

Vanity Fair: Month? 1921

An Excerpt from

“Canonizing the Flapper”

Whatever the novelists knew yesterday the playwrights discover to-day. The novelists tell them. In this case Clemence Dane has brought the tidings of a new world. She has turned playwright for the purpose and it seems to us that *A Bill of Divorcement* is the only play in town which has claim to greatness. Not only does it reflect life, but it performs the still more rare and valuable function of interpreting it. We know of no better expression of the creed of the new generation than that which Clemence Dane has drawn up and assigned, ironically enough, to the oldest character in her play.

The Flapper's Manifesto

THAT young, young generation”, he says, speaking of the new world which began with the war, “found out, out of their own unhappiness, the war taught them, what peace couldn't teach us—that when conditions are evil it is not your duty to submit—that when conditions are evil, your duty, in spite of protests, in spite of sentiment, your duty, though you trample on the bodies of your nearest and dearest to do it, though you bleed your own heart white, your duty is to see that those conditions are changed. If your laws forbid you, you must change your laws. If your church forbids you, you must change your church. And if your God forbids you, why then, you must change your God”.

It may be objected and it will be objected that this is a theory of life which tends to hardness. The answer to that is that truth is compelled to steel itself in a world of error. It is better for righteousness to seem hard than to perish. The harshness is only the semblance.