SOCIETY CORRUPT.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox on Social Weaknesses and Defects.

Immoralities of City and Country Life. Where Divorced Women and Adventuresses Come From.

The Worst Man—Disagreeable Tempers More Productive of Evil than Original Sin—Social Insincerity.

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For the Gazette.

It is only the rustic, the dyspeptic, or the declasse man or woman who is forever talking of the "corruption" of society. Many excellent people, whose lives have been passed entirely in rural places, imagine the society of large towns to be a hot-bed of immorality and godlessness.

People who have striven vainly for social place and failed to find the open sesame, are often loud in their denunciation of the successful, and are wont to compare society to a whited sepulchre. But the cosmopolitan, observant being, with a good circulation, knows that human nature is the same the world over, and that everywhere is the same mixture of good and evil.

During a month I once passed in a remote and sparsely settled country place, I heard of more immoral actions among the quiet denizens than I had heard in two years in the largest city of America. Yet should one take the trouble to select at random, in the most respectable part of the city, the same number of human beings, it is wholly probable that an equal number of equally immoral, if less vulgar actions could be recounted.

The whirl and rush of city life seems alike unconducive to great thoughts and small gossip, but the morals of people are very much the same mixture of good and bad in all civilized communities.

I think the repression of country life as often brings latent propensities for evil to the surface as the temptations of city life. One of our smaller towns has been prolific in the product of adventurous women, who have achieved notoriety in the divorce courts; and it is a curious fact that few of the great adventuresses of the world's history were born or bred in large cities. But, whether in town or country place he who seeks shall find that which he seeks.

The man or woman who sets forth on a quest of evil is sure to find it. Early in life I realized that there was more pleasure to be derived from observing good than evil, and consequently sought and found it existing in abundance about me.

It is the crude idea of the youthful mind that the world is divided into two armies—the good and the bad—one clothed in darkness upon the left, one in garments of light upon the right; and in deadly opposition to each other. As we mix with the world this illusion vanishes, for we find the two armies clothed in the same habiliments, mixing together amicably, and the deadly battles are fought silently and out of sight in each human heart, between right and wrong.

A great native virtue, planted too generously in a human heart and deprived of careful cultivation, often degenerates into a rank vice, and the world not unfrequently mistakes a sterile and inactive nature for one of great chastity and self-denial. The summer sunlight is beautiful and beneficent, but it is as prone to produce bugs as butterflies, weeds as ferns, while the winter sun produces neither. Yet the summer sunlight is of more use to us than winter's chill rays, despite the bugs and weeds. A wise gardener uproots the one and kills the mischievous insects.

There is no more godliness in negative goodness than there is heat in winter sunlight, which does not produce bugs or weeds simply because it has not power enough to warm anything into being, and not from an inherent objection to weeds or bugs.

Absolute virtue is that which seethes with active impulses and is forced by will and reason into unselfish channels.

The worst man I ever knew had no vice. He attended church and broke no commandment and indulged in no excesses. Yet he nagged his wife and children to the grave, and destroyed every flower of pleasure which sprang up by his hearth-stone, and ruined the tender young lives about him with the unceasing tempers of a household tyrant and petty demon.

Disagreeable tempers and uncontrolled nervous dispositions ruin more homes than drink or vice. A fault-finding or sarcastic tongue in a family circle drives more men and women to evil than original sin. A lady said to me once: "I demand good manners before good morals from my acquaintances. Bad morals can be hidden, bad manners cannot."

I think I would demand good motives first of all, since good morals would of necessity ensue; and he whose motives were truly good must, too, desire not to give offense by bad manners, and so all three virtures would be his.

Were I to select the one good quality which is most indispensable to me in an intimate friend, I would without hesitation say insincerity. No matter if she be bright, gifted, refined, amiable and witty, full of appreciation and affection, yet an insurmountable wall stands between my heart and hers if she be not sincere in small matters and in great.

"Come and see me soon," I said to a friend one day who stepped off a car as I stepped on.

"Yes, to-morrow or next day," she replied.

In consequence I stayed indoors during both days, missed a drive and a luncheon, which I declined because I felt that my share in the arrangement necessitated my remaining at home during the specified forty-eight hours.

