are always unjust to each other." Women understand each other better than men understand us, or are willing to understand us. They adhere to their own version of the sex, till some great ruin serves to open their eyes, and they learn the truth when it has ceased to be of any service to them.

**Men.**—Men cheat in business and politics, women in affections. They from sheer vanity encourage a man, and when his ruin is af-

fectured, they say, "I'm sure I never thought he meant half he said; I did't mean any harm!"

Well, David insisted to know how he stood with Blanch, for her calm self-possession lured and maddened him, and then came the discovery that she was engaged—engaged to a German Count, who would soon arrive to marry her. David must have yielded to a terrible paroxysm of rage and mortification, for he called her a traitorous Delilah, a she-d—l, and other uncomplimentary epithets, which false women hear from weak lovers, and came home boiling with excitement.

"Oh, mother! there is nobody like you," he cried, throwing his arms about my neck. "Please, mother, let the whole thing drop; I am a poor fool, but she is worse—let her go, let her go. I will sleep, sleep," and the poor, beautiful, injured boy was convulsed in my arms. Ah, it has been a sad, sad time! How I was bitter against Blanch for this ruin inflicted by her vanity; how I mourned and wept over my poor boy, are emotions incident to life, a chapter in human suffering out of which we arise, healed and ennobled, or crushed and distorted, need not be told. It is now in the past. I am calm, and David, wasted by disease, is himself again, beautiful in his young manhood, gathering up the broken threads so rudely snapped, studious, unduly grave; but all that youth should be, that has been dragged through such an experience. The Judge went to Blanch, and in hot wrath told her that she was beneath the contempt of an honest man. She was a swindler of the basest kind, and if her German Baron was half a man, he would no more marry her than any vile woman who traffics in the privileges of her sex.

In the mean time, much has transpired, which I have but partially jotted in my journal. I went one evening to hear the ministrations of the Rev. Mr. Angel, I went strongly prejudiced against him, but the sight of an almost heavenly face disarmed me. He must have been a man of intense passion, in the high sense—fervid, eloquent, most tender, clear in intellect, forcible in language, with an almost child-like simplicity in manner. His voice thrilled the senses like the low vibrations of the wind-harp—plaintive, ethereal, yet rich and manly. Never was

Christian earnestness more apparent, devotion, self-abnegation more beautiful. The divine love, the divine purity of Jesus were shown forth with a sweet earnestness that melted the heart to tears.

Knowing what I knew, my soul was melted within me, and I looked with a sad sorrow upon his thin, fair face, and contrasted it with the hard unsympathetic one of the wife who sat looking around with an indifferent, careless air, the least affected of all the multitude of listeners. Many desired prayers at the close of the discourse, and I have never, never heard invocations so humanly pitiful from human lips. Alas, poor heart! must there be the great woe, the bitter sin, the soul-deep agony of repentance to bring the whole being prostrate at the cross?

I think Tom was angry at my emotion. I think the rigid matter of fact, quality of mind, which can not but underlie all experience of it in the law, has rather tended to harden Tom. Not that he is ever unkind.

The night after the discourse to which I had listened was dark and loaded with tempest; the trees writhed and creaked, and the rain came down in a heavy continuous sheet. I could not sleep. I arose, and, shading the lamp, sat down by my table in a deep reverie, while my good husband slept that much-to-be envied sleep that goes with a good conscience, good nerves, and good digestion. I leaned my head upon my hand and listened to the storm. There was the whistling and wailing as if pitying spirits would avert the destruction of the wind god; and those indescribable sobbings, incident to the night and tempest; but slowly, distinctly rising, fearfully distinct, I heard a great cry, as of one in mortal agony. Awe-struck at the sound, I looked from the lattice, but could see nothing but the great clouds of blackness making the night terrible. The weird eyes of the preacher haunted me—Sally Liscom, grand, imperious filled the room with her presence. I felt a strange elevation, like one who may have laid aside all the associations of earth, and saw in death a bright, beautiful angel. I wrote the following, which came I know not how, and its meaning bidden, as it were, from my own mind:

#### THE MIDNIGHT STORM.

Gusty comes the wind that's blowing,  
As it wrestled, seeking somewhere  
Broken branch or leaf,  
Thing forlorn in grief;  
In a crevice now 'tis throwing  
Voices, sobbing, calling out there—

As a human being pleaded,  
Cried for help in hour most needed.

