

distinctly in our mind's eye. Hers was the very figure of which she and her *modiste* could produce anything; and, accordingly, as will appear in the sequel, on a mutual understanding both parties made their own of it.

The sedate may lament over the weakness of this specimen of humanity, whose judgment seventy summer suns has failed to bring to matured sobriety. But let it be remembered, in judging Miss Wilmont, that a young and handsome woman is comparatively independent of her milliner, and instead of making the reputation of a *modiste*, is generally content to resort to the *magasin* of one whose fame is already established.

"How extraordinarily well Miss Wilmont looks and dresses!" observes La Comtesse de Bleau at a soiree to her English friend lady Soft; "she is an extraordinary woman for her age—is she not?"

"Wonderful!" exclaims the other, while she whisperingly adds, "Pray, my dear Madame la Comtesse, can you tell me who BUILDS our friend?" And this same question is asked over and over again everywhere, and by every one, for there are few ladies, be they French or English, so deficient in acumen as not to arrive at the conclusion, when contemplating Miss Wilmont's "outer woman," that the *modiste* who can make so much of a lady at seventy would make "quite a love" of one who happens to be of an age less dependent on her science. The consequence was, that many took Miss Wilmont as the pattern card of *Madame Tourneaux, modiste de dames, Rue Vivienne, numero quarante quatre*.

But to what amounts all this, it may be demanded, in defence of an old woman like Miss Wilmont, making herself ridiculous by assuming a mask of youth, while one of her feet may be said to be slipping out of the world? And we find that, to make this point of the character of our ancient friend sufficiently luminous, we must be extremely confidential with our reader. It did so happen, then, that even with the help of the card-table, which observing people thought (while few dared to say) stood friend on pressing emergencies in a manner somewhat unaccountable, she could hardly bring together a sufficient income to pay expenses incidental to her not extravagant mode of

living; and she dressed so remarkably well, chiefly for the reason that it was the only way she could afford to dress. In a word, she made the milliner's business; and that personage was more alive to her interest than to demand payment of an account of many years' standing, from one under the sunshine of whose patronage she was fast making rich. Besides, Miss Wilmont felt society to be necessary to her existence, and that her existence in society depended upon appearances; for it is notorious that to have influence in the *salons* of Paris, remarkability for something is absolutely indispensable. So much for Miss Wilmont's *personelle*.

She was a well-instructed woman scholastically, had read much, and had not only been long in the world, but had observed closely, with a penetrating eye. Her remarks had much of that point which is aimed at in the coteries. Occasionally she evinced a vein of satire extremely biting in its character; and we may admit being frequently amused by the piquancy of her allusions to people as they passed us in a crowded room, and to the frailties of some of her own sex who might happen to be of the party; still, we never thought her ill-hearted; but it always appeared to us that Miss Wilmont was dissatisfied with her position, which she yet strove, day by day, to retain. Her constitution, when we think of her age and the racking life she had led, must have been of extraordinary strength, for night after night Miss Wilmont's aristocratic form was everywhere familiar to us. Even the appearance of her valet became so, for he was ever to be seen reclining—and generally in Morpheus's arms—on one of the benches in the hall, or, more correctly, the outer apartment of "the suite" of the fashionable of whose party his mistress happened to be one. During the season, we are inclined to think she must have averaged three parties nightly; for, be it remarked, that one who has discretion, and wishes to retain his footing in the *salons* of his circle, will be wary of giving even his favorites too continued a portion of his presence. In our experience, we never felt that we had overmuch of the society of an agreeable woman; but we concurred with our then