She did not come, nor did she send an apology. She had spoken from the lips only, and she had supposed my invitation was a purely polite one, which would be satisfied with a speedy promise and tardy fulfilment. But a fine code of honor in these small matters permits no carelessness of invitation or reply.

If I say to a friend passing, "Come around and see me to-morrow," it is my duty to remain at home during that day, or to send word if obliged to go out. We have no right to say these things on impulse, and then waive the responsibility they incur.

It savors of moral worthlessness and irresponsibility.

I once knew a gentleman who was prone to make cordial speeches to people in whom he really felt no interest. In a public conveyance one Saturday morning he encountered an acquaintance from a neighboring city, who was journeying to another state in company with his wife. Now, my friend had but slight acquaintance with the couple, and really felt no especial regard for them; but with an effusive air he smiled and said: "I wish you were not obliged to hasten on your way, we should be delighted to have you stay over Sunday with us." To his utter amazement the couple conferred together and accepted his invitation with thanks.

When he arrived home with his encumbrances he found hat his wife had given the servant a holiday, and that the presence of these almost strangers would utterly spoil the pleasure of the Sunday dinner to which she had invited a few intimate friends on the day before.

"What on earth made you ask those people to come home with you?" cried the wife in despairing tones.

"Because I never dreamed they would accept," explained the husband.

Alas, too many invitations are given because the people are not expected to accept!

I wish the expanding minds of children could be inoculated with the vast importance of sincerity in speech and action. I wish they could be indelibly impressed with the idea that to make ever so small a promise, or to give ever so casual an invitation for the sake of creating an impression upon the recipient, is as reprehensible as passing spurious coin.

Morals are matters requiring several generations to rectify, and human beings grow more moral in tendency with every century. The passions of men and women are not emotions, which only the Creator and time can control and improve. The most strictly educated and carefully trained men and women sometimes become the most immoral in after life, and in our search for good, whether in our own hearts or our neighbors', we are constantly surprised bp stumbling upoh hidden propensities for evil. We are all working out toward something higher. But as we go, we might help the growing generation by teaching it to be sincere above all things, and strictly accurate in keeping its word.

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.

A Royal Wedding Robe.

Persons who have seen many royal wedding robes pronounce that of Princess Louise the handsomest ever made in London. It was of rich white satin and point de gaze, a most lovely lace, of which from eighteen to twenty yards have been used. The rounded satin train was three yards long, perfectly plain and edged with five folds of satin all the way around, and it was lined with satin and had an effective, though invisible, froufrou of lace underneath. The point de gaze laid on the sides of the train came over on the skirt, and, as it were, connected it with the train.

Rows of lace were most cleverly arranged on the front of the skirt, leaving only two spaces, the right one of which was occupied by two long folds of satin going from waist to hem, in each of which nestled a trail of orange blossoms, and not a very long one. The space on the opposite side may be described as a long triangle entirely filled with orange blossoms. The high-necked bodice was V-shaped in front and completely covered with lace, a V of which was also laid on behind, leaving the satin to be seen only at the sides of the bodice, to which the lace also formed a basque. The sleeves, which came just over the elbows, were entirely made of rows of lace, deftly sewn together with invisible stitches, and the only ornament of the bodice was a spray of orange blossoms on the left shoulder, with a trail running down the opening on the bodice and terminating in a small bouquet at the apex of the V.

Round her neck Princess Louise wore a single string of pearls, as did her bridesmaids also, and on her head a small wreath of orange blossoms high in the center, with a little trail over the left ear. Her point de gaze veil had a border similar to that on her dress, and was also dotted over with single buds and blossoms.

AMERICANS IN PALESTINE.

A Colony of People Who Believe that Regeneration is at Hand.

Among the people who confidently believe that the Jews will soon again own Palestine, is a colony of fifteen persons who live in a fine house built on the very walls of Jerasalem, and who are known as 'the Americans.'' These people are not Jews at all. They are Christians who have come from different parts of the United States to await the fulfillment of the prophecy that God will regenerate the world, beginning at Jerusalem.

They believe that this day is close at hand, and they say it has begun in the Jews coming back to Palestine. They see its fulfillment in the improvements that are going on in Jerusalem, and cite the new roads that have been built over the country as one of the evidences of it. They are evidently people of means, as well of refinement and culture.

