

to see what *that* meant, he received a bang on the head, making him see more stars in a second than he had ever seen in the sky in his lifetime, and before he recovered his sight there was a crash and a roar as if the very earth had suddenly collapsed. The roar came from poor Buttons, who with step-ladder on shoulder was making his way to polish the interior, having finished the exterior, and being quite unprepared for the combat at the end of the ladder, received the sudden thrust with such force as to back him down the steps, sending his ladder sticking through the stained window. The Count fled for his life, mentally wondering what it all meant, but never daring to make a second inquiry of what "Got a hum" was, it raised such a peal from those who heard his first; for none could see what "worms" had to do in the case, that being the nearest approach they could make of what Miss Jones did say, only the pins interfered—"Not at home."

Free from the Count, Mrs. S. came from her refuge and pounced upon her amazed son. Such a string of "You did it purposely," "you outrageous boy," "you ought to be ashamed of yourself," until the scandalised lady exhausted her stock of anathemas and her breath, only to find both again, as her husband made another astonished auditor of the scene.

Boys get riled as well as older people, and in angry amazement he appealed to his father to know what he had done.

"Done!" shrieked his mother.

"Done!" sighed Miss Jones. The uplifted eyes of the housemaid suggested that had she been able she too would have asked the same question. Buttons answered it with a knowing leer at the broken window, with his finger against his nose in the position vulgar boys make use of to express internal amazement.

"What is the matter?" queried Mr. S. angrily. "Have you broken that window?"

"I just brought a gentleman here, Papa; that's all I have done. He asked for Mamma."

"And I was not dressed," interrupted his mother excitedly. "I shall never face him again. Just fancy the Count seeing me so."

"Good gracious Mamma," shouted the boy, "he has seen you so dozens of times."

"Oh! you wicked, wicked, wicked boy," screamed his mother, and she appealed to her audience if he ought not to be sent out of the country for he was being ruined in it. But as nobody seemed to know how this punishment would work, they discreetly took refuge in sighs and groans, not committing themselves to words.

"I tell you," shouted the goaded lad, "the Count has had his arms round you when you were undressed, and you never made this fuss."

The scene that ensued baffles description. Mrs. S. fell back in a faint of some sort on the couch. Miss Jones hid her face in the dress goods, and another gulp told that the pins had been doing their best to give the coroner a fee.

The housemaid hurried to impart the astounding news to the servants below, whilst the master of the mansion felt a sudden creeping—up his spine, and had an invisible bath of icy temperature as certain remembrances of his wife's admiration for the fascinating foreigner came like accusing spirits before his view.

"Doesn't she go to parties every night undressed," cried the boy, in agony, "and doesn't she dance with the Count and lots of fellows, too," he added, triumphantly.

"Good gracious, this is shocking, he must be going mad," said the father, looking helplessly around. "Goes to parties undressed; bless my life, what does it all mean?"

"Why, sir," answered the dressmaker, excitedly, turning out a mass of pins in her hurry to explain, "if he doesn't mean his ma goes in full dress."

"You young idiot, how dare you try your jokes on us?" asked the exasperated father.

"It was mamma said it. I didn't know," cried the bewildered boy. "She said she wasn't dressed, and I only said the same. See, papa," he added, eagerly, "now look at mamma, what's the difference when she goes to parties and the way she is now, only she's dressed up finer then."

"Well, Maria, I think you had better answer that query," said the husband, significantly, "I do not pretend to understand fashions, but I tell you honestly, I never like to see you standing up before a lot of men as you do, in what you call full dress, and I have an old fashioned notion there must be a lack of nature's gift,—modesty, the crowning glory of woman, so that when any of your sex can stand before ours and have no sense of feeling, you are more likely to call forth all that is low in our nature than to win respect or admiration. Why you should shrink from being seen in your—your—"

"Bodice," modestly suggested Miss Jones.

"Well, whatever you call it, for *that* is not so outrageous as some of your dresses, you can best answer, for it puzzles me where such modesty begins or where it ends."

So, now, I ask the same question: Why should ladies be so dreadfully ashamed if caught in the bodice of a skirt in the morning, and yet know no

such feeling about a dress of the same nature in the evening? Is there no want of *right* thinking on the subject? I pause for a reply.

AFFECTATIONS.

