

small vocabulary. What could I have seen in her to make me imagine her possessed of a mind congenial to my own? What an escape! Fancy my wife strumming waltzes and galops all the evening to me, when my soul thirsted for real music! Oh, if that sister had only been *passably* good-looking and a *little* bit younger. Even as it was, could her voice suffice? Then I pictured her—pictured those lips through which breathed the poet's sentiments of tender passion—but I also pictured the fact that I might have to *kiss* them in thanks! That finished my reverie. I started up; tumbled my goods and chattels into my valise; went down stairs (I used the stairs this time); paid my bill, and left orders that I was to be called in time for the early train for Suspension Bridge. My mind was relieved. I ran up stairs, and after a good night's rest, commenced my homeward flight.

Thus ended my first trip to New York. My second was even more eventful, because I then had with me my dear little bride (*Nellie H—* formerly.)

She sings and plays charmingly. She has a mind, and does not she chaff me about *Undine*? I need scarcely add that this time I put up at a different Hotel. Although my vengeful feelings towards the tormenting genius of that elevator are greatly mollified, I don't want to see him again.

FRANCES J. MOORE.

#### A MODERN GHOST.

"There's a chance to get a cheap farm," remarked a Manitoban to the writer.

As he spoke the farmer dropped the stock of his gun to the ground, bit off a piece of plug, and pointed to a small cottage house with barns and other outbuildings, a mile or so away across the rolling prairie.

"How much?"

"There's eighty acres of good land, and nearly new buildings, that any 'squatter' can have for the taking, and I don't suppose there is anybody living to claim the property."

"Why doesn't somebody 'squat' on it, then?"

"This is about the last place in the world that anyone would expect to find a ghost, isn't it? And yet there is ghost enough about that place to keep even squatters and claim-jumpers from taking possession of it."

The reporter gazed off across the treeless prairie, a plain of luxuriant vegetation, billow after billow of grass, until, in the dim distance, the green united with the blue of the skies, the sun shining brightly over all, and remarked:

"I should think that with all these boundless acres to till, the farmers of Manitoba could find more profitable employment than inventing 'bug-a-boos' to scare their children."

"Say!" exclaimed the farmer, as he sent a jet of tobacco juice among the petals of a prairie rose and faced quickly about with a slight flush showing through the bronze of his cheek, "I'll give you \$5 if you'll stay in that house to-night from dark until daylight!"

"What's the particular line of hobgoblin you show up?"

"Swede."

"Um-m-ah! a little out of my line of spooks, but whoop up your scare."

"This is no 'scare,' but a fact, as far as what I tell you is concerned. Two years ago last summer there came upon that quarter section a man and his wife, each apparently nearly sixty years of age. Nobody knew, or cared, where they came from. They brought two cows, four horses and household goods, slept in their wagon and cooked in the open air until they got their house closed in, and then put up the barn. Then the man went to plowing, and the woman, who appeared to be the better carpenter of the two, shingled and clap-boarded the house. This done, the woman went to plowing and the man plastered the house and built a chimney. Before snow flew their buildings were completed, and they had about twenty-five acres of prairie turned over.

"During the winter the woman died, but no one knew of it until the man who lives over there to the left, a mile distant, saw the old man digging a hole in the frozen earth, and went over to see what he was up to. She was already in her coffin, which the man had made out of rough boards, and some of the neighbours helped him to bury her. He could not speak a word of English, but by signs indicated that she had taken cold and died of some lung difficulty."

"After that the old man lived there alone. He raised a good crop of wheat the next season, harvested and thrashed it, and marketed it at town. Along towards the last of January his nearest neighbour came over to my house one day and told me that he had not seen the old man for a month, nor smoke coming from the chimney of his house. He proposed that we go over and ascertain the reason, and we went. We rapped upon the door, but got no response, so as it was not locked, we pushed it open and entered. There are but two rooms in the house. One was used for a store-room; the other for a living room. Both were vacant, as far as the old man was concerned, but they looked as if he had but just stepped out. A lot of potatoes, turnips and beets on the floor of the store-room were frozen as hard as rocks, and the water-pail contained a block of ice. There were bread and cooked meat in the cupboard, and clothing hanging about on hooks. Neither then, or subsequently, could we discover anything to indicate a premeditated abandonment of the premises."

