

THE LITTLE CRITIC

I Like to Talk with Women

I LIKE to talk with women. They are delightful. They always remind me of the immortal lines of Byron:

"What a strange thing is man! And what a stranger
Is woman!"

Now it must not be inferred that I am a misogynist, like Nietzsche and Schopenhauer; nor do I entertain that high notion of the ladies which is embodied in Shakespeare's gentlemanly saying.

"Frailty, thy name is woman."

I like women as they are, without any romanticizing and without any bitter disillusionment. With all their contradictions, light-mindedness, and superficialities, I have an immense faith in their commonsense and their instinct for life—their so-called sixth sense. Beneath their superficiality, they live a deeper life and are closer to this business of living than men, and I respect them for it. They live life, while men talk about it. They understand men, while men never understand women. While men spend their lives smoking or hunting or inventing or composing music, they bear children and provide for them, and that is a great thing. I do not believe there is single father in the world who can provide for his children, if left alone. If there were no mothers in this world, all children would catch measles and die of it in their first three years or turn pickpockets in their tenth year. Children would go late to school and I doubt very much grown-ups would ever arrive in their office punctually. Handkerchiefs would remain unwashed, umbrellas would be lost and bus lines would run irregularly. There would be no birthday parties, much less funeral processions, and certainly no barber-shops. Yes, this great business of living and going on living until the tender flame of life flickers out is carried on by women and not by men. Through them and through them alone, do we preserve our racial continuity, our national homogeneity and our social solidarity. In a world without women, there would be no customs, no conventions, no churches, and no such thing as respectability. Man is inherently respectable, but all women are by nature. Instead of respectable and fairly standardized apartment flats and villas, men would live in triangular houses with the most inventive designs, in which one would eat in the bedroom and sleep in the parlour, and the best attaches would not be able to conceive of the importance of distinguishing between a white and

who desired to come home. Such an arrangement terminated by June 15, but recently Mr. Yu obtained, as reported in the *Man Sen Yat Po* on September 27, an extension of the arrangement to the end of this year.

When the Cuban Government decided to require the registration of foreigners, our Consul-General in Havana helped our brothers there by preparing and printing forms in Chinese to facilitate their registration.

All in all then, our leaders in Cuba, both official and unofficial, are leaders in the true sense, and as such deserve our profoundest respect.

L. Y.

a black tie.

Having made clear the superiority of women's instinct to men's logic, I may now explain why women are so delightful to men in their conversation. In fact, their conversation is part of their business of living. Instead of a colourless discussion of abstract terms, we have what is called gossip, in which persons are very real and everything either creeps or crawls or marries. A woman never introduces a professor of ichthyology in society as a professor of ichthyology, but as the brother-in-law of Colonel Harrison who died in India while she was lying in hospital in New York after an operation for appendicitis. From this standpoint, she could launch forth into what the Japanese statesmen call "realities," with immense possibilities for development.—Either Colonel Harrison used to take strolls with her in Kensington Gardens or the appendicitis reminded her of her "dear, old Doctor Bucks, with his nice, long beard." No matter how high-flown the discussion may be, a woman always sticks to facts. She knows what are living facts, and what are useless, idle suppositions. That is why any real woman would like the girl in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, when she visits Place Vendome in Paris, prefer to turn her back on the monument and look up to the famous historical names like Coty and Cartier. Now what is the Vendome, and what is Coty? With her sureness of instinct, she knows that Coty means something in life, while the Vendome does not. In the same way, appendicitis is real, while ichthyology is not. Life is made up of births, deaths, appendicitis, measles, Coty's per-tumes and birthday parties, and not of ichthyology or ontology. Of course, there are Madame Curies and Emma Goldmans and Beatrice Webbs. But I am speaking of Woman, with a capital letter. I will give a few instances.

I was talking with a lady on a transatlantic liner.

"Do you suppose the United States would have entered the war, had not J. P. Morgan and other New York bankers lent so much money to France and England?"

"Why?" asked my fair companion.

"Because if the Allies had lost, the bankers would have forfeited their loans. The people were hounded into the War without knowing why they entered into it."

"We entered the War, because of the German atrocities against children and women."

"Would you know of these atrocities had there not been systematic propaganda?" "But we *knew* these atrocities, and that is the point, whether there was propaganda or not." "Would there be systematic propaganda if there had not been foreign loan investments?"

"But they did commit the atrocities, and that is why we went into the War, loans or no loans."

"You admit, don't you, that you would not know of these atrocities, at least not so much of them, had the capitalistic press not dinned it into your ears days in and days out?"

"What difference does it make? We did know of these atrocities and I'm glad we knew of them in time to stop them. And we did stop them. Who won the war? America did."

I gave up.

"—is a great poet," I said once to a lady in a railway compartment. "He has a great ear for music and his language seems to come so naturally."

