

THE "GOOD-FELLOW GIRL."

The doctrines of female suffrage and the equality of the sexes are undermining the foundations of our social structure. Their advocates call it reform. It seems more like revolution. They are substituting the hotel and the club for the home. comradeship for marriage, and Bohemianism for domestic life. With wealth, leisure, and luxury they are establishing a social code that demands fidelity only to those who are faithless and that forgives everything in a woman except old-fashioned goodness.

The recent records of the divorce courts in New York and all our great cities justify the apprehension that quite as many of the fair sex are unjustly suspected of innocence as are falsely accused of wrong-doing. It is commonly said that the world is growing better. Probably it is—in spots. There are many good people who pay tithes of anise atonement and contrition Sunday and forget the weightier matters of the law every other day in the week.

Universities, colleges, libraries, and museums are endowed by contributions to the conscience fund from the death-bed repentance of contrite pirates and extortioners who, having burned the candle to Mammon all their lives, blow the snuff in the face of the Lord. This is morally the most corrupt and greedy age since Nero played first violin at the burning of Rome.

Those who have seen the frescoes and sculptures of Pompeii can comprehend why that composite heap was buried under the cinders and ashes of Vesuvius; why the site of Sodom and Gomorrah is forgotten; why ancient Corinth was despoiled and its inhabitants extirpated. There was no other medicine for such depravity and degradation. Most travellers who know the gin-mills of London by sight and have walked the Strand after nightfall, or have visited the Moulin Rouge, or witnessed the viciousness of Berlin and Vienna and Venice, know that every capital in Europe can give odds to Pompeii and Corinth.

A fatal contagion infects our society and portends individual degeneration and national decay. No nation can long survive a loss of moral integrity or the sanctity of the home. No one can observe without alarm the invasion of our country by this foreign pestilence and the amazing changes that are going on in the social condition. A deluge of French and English sewage is polluting literature, art, and the stage. Plays glorifying infidelity, making marriage a jest, and sneering at virtue as rustic prudery are supplemented by numberless sex and problem novels that treat Nature's holiest mysteries with the brutal candor of the clinic and the dissecting-table. Eager, thronging multitudes listen to such plays as "The Degenerates," "Sapho," and "The Turtle."

It is unfortunate, from a moral standpoint, that the best of mankind are not invulnerable. There is no armor proof against temptation. It is still more discouraging that good people are generally uninteresting and that we remember with most pleasure the persons and events we ought to forget. It is a prodigious task to lift a man, a community from barbarism into enlightenment and civilization, and a still greater task to

keep him or it there. The tendency is to relapse. The gravitation is to the gutter. It requires the constant active coöperation of the conservative forces of religion, education, laws, habits, and customs to maintain even external order and decency.

Break down the barriers of modesty and shame in woman, teach the young that the distinction between right and wrong is an inversion of theology, that conscience is an impertinent interference with the natural enjoyment of life, that vice wears velvet and virtue goes in rags, and the evil is irreparable. This is the fatal process that is now going on through the decadence of art, literature, and the stage.

It is developing a type of womanhood of which Helen of Troy, and Cleopatra, and Messalina are historic representatives—the woman of the world, the up-to-date woman, the end-of-the-century woman, the jolly "good-fellow girl," who goes to the races with one man, and bets, drinks cocktails, smokes cigarettes, and goes to midnight suppers with another, and is introduced to pugilists by a third, and listens to innuendoes, *double entendres*, and unprintable stories.

Such is the extreme nineteenth-century protest against Puritanism. The home is the unit of the State, and the social law hitherto has been that woman's proper place is home—not as a slave or a drudge, but as a companion, colleague, and spiritual guardian; walking a path not of roses, but of love, faith, and duty, and supreme in that kingdom. The properly reared and educated young woman anticipates marriage and maternity as her natural destiny. The race-track, midnight revelries, high kicking, skirt-dancing, and "coon" songs are not favorable preliminaries.

JOHN JAMES INGALLS.

Even the most sated and cynical of men in their better
intervals turn reverently to the higher ideal of the

"Perfect woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command;
But yet a spirit still and bright,
With something of an angel light."