"Not finding the old man in the house we turned our attention to the barn. Then we discovered that there wasn't a vestige of a path anywhere between the buildings. In the barn we saw a sight never to be forgotten. The horses and cows had eaten every straw within their reach; had licked the floor clean of even the last particle of dust. They had died from starvation and were frozen stiff."

Of course we came to the conclusion that the old man was under the snow somewhere in that neighbourhood, and we were on the lookout for him to come to the surface in the spring, but he didn't."

"And hasn't he been seen since, eh?"

"If you think so, you'd better stay in his house to-night. In the spring, this same neighbour, his name is Hill, said to me one day that he was going to sow the old Swede's plowed ground, about thirty acres, and take his chances. Of course if the old fellow should put in an appearance any time during the summer, Hill would be out his seed and labour, but if he didn't, Hill would get thirty acres of wheat pretty cheap. About seeding time there came along a Norwegian family, consisting of a man, his wife and two children, looking for work. Here was a chance for Hill. He hired the man for the season, and told him he could live in the old Swede's house, and they moved in at once, Hill sending them over a lot of provisions. At daybreak the next morning, the whole family showed up at Hill's house white with terror, and the man declared that he had seen a ghost during the night; that he was awakened by a grunting noise, and could plainly see the figure of a man sitting by the stove; that he rose up in bed, and said 'Who are you, and what do you want?' but received no reply; that when he spoke, his wife was awakened, and screamed when she saw the figure. Whereupon it arose, went towards the door and disappeared, but without opening or closing the door! that he sprang up and went to the door and saw the figure pass down to and enter the barn: that it did not walk, but moved as if floating; that he took a lantern and went to the barn, but could find no one; that when he reached the house and was about to enter, he turned and looked toward the barn, and there, in the very path he had just traversed, stood the figure."

"Hill poked at the fellow's story, telling him he had been frightened by a shadow, but he took his wife and children and lit out. Although Hill laughed at the story, he determined to disprove it, and so that evening he took his dog and went to the house to spend the night, though after he got there he decided to watch in the barn. He says that he had got within twenty feet of it, being then about midway between it and the house, when, as if rising from the ground, the figure of an old man appeared not over ten feet in front of him. The outline was so clear and distinct that he supposed it was the old man sure enough, and exclaimed: 'Hello, when did you get back?' At the words the figure floated off toward the barn and disappeared. As it did so Hill's dog gave a howl, dropped his tail between his legs and darted across the prairie in the direction of home, and Hill admits that he wasn't far behind the dog."

"Of course the news quickly became known to everybody in this vicinity, and Hill was laughed at wherever he went. He got mad one day, and declared that he would give anybody \$10 to stay in that house over night, and a couple of fellows who were working down here, about three miles west, said they wanted the money. Armed with shotguns, they went over to the house one night just before dark, bragging about the way they would blow the head off of any ghost that came fooling around them. They were to go over to Hill's in the morning and get the \$10, but they didn't show up. Hill waited two or three days, and then he and I went down to see them."

They were loth to say anything about it, but finally told us their experience. They took their guns there for a purpose. When they reached the house one of them sat down by a window, the sash of which he raised, where he could see every inch of space between the house and barn, while the other one sat down on the well-curb a few feet from the path. Not far from 10 o'clock the one who was sitting by the window suddenly became impressed with the idea that there was some one in the room, and, turning his head, saw the figure of a man moving toward the door, which was closed. As it faded from view he leaned forward so that he could see the outside of the door, and saw the figure step out from the solid wood. Then it started down the path toward the barn, and the watcher by the window, although he admitted that his hair was standing on end and that he was so frightened that he never thought of his gun, eyed the moving figure closely. As it was passing the well the man there fired, and the other said the stream of fire went clear through and a yard beyond the figure. When the smoke cleared away the spectre had disappeared and the two watchers did not wait for it to reappear. Do you happen to want this \$5 bill?"

