

Then we must have lapsed again into the land of dreams; we awakened to hear the same manly voice say:—

"You love me, yet you will not wait for me! My dear Freda, do you know that such love as that is not worth striving for?"

Female voice, pertly—"Nobody asked you to strive."

Manly voice, hotly—"But I will, though. I shall work hard, and possibly in a year or two your people will see cause to alter their opinion."

Strange female voice—"My people have nothing to do with it."

Manly voice—"Who influences you then?"

Strange female voice—"Myself. I am not going to bind myself to a man for an indefinite period of time."

Manly voice, sarcastically—"Yet, according to your lights, you love me!"

Strange female voice—"Conceit!"

Silence of about a minute, then this elegant appeal to our imagination:—

Strange female voice—"Don't."

Manly voice, pleadingly—"Please!"

Strange female voice, decidedly—"Certainly not!"

Manly voice, persistently—"Ah yes!"

Strange female voice—"No."

Manly voice, laughing—"Tut, tut!"

Strange female voice—"I tell you No!"

Manly voice, unctuously—"I will. Positively you shall not go until you consent."

Strange female voice—"I shall never consent."

Manly voice—"Then you must stop here."

Strange female voice—"I shall scream!"

When this interesting dialogue began we were, as the reader has been informed, lying on our back on the sand in a semi-drowsy state. But towards its close we became wakeful and our position altered. We raised ourselves on our elbow and thence to our knees. Finally, unable to control our curiosity, we stood upright to behold the broad back of Mr. Baines, and a small maiden with an expression of laughing protest on her face. We had a very brief glimpse of the face, but it was a comprehensive one; it sufficed to tell us that there was no pressing need for us to continue the role of a silent listener. Accordingly we turned and fled from the place. Two hours later our base companion rejoined us. As he had the grace to look guilty we forbore to express our opinion.

Later the same day, however, as we were bowling merrily along before a not too fresh westerly breeze, Baines declared himself as follows:—

"What fools fellows are!"

The remark was apropos to nothing; moreover it was a sweeping condemnation of the species. We prepared to do combat, but we did not rush wildly into the lists; we are naturally cautious. We knocked the ashes out of our pipe and enquired mildly:—

"Why?"

"Because they are so infernally reckless in wasting the most valuable commodity in life."

"And what may that be?" we demanded pugnaciously.

"Time!" replied Baines tersely.

We stared at him blankly and he proceeded:—

"Just think of it! We have only a few years to live and we have so much to do. Everybody wants to do something—at least everybody who has ambition or self-respect does—yet we go on and on until at last it comes to us that we have done nothing, that possibly we have not the ability to do anything. I know heaps of fellows like that. They began just as I did; they dreamt vaguely of achieving something some day but they wasted time—and they got into idle habits. Hang it all, I believe it were better for a man never to have been born than for him to be cursed with idleness."

We abandoned our intention of debating the question; the position he took was too strong. We merely nodded our head and remarked sagely:—

"We have heard all that before, dear boy!"

"You never heard it from me," affirmed Baines, with a fervour that we had never before known him to assume.

"No, possibly not," we said slowly—then added: "But in all probability we shall hear it from you a dozen times in the course of the next few years. Once a fellow begins to talk in that strain he invariably reverts to it again and again. His men friends say it is the blues, and prescribe a cocktail; his lady friends shake their heads quizzically and say he is in love. It is hard to tell which is right and——"

"You are a bully old idiot!" said Baines tersely, and with that he relapsed into a sullen silence.

Baines is a young lawyer still, but his way of life has changed; he has scored more than one point in the game, made several upward steps on the glorious but very rugged hill. And you would never believe it if you knew how hard he works. It is grind, grind continually—there is no idleness now.

And Freda? She married a very ordinary chap last year. Baines made her a handsome present and was at the wedding, looking as pleased as possible.

And this story—where is the point? Alas, good reader, 'tis but a bald narration of facts! When the writer confines himself to facts he cannot always point a moral; he cannot pierce the minds of men and analyze the impulses which emanate therefrom. He can only tell you that which all may see.

What impelled Baines to work is a mystery known only to himself, and what it was that made him persist in his endeavours is also a mystery. A bald narration of facts never deals in mysteries. If this particular one did, it would cease to be that which it takes pride in calling itself.



