

held in utter subjection, were a spiritless lot, and the women were not equal to the big and bold work of railway administration, while the dispeopled country had no longer the same transport needs as in the old days.

The population was kept down by the subjection of the men, and by the way in which the older women, past child-bearing age (who ruled the land), selected the best men for themselves.

Christianity had been superseded by the religion of the Perfect Woman, for which Mariolatry had prepared the way; and the priests, of course, were women. The cowed working men now worked at their handicrafts at home, for their wives, taught by experience, would not trust them in the associated labour of the factories and workshops. As there was little export trade, the scale of production could afford to be all the smaller.

Discipline.

The men were subject to be haled off to prison at the bare word of their wives, and compliance could be readily secured on the threat of laying an information with the police, as the elderly and unloved wives often did. The prisons were full of men confined for life on charges of wife-beating, which was an act of sacrilege against the religion of the State. The prisoners were guarded and kept at their tasks by men who had themselves broken the law, and who regained their freedom by joining the hated and despised army of warders.

The Arts.

The arts had sunk into flabby degeneration. Pictures, painted by women, sought to glorify woman; but there was no originality of conception. The artists copied stock types, and the range of subjects was very limited. When man was depicted he was shown as a sleek, docile-looking creature, with a namby-pamby face and fat calves.

The drama followed suit. Wit was thought rude, humour low, and laughter undignified. Decorous commonplace was consecrated, and always the themes were the perfection of woman and the duty of obedience and worshipful service on the part of man.

But the system carried within it the seeds of its own destruction. The farm workers had never been thoroughly broken in. They did the work of the field, and although law, religion, public opinion, and social custom required that they should hand over the reward of their labour to the women who sat at home, they did so under protest.

The Revolt.

The best men being secured by the older women, the younger women were robbed of their lovers. The revolt against all this was led by the young Earl of Chester, whose hand had been sought in marriage by the sexagenarian Duchess of Dunstanburgh, the most powerful woman in England, who had already got through three husbands. The masterful Earl, in love with the Countess of Carlyon, resolved to have nothing to do with her Grace. A confederacy is formed, mostly of young men, but including an elderly professor, a woman of course, and her husband, who both knew the