"No, for it would be robbing you of not only your money, but also of a very interesting neighbour."

THERE is no harm in being respected in this world, as I have found out; and if you don't brag a little for yourself, depend upon it there is no person of your acquaintance who will tell the world of your merits, and take the trouble off your hands."

#### DRESS REFORM VERSUS POCKETS.

In times past there have been treatises *de re vestiaria*—at least, we have the fact on the authority of the Baron of Bradwardine. But they were purely learned and antiquarian. Not so our discussions of dress. Ever since Mr. Carlyle took it into his head to write "Sartor Resartus," and still more ever since his pupil, Mr. Ruskin, took to informing our ignorance on the principles of art, we have been terribly cumbered about our outer man. The latest thing in religious movements and the latest thing in social movements—the Salvation and Blue Ribbon armies—acknowledge the power of dress. If a man wants to "get culture," he must dress accordingly, under pain of considerable suspicions of unorthodoxy. Did not Mr. Du Maurier only last week exhibit to us the terrible effects produced upon a susceptible young woman, who had "thought him a Greek god" in flannels and a lawn-tennis jacket when she beheld "him" in the costume, not of a Greek god, but of a London young gentleman? It is no wonder that minds and pens are busy on a subject on which so much may depend, and here before us is Mr. I. A. Gotch, the latest authority on the subject, who publishes with Messrs. Kegan Paul and Trench a pamphlet of a very revolutionary nature, illustrated by a sheet of engravings containing sweet things from the fourth century before and the fourteenth century after Christ, together with a few awful examples from the last and the present ages.

Let us put ourselves into the hands of Mr. Gotch, or rather at his feet. There is a confidence about him which is very inspiring, and which would evidently have made him perform to admiration the part of that County Court Judge who had the other day to decide by actual scrutiny the fearful inquiry of an injured dress-maker, "How could I make her a Venus when it was all wadding?" It is even to be feared that Mr. Gotch would have been too decided in his decision on that occasion, for the mere fact that "it was all wadding" would have aroused his indignation. Mr. Gotch is like most of our dress reformers, a Ruskinite, but he differs from most of them in boldly disdaining to temper his views by a pretext of hygienics. "Let us be comfortable and beautiful," he says in effect, "and we shall be healthful enough." He seems even inclined to allow the greater influence to comfort, which is satisfactory for that not inconsiderable portion of mankind (whether there is any such portion of womankind we shall not undertake to say) which doubts its powers of becoming beautiful anyhow. It is only "the arch fiend, Conventionality," says Mr. Gotch, that prevents us being comfortable. He makes us wear trousers (a harmless garment, which Mr. Gotch regards with undying enmity, he puts two meaningless buttons in the small of our backs; he insists on our wearing gloves, linen shirts, tall hats, and other abominations. All this seems to lead to something like Mr. Du Maurier's suggestion in the legend to the work of art just referred to, that we should be always as Greek gods clad in perpetual flannel and crowned as to our Hyacinthian locks with nothing more weighty than a small cap. Mr. Gotch, however, does not go to this almost savage length. His mysterious statement that "a good deal may be expressed by the lie of a collar" shows how deeply he has studied the matter. He has many intricate suggestions for the reformation of the modern coat, the probable effect of which, to the uninitiated, seems to be something like its reduction to that state—collarless, buttonless, and unkempt—in which one tries it on at the tailor's. For the trouser he has no mercy. All our bashful calves must undergo, it seems, the trial of the knickerbocker, but perhaps there are no sentences which impress us more with Mr. Gotch's competency than these two, "folds in themselves are admirable, are indispensable," and, "there is room for improvement in the finishing of sleeves at the wrist."

