

Two Prose Fancies

By Richard Le Gallienne

I—Sleeping Beauty

“EVERY woman is a sleeping beauty,” I said, sententiously. “Only some need more waking than others?” replied my cynical friend.

“Yes, some will only awaken at the kiss of great love or great genius, which are not far from the same thing,” I replied.

“I see,” said the gay editor with whom I was talking.

Our conversation was of certain authors of our acquaintance, and how they managed their inspiration, of what manner were their muses, and what the methods of their stimulus. Some, we had noted, thrive on constancy, to others inconstancy was the lawless law of their being; and so accepted had become these indispensable conditions of their literary activity that the wives had long since ceased to be jealous of the other wives. To a household dependent on poetry, constancy in many cases would mean poverty, and certain good literary wives had been known to rate their husbands with a lazy and unproductive faithfulness. The editor sketched a tragic *ménage* known to him, where the husband, a lyric poet of fame, had become so chronically devoted to his despairing wife that destitution stared them in the face. It was
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