CASSANDRA'S COLUMN

In Defense of Hu Shih

IT is often a great advantage to be ignorant of the customs and ethics of the country in which you live. Not knowing exactly what is permissible and what is not, I shall try to vent my spleen. Perhaps I shall get by with it. Perhaps not.

My first friend in China was Dr. Hu Shih. When I was making a trip around the world, I carried with me an introduction to him from Witter Bynner, then president of the Poetry Society of America, and well known to certain groups in China for his interest in Chinese poetry, and his several books of translations in collaboration with various Chinese scholars. As a westerner, Hu Shih was the only living Chinese of importance of whom I had considerable knowledge; it was not knowledge that I had sought out, but which I acquired almost unconsciously, for his name and his writings and his lectures were almost as well known in the west as those of Keyserling, Russell, Santyana, Spengler. I admired his writings before I ever met him, for their clarity, logic, courage and counsel. When I met him, (and ever since let me say) I succumbed completely to his amiable dignity, his special and very gracious charm, his superbly inobtrusive way of establishing a point, his gentle and delightful manner in everything. We became, and always shall remain I hope, close friends. Through him I met Hsu Tsu Mo and many others of the most interesting people I know in China today.

"Do you mean W——? His wife smokes opium."

"Well, he did himself, occasionally. But I was talking about his language."

"She led him into it. I think she spoiled his life for him."

"Would you like your cook's pastry the less because he eloped with another man's wife?"

"Oh, that's different."

"It is exactly the same, isn't it?"

"I feel it is different."

When a woman appeals to her feeling, the wise man knows it is final, and should hand her the laurels.

"You cannot have a successful Disarmament Conference, so long as the big powers are not willing to disarm," said I.

"That's it. What is the use of the Disarmament Conference, if the big powers are not unwilling to disarm?" replied a lady.

"I'm afraid I mean if the big powers are not willing to disarm, the Disarmament Conference cannot be successful."

"Then what is the use of the Disarmament Conference?" said she. "The Disarmament Conference can only be successful if the big powers are unwilling to disarm."

"No, if they are not unwilling to disarm," I corrected.

"No, unless the big powers are unwilling to disarm, the Disarmament Conference cannot be successful. Otherwise not. If they are not unwilling, the Disarmament cannot be successful."

She was irresistible.

Lin Yutang

A few years ago it seemed to me that Hu Shih was regarded almost as a deity by his colleagues and students. But the last year there has been a strange amount of criticism directed at him, the reason for which I am unable to apprehend, although I have read many attacks against him in English, and have listened to innumerable discussions as to his actions. I shall record some of these.

One says Hu Shih has departed from the traditions of the true scholar and intellectual. He has dared to remove his nose from his books and look about the chaotic world in which he is living, make suggestions and give advice and he even dares to say this statesman seems to him better than that one, or such an official is corrupt and a disgrace to his country whereas another one is admirable. A true scholar would never take notice of politics, say his critics, although they themselves are usually immersed in such discussions. A true scholar lives in books alone, and damn the good of the country or the people.

Then they say, granted that he is taking an interest in social conditions and politics, he jumps constantly from one side to another. You never know where he is going to land. One day he favors this man, the next day he abuses him. Well, why not? Why go on damning a once corrupt man now on the way to reforming, or why continue to encourage a seemingly worthy man if he has proven himself to be ineffectual? The scholar occupies a strategic position in that he is not expected to take and maintain a side; he is the social spectator, and praises or condemns conditions in their flux.

His writings are not clear, we are also told. His theories are impractical, and his suggestions not explicit. His conclusions, we also hear, are vague and irrelevant. I can only say that he is considered the foremost interpreter of China's position by the great minds of the west, and I have yet to read anything written by another Chinese intellectual (or politician) which so sympathetically and honestly and tenderly illuminates China's problems, her faults and her grandeur. It is true that he speaks and writes without consciousness of 'face' in the eastern sense, and it may be that it is there that he irritates his colleagues who may not have the courage to speak so candidly and directly, in defiance of China's traditions.

Moreover, they say, he is not so brilliant after all. To the westerners perhaps. But not to the Chinese. Why, there are thousands of scholars much more brilliant than Hu Shih, much more respected by the Chinese themselves, only they do not speak and write in English.

What of it? Suppose we grant that it is true, does it make Hu Shih any the less important or valuable? If there are thousands, or hundreds or even ten other brilliant scholars in China who do not speak English, how very fortunate indeed China is to have at least one man who is considered by the rest of the world as one of the great thinkers of his time, who is one of the few living Chinese who writes pure and convincing English, who is able to project his mind into the mind and psychology of the westerner, and therefore comprehends so ably the relation of China to the west and the usefulness of certain aspects of the west to China. Why not rejoice that China has at least one man who is regarded almost with reverence, certainly with the utmost respect, by the rest of the world for his fearless and ethical exposition of conditions in all the world, and especially those affecting China.