TO LACE OR NOT TO LACE.

In response to lb. F., who reminds me that I have ventured to make one point, I would like to say that I will gladly concede every point in which I am mistaken. In this controversy it is not a matter of much importance who is right and who is wrong. It is a matter of the greatest importance that we should know what is right and what is wrong. Principles, not persons, should triumph, and just so far as my own are concerned I hope my arguments may be overthrown.

The point conceded is that more corsets are advertised than ever before. Very likely. Then there is all the more need that the feminine public should be warned against them. The great, the irresistible temptation which assails their devotees—the temptation to make the woman fit the corset, not the corset the woman. The best that right-thinking women can say of this habit, from the standpoint of the great, is that it is harmless. Men who drink have made the same excuse; they have gone further and admitted that drinking was beneficial; they point to some man of exceptionally strong constitution, who, without the drinking, would have died. Men who ever regretted that he was a total abstainer said, "There, you see, his health doesn't suffer in the least. And yet it is safe to do that; he lives as a man or lives as a bachelor. Little Dominion in which there is not at least one man for every town or county who has not a stove-pipe waist is likely to be turned into a "harmless" and "beneficial" drink. But who ever heard of a man regretting that he was a total abstainer?

Is a woman's thirst for admiration as strong as a man's? Is it our estimate of her character? Is it a natural, irresistible temptation which assails their devotees—the temptation to make the woman fit the corset, not the corset the woman? Is it really as strong as a man's? Is it? There is nothing which can be so admirably done as the good of their contribution to the decoration of the feminine sex, for if there was no man who admired stove-pipe waists, every prisoner among us would break her back, if not her neck, to be born beneath so much of a slave, but a free woman, with as good a right to the breast of life as the average man.

If some men did not admire stove-pipe waists, are they better suited to the character of the men among them? Are they men of brains rather than of fashion, or men of fashion rather than of brains? Do they cherish an exalted ideal of womanhood, or do they speak of the women as tidy, trim, and trim, in terms of admiration that they use in reference to their feminine traits? Are they fond of any but in any reform having the good of the people to their taste? Is all the perfection of their fellow men as its object, or do they care for nothing but the gratification of their own senses? Do they believe that women are capable of anything? Do they believe in the unity of the perfection of their fellow men? Do they or do they not regard a woman as a pretty plaything, whose little mind is to be despised, whose little attainments are to be ridiculed, whose little waist is to be admired?

The admiration of men is very sweet, but we don't need to kill ourselves in order to get it, because in truth it is not at all a difficult thing to get. If a woman with a plain face and an ordinary figure has not a single quality of mind, heart, or person, that will win the admiration of superior men, and if her whole personality does not compel the reverence of others, the sympathy of men, or the kindness of one, one must blame herself. We may set our own price on ourselves, having nothing to do with our own but pay.

Is an unmasturiously small waist really a beautiful object? No artist will answer yes. In every surviving or recently deceased feminine love, we find the graceful curving waist in place of the double handful of shrunken ribs which some people positively desire in the figures of fashion. But the least of those in the lowest class of story painters would object to this rule. Besides, something almost as regulative in the idea of an artificial waist as there is in an artificial complexion.

"TUE LADIES' DEBATES."