A Pretty Fashion—A Delightful Idea—A Tasteful Boudoir Screen—The Last Drawing-Room—Tea Gowns—Snakes—The American Lady Explorer—The Order of the King's Daughters—A Pretty Photograph Frame.

A pretty fashion has come in with regard to the wearing of lace, which is now returning to favour very much for both day and evening costumes, and this is seen in the first illustration. Deep basques are becoming so very universal that I fear they will degenerate into something very ordinary after a time, as pretty novelties so often do. They now appear on most evening dresses, and the prettiest of them are composed of lace in a deep flouncing. My little sketch shows a toilette of "Ophelia"—coloured *peau de soie*—that beautiful pale pinkish mauve which is so favourite a hue of the lovely Queen of Italy. It is made quite simply, being plain in front in princess fashion, and the back may be carried out also in this way, if preferred; or the back-breadths may be gathered into a very narrow space on the lower part of the princess bodice. The lace is worn as far as the side seams in two basques, and instead of cutting it, may be *jaboté*, or turned in zigzag folds down the side, either on one or both sides, according to taste. The bodice may be filled in with a drapery of lace folded across, or *mousseline de soie*, which is now preferred to chiffon, either of the colour of the silk or of the creamy hue of real lace. It is finished off at the edge with a narrow border of the same lace or passementerie of silver, gold, or gimp of the mauve colour in silk cord. The frilled sleeves are also of lace, and the feather fan should be either of creamy white or palest mauve feathers. The gloves should be in palest pearl grey kid, or in cream suède. All gloves are now for evening wear either white or the most delicate shades of grey.



A delightful idea, and one of which many a capable clever lady who is at a loss for employment might well avail herself is that of a housekeeping teacher. It is stated that even with our advanced female education many a bride when she comes face to face, after her wedding tour, with the new housekeeping duties of her home, finds herself terribly at a loss what to do if she has not been previously well "coached" by a mother or aunt in the necessary routine of an establishment. There is a clever lady who appears to be born with the talent for arranging the working of a house in the very best way possible, for the happiness and comfort of its occupants, and, what is so very important, according to their means. She is apparently endowed with so much *savoir faire* in *modo*, that neither mistress nor servants resent them, but rather find a pleasure in following her suggestions. Things go comfortably, regularly and smoothly, meals are nicely cooked and irreproachably served, and the bridegroom, who as so often happens, is only too ready to find fault, has no reason nor opportunity to show the seamy side of his temper over household *contretemps*. This worthy lady for a slight remuneration remains for a short time with the young couple as a sort of visitor in no way *de trop*, for she never inflicts her company on them unless specially invited. Having duly instructed the young mistress, and established the proper working rules for the servants, she leaves, always much regretted, for fresh fields of usefulness. Now what an opening this is for innumerable lonely women, who have plenty of *savoir faire* in domestic matters, and what blessings they might prove to numbers of poor worried young ladies who have not always had the chance of learning to navigate the treacherous waters of household duty. But whilst I suggest this new career for lonely members of my sex, I would bid them remember that there is one thing that is indispensable before undertaking this kind of work, they *must* have tact—consummate tact.

A tasteful boudoir screen can be made very easily as a dainty wedding or birthday present in the following manner, by those who are sufficiently good artists to paint flowers well. Paint a pretty design of wysteria in oil, either on canvas or the panels of frosted glass that are now made into the firescreens so often seen in many a boudoir or drawing-room. If of canvas, you must do two, and have them framed back-to-back in one of the ornamental bamboo screen frames to be had at any good furniture dépôt. The colour of the flowers should be exactly matched in broad faille ribbon, which is tied on one side of the top rail of the frame in high upstanding loops, and a similar bow tied on the lower part of the same, just below the painting, with the same long loops. If these do not stand upright of themselves, they must be lightly wired. The loops vary from a quarter to half-a-yard in length when made, and there should be at least four or five of them. As a present for anyone living in the country, where things keep clean, it is very pretty to tie—as in the French model I am describing, and of which I can give a sketch next week, if desired—into the top bow a branch of artificial wysteria, so as to repeat the idea of the flowers in painting. Of course any other flowers may be used, accord-