

cine and surgery; she will practise for the bar; she will write books; and the days are fast approaching when she will become a high priestess of the church, and will preach to the lost sheep of Israel, as well as to the equally lost ones of New-York or Chicago; she will be a "beauty doctor," a "physical culture" woman, a "medium," a stock-broker, a palmist, a florist, a house-decorator, a dealer in lace and old curiosities; aye! she even will become a tram-car conductor if necessity compels and the situation is open to her; and she will manage a cattle-ranch as easily as a household, should opportunity arise. Marriage is only one link in the long chain of her general efficiency, and like Cleopatra, "age cannot wither her, nor custom stale her infinite variety."

A curious fact, and one worth noting, is that we seldom or never hear Americans use the ill-bred expression "old maid" when alluding to such of their feminine relatives or friends who may happen to remain unmarried. They know too well that these confirmed and settled spinsters are as capable and as well to the front in the rush of life as the wedded wives, if not more so. They know that among these unmarried feminine forces they have to reckon with some of the cleverest heads of the day, to whom no opprobrious term of contempt dare be applied—women who are editors and proprietors of great newspapers, women who manage famous schools and colleges, women who, being left with large fortunes, dispense the same in magnificently organized but unadvertised charities, women who do so command by their unassisted influence certain social movements and events, that if indeed they were to marry, something like confusion and catastrophe might ensue among the circles they control by the introduction of a new and possibly undesirable element. "Old maid" may apply to the unfortunate female who has passed all the days of her youth in talking about men and in failing to catch so much as one of the wandering tribe, and who, on arriving at forty years, meekly retires to the chimney corner with a shawl over her shoulders and some useful knitting; but it carries neither meaning nor applica-

tion to the brisk, brilliant, American spinster who at fifty keeps her trim, svelte figure, dresses well, goes here, there and everywhere, and sheds her beaming smile with good-natured tolerance, and perchance something of gratitude as well, on the men she has escaped from.

Life does not run only in one channel for the American woman. She does not "make tracks" solely from the cradle to the altar, from the altar to the grave. She realizes that there is more fun to be got out of being born than just this little, old measure meted out to her by the barbaric males of earliest barbaric periods, when women were yoked to the plow with cattle, as they still are in some parts of Switzerland. And it is the innate consciousness of her own power and intelligent ability that gives her the dominating charm, the magnetic spell, under which the stolid Britisher falls more or less stricken, stupefied and inert. He is never a great talker; she is. Her flow of conversation bewilders him. She knows so much, too—she clatters of Shakespeare, Byron, Shelley, Keats—and he thinks that he has heard of these people somewhere before. He listens dumbly. Sometimes he scratches his head, occasionally he feels his mustache, if he has one. When she laughs, he smiles slowly and dubiously. He hopes she is not laughing at him. He feels—he feels, don'tcherknow?—that she is "ripping." He couldn't tell you what he means by "ripping" to save his life.

But painfully accustomed as he is to the dull and listless conversation of the British materfamilias, and to the half-hoydenish conduct of the British tomboy girl who will insist on playing golf and hockey with him in order not to lose him out of her sight, he alto-

gether is refreshed and relieved when the American woman dawns upon his cloudy horizon, and instead of waiting upon him, commands him, with one dazzling look of her bright, audacious eye to wait upon her. The American woman is not such a fool as to play hockey with him at all times and in all weathers, thereby permitting him to take the unchecked measure of her ankles. She is too clever to do anything that might possibly show her in an unlovely or ungraceful light. She takes care to keep her hands soft and small and white, that they may be duly caressable, and makes the best and prettiest of herself on all and every occasion.

And that she has succeeded in taking English society by storm is no matter for surprise. English society, unmingled with any foreign element, frequently is said to be the dullest in the world. It is an entertainment where no one is entertained. A civil apathy wraps each man and woman in its fibrous husk, and sets them separately apart behind barricades of the most idiotic conventionality. The American woman is the only being that can break down these barricades and tear the husk to shreds.

No wonder she is popular! The secret of her own success is in her own personal charm and vivacious intelligence, in her light scorn of stupid ceremonies, in the frank geniality of her disposition (when she can manage to keep it unspoiled by contact with the reserved hypocrisy of the "smart set"), and the delightful spontaneity of her thoughts which find such ready expression in equally spontaneous speech.

Altogether the American woman is a valuable importation into Great Britain. She is an incarnation of the Present, and an embryo of the Future. She is a gifted daughter of the British race, holding within her bright, vital, ambitious identity many of the greater responsibilities of Britain. And to the question: "Why is she popular?" the answer is simple: "Because she deserves to be."

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[—"The Palm of Beauty," next Sunday.]

The Mission of Poetry

By Earl Marble

Prose ruled the world with ruthless hand so long
That lazily men's aims were all fulfilled—
When Poetry awakened them with song,
And at their tasks henceforth their souls were thrilled.

CITY CHILDREN ON THE FARM

