THE WORLD OF WOMAN

Bab Reflects On the Serious Phases of Life.

Just now the world is full and reeking over with tragedy. Here a great empress is killed in another place an unknown boy falls by the cutlass that he was so proud to possess; that way off in some lonely corner a bitter, cynical man hide goodby to the world, for he has found nothing sweet in it, while among a party of gay companions a handsome woman surprises them all by the exit of a priest because there have been too much life, too much love and too much of saving happiness in her career.

Did you ever sit down and think out the terrible life of the Hapsburgs? What a doomed family they were! From the days of Marie Antoinette, who walked so proudly to the guillotine, there seems to have been nothing but unhappiness and sorrow. The fair haired Marie Antoinette saw her son and heir beaten, starved and ill treated by a rough jailer till the tears no longer flowed from her face. She could no longer weep, and when tears are taken from a woman surely her last refuge is gone.

The dark haired Elizabeth, the sister of the house of the Habsburgs, saw a very young son kill himself simply because the morbid line of heredity was stronger than he could bear. And yet he was only 18 years old! Justly he feared the future. Then a girl of 15 was murdered, a pretty, dainty maid, but to whom even life was envied. Afterward there was that most awful death, the death of the son and heir, the death of the gay and joyous Rudolph, who, seeming, like his brother, to look into the future, murdered the woman he loved and then killed himself. This was at the supper table, the gay, festive board where such was drinking the health of the other and from which some one had to carry the news to that lonely mother. She had grown lonely by this time. Gradually her children had been taken from her by the dagger or the steel, and she wandered over the face of the earth, finding no place to rest. Always the word "murder" seemed to hang, like the sword of Damocles, over her head.

Last year the greedy Reaper found her beautiful sister, the Duchesse d'Alencon, one who was eager to help the poor, and beautiful in her desire to offer bread to those who lacked it. She was caught by the whirling, pitiless wind of fire that in taking away her sweet breath was even brutal enough in death to render her body unbeautiful.

So they all went, and Marie Antoinette, as the empress preferred to be called, since she could hide herself under that name, sought refuge in England and Ireland. She was followed here, there and everywhere by the friends who loved her best and who spoke words of consolation, as well as by those dumb friends that, when she was told that she must no longer ride, since some bitter diarrhoea might take her life from her, would come to her and eat lumps of sugar from the dainty hand that never hurt, but always did good. One who saw it said that there was never a more beautiful picture than that of the empress of Austria, surrounded by her favorite pets, each gently pushing the other in its eagerness to get nearest to her or to gain from her the bits of sugar that were held out and she, like a child, expecting the loving looks or thanks in return.

And now she has gone away. The great cathedral bells toll the masses for the dead, and those to whom she has been a friend raise their hats and bend her by that great silence only given to the dead. Here she lies, magnificent in death, and yet in death she and you and I are all equal. To her, to you and to me there can only be said, "An revoir" because of that certainty that we will meet again.

Think of the going home! Think of the empress, and then think of the soldier boy! There is no great difference.

Do you remember going home after a pleasant party? The day never you reach the time to say a laughing "Goodby."

Do you remember the time when a pleasant group, after studying the magnificent stars and the great Master to achieve the wonders of the world, uttered the somewhat awful "Goodby?"

And yet there come into everyday life situations that are quite as wonderful, and they all lead to the great home. Just today there is a young and pretty girl in one of the rough, everyday cars that fly over the great mountains carrying home hundreds of soldier boys, some dead, some wounded and some as dear because they are going home. There is an accident. The whole train is delayed for four hours. A young boy goes through the car begging, not for money, but for whiskey, but for opium, for the health giving bark that will bring strength, as he explains, "to that other fellow that I am taking home to his mother." When there is an opportunity, my pretty girl, do not minister to the dusty, wounded soldier boy and thus kiss gasping, sighing, surcease and almost dead. The opiates is quickly given, and then, with the distinctness of a great wreck, the handkerchief is dipped in a cup of water, and the soldier's face is freshened up, while his hair is made to look a little more like that of a human being. There they stand, the pretty maiden and the boy, for he is only that, who a few months ago started out to fight for his country. Like you and the rest, he had an opinion, and he remembered it.

"You see, miss, until I really and truly got to know all about it I didn't dream as how this here war was what a war really and rightly is. But, my God, the first man I killed—why, I fell as if God and his angels and the devil and all his host was saying: 'This, what right have you to take an eternal soul when you can't give one?' Who gave you the right to sit when you can't create?' And now, miss, there ain't no more war for me. It ain't that I'm a coward—I'd like to see the man that says so—but I believe in what they call by that there long word—you see, it isn't persuasion—you've got it, it's 'arbitration.' And, as I understand it, it's the coming together of the best and the wisest men from the different countries and letting them decide how things ought to be managed and how it is best for this part of the country to be ruled in such a way and that part of the country to be governed by another. You see, it is only natural for a dago to jerk out his knife, while a coon, calm thereby would behave in an entirely different way. They've got to consider climates and the dispositions of people. That is what I call arbitration, and I'm glad, miss, as how you agree with me, and I'll never be in any war again, no matter who it is for or what it is for. So, miss! You going home to the little farm that my father left me, and, begging your pardon, miss, there's a girl that I've took a mighty liking to, and I think about the end of the year they'll be making quilts around the neighborhood, and she and I will dance the Virginia reel to the tune of 'Love Makes the World Go Home.' Gentle, miss! You've been mighty good to me, and I am very much obliged to you, and I only hope that there will never be a time in your life when you'll need quinine."

Aren't you glad this cruel war is over? I do believe all of us are glad, men, women and children. We cheered the soldiers as they marched out so gayly, but those are not quite so many cheers as each regiment returns. Rows of those who have come back tell their little children of the wonders of war and the marvels of the strange country where they have been, but there are those who don't come back to tell of the glory of the war and its story—those who are martyred. Thank God that women do make martyrs of men when they are dead! It's a soft spot in the heart of each woman that makes both the man who before his death was that woman's husband and the child that was born to them seem more than mortal. Then, when the man is dead, he is a hero, and the child is a hero's son. Then, when the man is dead, he is a hero, and the child is a hero's son. Then, when the man is dead, he is a hero, and the child is a hero's son