Now 'tis over, and a stirring  
Creeps along the dusky lattice;  
Lifts, then drops the curtain,  
Pauses all uncertain—  
Now a ragged leaf 'tis whirring  
Upward, blowing to the cornice;  
Down it falls forlorn and stilly,  
And the room is hushed and chilly.

I have quenched the taper burning,  
And a thick screen shades the fire-gleam,  
While I think of Thee  
Saddest soul to me.  
By this fond and heart-felt yearning,  
And this lucid waking night-dream,  
And a presence breathing by me,  
Sure I am that Thou art nigh me.

Darkness, silence brooding ever.  
Ebon wing, death-like and folded—  
Shapes all massive rise  
Taking thy weird eyes—  
Hope to Thee awaketh never—  
Who this fatal doom hath moulded  
Oh, ye Angels! him beholding,  
Wrap him in your peaceful folding.

He a living death is dying,  
Every pulse a pang revealing;  
Hourly at Heaven's-gate  
He doth kneel and wait.  
God be merciful the crying,  
Prostrate on the marble kneeling,  
Bearing memories wild and dim,  
Oh, ye Angels, pity him!

Sept. 20.—This morning is bright and lovely, with scarcely a breath of air. Very early in the morning, indeed, it was hardly day, the sexton of the church called for my husband in a most mysterious manner, and they went out together. As was most natural, I looked through the blinds to see in what direction they went, and was surprised to see them enter the cemetery, and disappear under the trees. They were not long gone, and on their return I heard my husband say,

"You have done a most discreet thing, Mr. Graveland, and we will say nothing more about it, and thus prevent a scandal."

He had no sooner gone than I called to Tom and asked what was the matter. My husband was very pale, his face rigid, and altogether he was not my Tom in the least. He leaned over the side of the bed, and smoothing back my brow replied,

"Kitty you are so little given to gossip, that I will tell you what I would not have another woman in the world know."

At which I could not but smile, for it is so natural to all women to gossip, to love to hear something strange and new, and be the first to tell of it, that I had some fears Kitty might not be entirely exempt from the vice, when consorting with a pleasant neighbor, but when Tom explained the why and the wherefore, I saw at once there need be no fear that I should prove a leaky vessel upon an occasion so solemn, and involving so much.

He went on to inform me that Mr. Graveland, having risen early to assure himself that nothing had gone amiss with the church during the heavy storm, had been startled at perceiving the body of a man stretched upon the grave of Sally Liscom. He hastened forward and found the limbs cold and drenched with the rain; the hat had fallen off, and the poor head was covered with sand and the hair scattered and wet. He turned the face upward. It was that of the minister of God who had so thrilled every heart the evening before! My husband said that he and Mr. Graveland had conveyed the body to the porch of the church and there left it, and, as the outer door was always left unlocked, the people would suppose that he had sought shelter from the storm within its sacred precincts, and there died from some unknown cause.

As he told me all this I leaned my head upon his dear shoulder and nearly fainted. He went on,

"Kitty, Mr. Graveland, without much penetration, was sure that this death was the finale to the tragedy of Sally Liscom; and conceiving that somehow the law must have something to do with it, he came to consult with me as to what should be done. There is no doubt he is right—but, as no good, and much evil may follow from making this public, he has promised me to say nothing, and he having no wife, I think the secret may be kept."

I then told him of the name which Sally had uttered in her distressing sleep, and he saw that I knew all.

"Wise! wise! little Judgine! There are some things which should be sacred between God and ourselves. You are fit for a Priest, a Doctor, or Lawyer, Kitty, in one point of view, in that you are trustworthy and could keep a professional secret, which is more than all men can do."

"Has this man atoned for his sin?" I said to myself, and then in the comfort of leaving

all, all in the hands of the Infinite Supervisor, hushed my questionings. Here is a great tragedy in common life, involving the deepest moral issues enacted under our very eyes, and except that portion of it palpable to external view, its most profound mysteries and its aspect of deepest suffering are known only to God, and hidden from men, and thus the following hopeful thought came to me:

There sure must be  
In some refulgent, far-off clime,  
A place, where we,  
Robbed and defrauded, here in time,  
Shall garner there  
The fruitage of each sorrowing tear:  
More rich, more fair,  
From the great wreck we suffered here.