"When I visited them the other day," says a correspondent, "I talked with several and found them intelligent and well educated. I asked one as to their belief, and was answered that they took the Bible as their guide, and that they had come to Jerusalem to endeavor to follow its precepts while living upon its walls. They have no particular creed, and one of them said that there is too much preaching and too little good living. They do no missionary work, and say that they have not yet felt called upon to preach."

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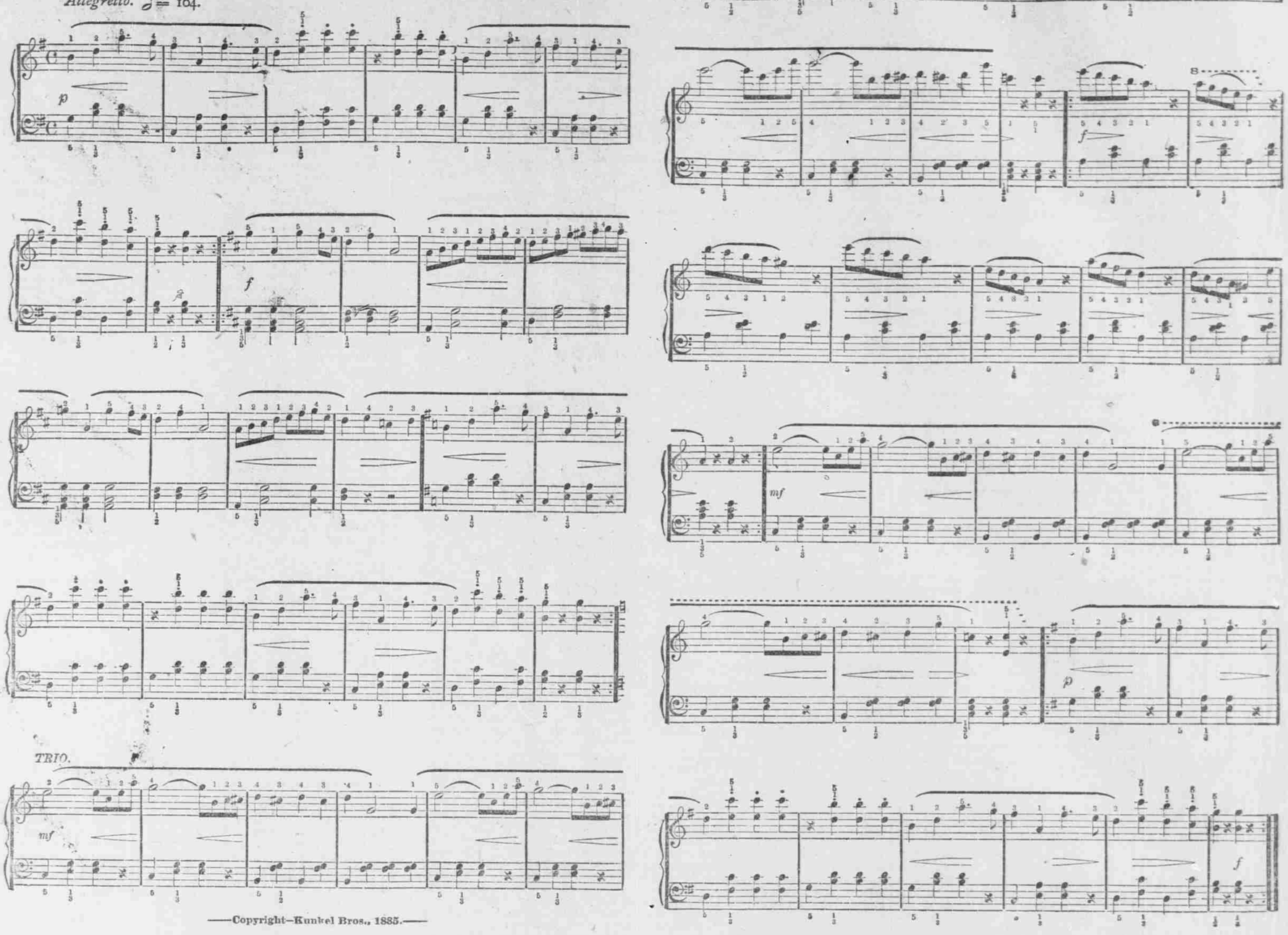

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