

Following close upon Mrs. Kingsland came a servant bringing tea. Geoff could not help noticing the polished silver, the dainty cups and saucers, and the richly-wrought table-cloth flung diagonally across the small square table.

"We are quite alone to-day," Mrs. Kingsland remarked en passant. "All the children are out."

"How many have you?" Geoff questioned.

"Four. Three girls and a boy."

"Jack is at school," Mr. Kingsland explained. "We expect him home in about three weeks for the Christmas holidays."

"And Mildred is visiting some friends in town," Mrs. Kingsland chimed in. "She ought to return this week, but whether she will or no is doubtful."

"Is she the oldest?" Geoff questioned.

"Oh, yes, by several years. Mildred will be twenty-one next birthday."

"Twenty-one!" Geoff questioned a little incredulously.

Mrs. Kingsland laughed pleasantly. "Do you think it quite outrageous that I should have a daughter that age?"

"Well, certainly——" Geoff began, then stopped suddenly. Mr. Kingsland, with his sixty years sitting lightly on him, was just opposite.

"Oh, you needn't mind my husband," she laughed as if divining his thoughts. "He was foolish enough, when he did marry, to choose a young wife."

"Wise enough, you mean," Geoff laughed.

"It was of little use thinking of marriage until I was able to keep a wife," Mr. Kingsland interposed. "Early marriages in many instances are a great mistake."

"I suppose they turn out very well sometimes," Geoff said, feeling a little guilty and helping himself to another piece of bread and butter.

"Of course they do," Mrs. Kingsland said with emphasis. "Money isn't everything."

"No, it isn't everything," Mr. Kingsland answered with a slow smile. "Yet people must live, and to marry poverty must be a very uncomfortable thing."

"My dear, the great thing is that people love each other." And she looked at him knowingly.

"Granted," he answered; "but you know the old saying about poverty coming in at the door."

"I don't think I believe it, nevertheless. It must be a poor kind of love that won't stand a little hardship and struggle."

"Perhaps you are right," he answered with an affectionate glance at her, and then the conversation drifted away to other topics.

When Geoff retired to bed that night he congratulated himself that he had dropped into exceedingly comfortable quarters.

He fell asleep almost as soon as his head touched the pillow, and when he woke again it was to the sound of some one drawing the blinds. By his side was a dainty tea tray and two or three slices of very thin bread and butter.

"Oh, come," he chuckled to himself as soon as the servant had left the room; "this is too luxurious, they are treating me as a guest rather than as an employee. I am not quite sure that I like it."

When he got downstairs Mr. Kingsland was half-way through his breakfast.

"I hope I am not very late," Geoff said in a tone of alarm.

"Oh, no, not at all. I'm generally a rather early bird. Help yourself, I hope you will find something you like."

A few minutes later Mrs. Kingsland came into the room looking even fresher and younger than on the previous evening. Grace and Molly, aged respectively twelve and ten, were the last to arrive.

After breakfast he and Mr. Kingsland retired to the library, where they spent the entire morning in answering letters and in making a rough sketch of the report to the Board of Trade.

After lunch he spent an hour in making a tour of the grounds.

From three to half-past four, when tea was announced, he did some reading on his own account, after which he enlarged his acquaintance with Grace and Molly.

Before dinner he answered a few more letters, and after dinner he played a couple of games of billiards with his employer.

It was not an eventful day by any means. It might even be described as dull. Yet, for him, it was the beginning of a new era, and he little guessed to what it was destined to lead.

When he got to his own room he found himself wondering what the absent daughter was like. It was no concern of his, of course. Matrimonially, his own fate was already sealed, but the unknown is always a matter of interest and curiosity.

Was she fair like Molly, or dark like Grace; massive like her father, or slender like her mother? Or was she a type to herself and unlike any other member of the family?

He fell asleep at length and dreamed that she had a face like a witch and hair like the Gorgon sisters.

(To be continued.)

Dainty Aprons

GIRLS who have been taking domestic economy courses at fashionable boarding schools declare that to get along without a variety of dainty aprons is an impossibility, especially if the embryo housekeeper wishes to preserve the fronts of her frocks from spots.

One girl who sews almost as well as she cooks, is making several aprons of plain lawn cut into half ovals, scalloped all round with a color and embroidered with washable floss in outline or shadow stitch. By this means she expects to have luncheon pinafores to

accord with every house frock—white embroidered with pale blue; pink, mauve or yellow and dark blue; green and brown relieved with white.

Charming little aprons of half oval, half round, diamond or oblong shape are to be made of finest nainsook, scalloped all round and hand-embroidered with white in imitation of the work done in the Madeira Islands, says the New York Herald.

All of the ruffle bordered aprons are fascinating, particularly the round ones which have bowknot and leaf designs embroidered on the lower curve and girdle belts which fit trimly, have embroidered fronts and tie in a little bowknot at the back. The same model is pretty when the hand-embroidery and ruffle are omitted and the hemstitched edge is finished with an inch wide frill of Valenciennes or Cluny lace.

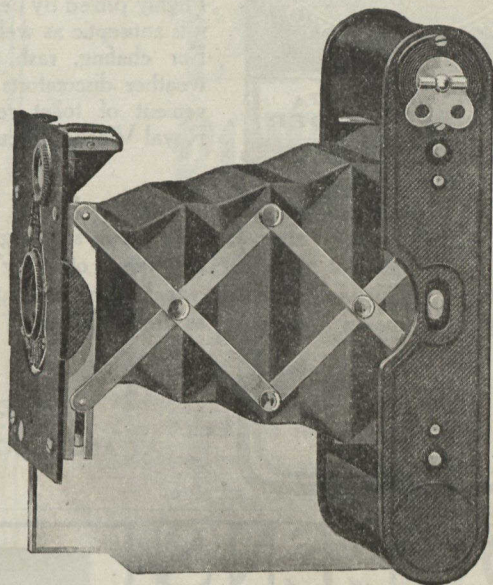
Bretelle aprons nearly always become a slender, girlish figure, but they are

more difficult to make than pinafores, because the centre panel with its square little bib should be carefully curved to fit in to the figure at the waist line and on it should be attached the narrower side panels, which are shaped above the waist into straps crossing the shoulders and then across the top of the back, where they are joined, so that the apron may be adjusted by drawing the bretelle portion over the head and then securing it about the waist with pink, blue or white satin ribbon sashes.

Nearly all of the bretelle aprons have cunning little hip pockets headed with fine muslin embroidery or lace edging to match the bordering of the pinafore, bib and shoulders, and if a girl wishes to make this sort of luncheon apron exceptionally elaborate she may have the bretelles entirely of all-over lace and let them run into narrow panels from the waist to the lower edge.

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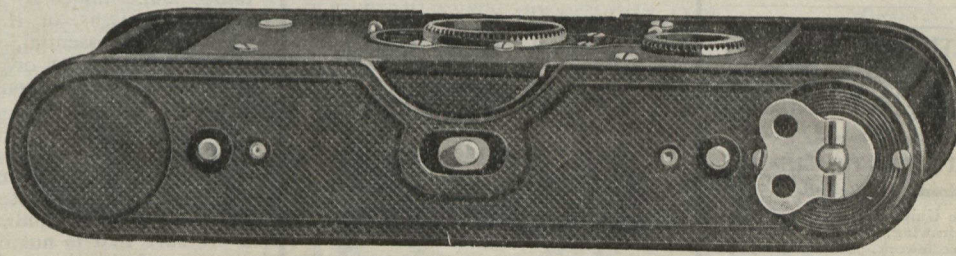
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