22.—There is one aspect of life incident to womanhood, which I think is not enough considered by writers, thinkers, and observers. It is this. The period of maternity, by a beautiful provision of Nature, is limited to the earlier portion of a woman's life, and she finds herself in the prime of her existence renewed in her youth, fairer to the eye, clearer in mind, and altogether exempt from many aspects of discomfort, sources of suffering, and tendencies to fretfulness of temper, and wear and tear of nerves, which may heretofore have marred the sweetness of her nature. Of course, I speak of sound, healthful women, sound in body and sound in mind, for sickly men and women are so disagreeably exceptional, that they are fit only for the Doctors to torture awhile, and then dissect to learn what ailed them.

In the course of my life I have known many hale, hardy women of middle life, who became perfectly peripatetic, going from place to place with a restless activity entirely dissimilar to their earlier habits. If these women were poor they might generally be found selling small wares, essences, or mints, perhaps, which they distilled by some simple process from herbs gathered by themselves on the way-side or cultivated for the purpose in some pretty garden. They brought berries also, and wonderful pin-cushions, or woolen socks, or coarse embroideries made in some antique and obsolete manner.

These women were bright and cheerful, and warmly welcomed wherever they came. They had huge pockets, at the bottom of which they fished up a cake, or an apple, or a pretty ball, or pair of mittens for a favorite child, in return for which the mother was likely to pay ten-fold. Kind, thoughtful housekeepers were sure

to buy something, and my mother would have a nice little meal with strong green tea, and cream biscuits spread before Mrs. Tandy, or Mrs. Dyer, as the case might be, and in return she learned the haps and the mishaps of people for miles around.

Indeed, the robust forms and tidy looks of the humble peripatetics was refreshing to the sense, and they were happier than if confined to the four walls of a house and condemned to in-door associations. They had a cheerful word, and a wise one, for every body; they were full of harmless gossip, never mischief-makers, they had something hopeful for the suffering, some kindly warning for the indiscreet, and a perfect pharmacopœia of recipes for aches and pains. It did one's heart good to see them, and of their steps at length grew heavy and they

neared the long bourne that must finish their earthly wanderings, a thousand hands were ready to smoothe the way.

Dickens, who saw every thing, has described one of these sturdy, independent peripatetics in his Betty Higden, and George Sand has referred to this period of life in pure penetrating language, as one who had learned something of its import.

Tom is looking over my shoulder as I write, and asks, "What are you driving at, Kitty?" at which I reply, "a great mystery. Do you remember the long solitary travels of Madam Pfifer? Do you know how she longed for space, for motion? How the limitations of the conventional woman fell upon her like a dead weight, and she went forth?"

## Claims of the Unborn Child.

BY CARRIE F. YOUNG, M. D., EDITOR OF THE PACIFIC JOURNAL OF HEALTH.

"WHAT!—must I begin to give attention to, and study the claims of my child, before it is born?"

"Yes, if you are a true woman."

"Well, I believe I am a true woman. Have I not worked late and risen early? Have I not denied myself rest and reading, rides and parties, that I might give personal attention to my little ones?"

"Very true, loving mother! Your thin hands and pale cheeks attest your disposition to *over-work*. Here is the trouble. To the children who are old enough to be turned off you give attention and strength for which the unborn child is suffering. You are dying, by inches and fractions of inches—sacrificing yourself unnecessarily. You are committing suicide. You can not in this way, live out half your days. The time you do live will be full of pain and sorrow, and vague fears, and nervous irritability."

"I am nervous. The slightest sound—a step on the sidewalk, a creak in the door, or unusual silence—and my heart almost stands still, then throbs so wildly, it frightens me. Then my

face flushes—it seems as if my heart would burst. After that, I am weak and trembling."

"What is the response in the foetal life?"

"Oh, it is sometimes terrible! I don't know how I can endure it. Can't you give me something?"

"Yes, you could take drugs, and temporarily think you were benefited. This is not what you need. You need

REST, REST, REST,

and must have it, or die prematurely."

"I tell you, Mrs. Young, I can't rest. I can't idle my time away. I must do the work. I must keep the children in order. I must patch, and mend, and make—clean, and scour, bake, and wash dishes"—

"Wait a moment; don't excite yourself. Sit down, put your feet to the fire; here, let me cool your hot head. See this pretty mother-bird, how contentedly she broods—how readily her mate answers her slightest chirrup! He puts food in her mouth, and talks to her, and tries to amuse her. When she leaves the nest a moment, how the father-bird peeps and chir-