The English characteristic is essentially robust; this is a sort of national pride. It has been written of Englishmen—"they are full of coarse strength, rude exercise, butcher's meat and sound sleep." But while this is true in the main, it must be conceded that there is another side to the character; and that every generation has given us examples of the Englishman's love of affectations and conceits. We have always had effeminate specimens of humanity, who gave themselves airs, adopted a fantastic style of dress and language, and despised the honest, blunt manliness of those by whom they were surrounded. We may trace the unbroken descent of these creatures from the fops of Queen Elizabeth's day down to the Crutch and Toothpick brigade of our own. Shakespeare has several specimens of the fop. There is that splendid description of Hotspur's of the "popinjay" who came upon the field of battle "neat and trimly dressed," and "perfumed like a milliner." In Osric, too, we have a portrait of a painted "water-fly" of this conceited order, who uses affected terms, and excites the scorn of Hamlet by his intolerable coxcombry.

The distinguishing mark of these fops was extravagance of style in dress even at a time when costume was carried so far that people in the pictures of the time look as if they were dressed for a masquerade. It was not enough that the gentry wore velvets and satins and made displays of jewellery, the "popinjays" and "water-flies" adopted bright colours, curious slashings and snippings of sleeves, clustered plumes in their caps, and roses in their ears! of course they carried themselves as if the earth were not good enough for them to walk upon, and ordinary mortals were too insignificant to be looked at, while their language was strained and pedantic to the last degree. In fact a new language may be said to have been invented for their use. One Lyly wrote a book, the chief character in which was *Euphues*, an elegant gentleman who talked in a fantastical style, his sentences being full of monstrous and overstrained conceits. This became the rage, and the young fellows about town adopted the style, the main point in which was to use some extravagant or unusual phrase for one common or familiar. It was the reverse process of calling a spade a spade. Shakespeare takes many opportunities of laughing at the "antic, lipping, affecting fantasticos," as Mercutio calls them, and possibly some of his dialogue loses its force to modern audiences from the fact that words then novel and odd have now become familiar. Mercutio, for instance, seems to suggest that "very" was a form of affectation, and he gives some examples of it, such as "By Jesu, a very good blade!" "A very tall man!" We have its counterpart in these days in "awfully" which our swells apply to everything good, bad, and indifferent.

Puritanism tried to crush out these butterflies, and there could have been little place for them in the stern times which preceded the execution of Charles I.; but with the Restoration they revived in wondrous force. The Court was, indeed, one vast crowd of fops and demireps who flaunted in a style of costume so extravagant that the sense of being at a masquerade must have been stronger than ever. To this age belongs the credit, or the reverse, of inventing that contemptible creature—the Beau. The first of these was Beau Fielding, a handsome fellow, who gave himself airs and graces, and was succeeded by Beau Nash, who called himself King of Bath, and who in his time was imitated by Beau Brummel, who was, let us hope, the last of the silly race. Other varieties of affected mortals sprang up at other times, the Bucks, the Coxcombs, the Dandies (there were Dandizettes too) the Bloods and the Macaronies, some of them the most fantastic beings in dress ever beheld. Unhappily some of their descendants still "strut and fret their hour upon the stage," and scions of the old stock, a little modified it is true by modern civilization, are still to be met with, even in our good city of Montreal.

But affectation has not confined itself to dress, language and learning; it has found a wide field in literature and the Fine Arts. There was in Charles's time a school of what was called metaphysical poets, in which Cowley and Dr. Donne figured, their chief aim being to produce verses which nobody could understand, and which therefore everybody pronounced delightful. There was another school of writers who thrust their verses—not into the fire—that would have been sensible—but into the shape of urns, birds, and fiddles, and what not. It was quite in keeping with the taste of people who raved about these things that they should vote Shakespeare a coarse barbarian, and every writer who was clear and robust as unfitted for polite readers. For in that time everything and everybody was "polite." It was the cant phrase. To be "polite" was to produce verses of no strength or colour, with a monstrous deal of nonsense about "verdant meads" and "amorous swains" and "pensive nymphs" in them; heathen gods and goddesses were also plentifully introduced, and there was a total absence of real nature, passion, or feeling. The "polite" school infected the Arts, and people had great family pictures painted in which they figured as classical or historical personages—a mode which Goldsmith satirises in his description of the famous picture which was painted in the kitchen of the vicarage of Wakefield, and was found too big to get through the door. In that