They may be to some extent studied off the celebrated code in "Pelham," but even imitation of such a kind is admirable. Even when he charges the happy trouser with "ignoring the knee-joint" (it is a comfort to think that the knee joint avenges itself pretty speedily, and by no means ignores the villainous trouser) or describes the legs of the happy past as "clothed with an interesting boot," he is not quite so great as in the passages just cited. But man is mortal, and we find even so great a man bidding us "avoid false hoods as we would falsehoods." Yet it is open to Mr. Gotch to contend that puns did not go out of favor till good feeling in dress began to decline.

The results of all this talking about coats and hats who shall forecast? There is certainly greater variety in dress than there was thirty years ago, but it is a question whether this is not simply due to the more varied nature of our present employments and in particular to the greater indulgence in games. There was a time (which all but very young men must remember) when the term "shooting coat" included almost all garments other than tail and frock coats. To be seen in a "shooting coat" in town or after the morning was not exactly disgraceful, but went near to be thought so. That, at any rate, is a thing of the past, but we are not sure that Mr. Gotch and his brother reformers like morning coats much better than they do frocks or tails. Again, the chimney-pot has exhausted the wits of at least two if not three generations, yet it holds its ground. "We buy an expensive hat to protect a too often worthless head," says Mr. Gotch (adopting a standard of criticism which surely is inconvenient), and it may be

added that though we may buy others as well, we buy and wear the expensive hat just as we did any number of years ago. The trouser, against which Mr. Gotch has sworn his truculent war, does not, it is true, reign alone, but like the chimney-pot it holds its ground in towns, and as far as Mr. Gotch's beloved knickerbocker is concerned, is likely to hold it, for a more unsuitable garment than the knickerbocker for London mud is not easy to conceive. We are not clear as to Mr. Gotch's ideal of an interesting boot, but it would seem to be a kind of Moliere shoe for summer and a melodramatic villain's boot for winter; which latter, indeed, might make the knickerbockers tolerable. After all, however, with the exception of the chimney-pot, which may be abandoned to him, it is doubtful whether modern dress—at least male dress—is as bad as he thinks it. It is unduly sombre no doubt, and the man of true literary taste may never be happy until he is once more permitted to wear a peach-colored velvet coat without being thought eccentric. But then there is the difficulty of collars. Would a peach-colored velvet coat look well with one's "own hair?" For the tyranny and uncleanness of wigs and bags, pomatum and powder, are surely not to be thought of. We do not much object to the Greek god costume, which fortunately does not require wigs or bags. But it would in this climate nearly ruin a man in laundresses; besides, for general purposes, it is deficient in pockets. It is, indeed, noticeable that pockets are deficient in almost all the costumes which seem most acceptable to our apostles of dress reform. Since ladies began to dress becomingly they have given them up or laid them open to the joyful larcener, and a Greek god when in costume usually puts his miscellaneous belongings in his cricket bag, or in a drawer, or in the pockets of the despoiled and temporarily discarded coat. Now this question of pockets is an important one, and may be commended to the reformers. For contemporary man is a sophisticated being, and what with handkerchief, cigar case, cigarette case, pipe, tobacco pouch, watch, pocketbook, knives, keys, pencils, stylographic pens, lights, season tickets, and all the other trappings of a vain civilization, he must have pockets. Hand-bags would bore him and infallibly be left about; an *escarcelle* slung on him would make him like unto the estimable flock of Mr. Cook. Let Mr. Gotch and his like look to it.

L. D. N.

#### AN ARTIFICIALLY SMOOTH SEA—INTERESTING EXPERIMENT.

Something over a year since, Mr. Vincenzo Fondacaro made a voyage from Montevideo to Naples in a 3-ton boat, for the purpose of experimenting on the feasibility of using oil at sea to reduce the roughness of ocean waves. He had a crew of only two men. The voyage was an exceedingly rough one, gales prevailing for nearly three-fourths of the time. Malaga was reached February 4, 1881, and there the voyage ceased for a while, because the funds and stores of the party had become exhausted. The little boat was enabled to ride out the roughest gales in safety by olive oil being scattered on the water.

In an interview immediately after his arrival Mr. Fondacaro said: "I claim to have made no great discovery. I have no valuable patent. For perhaps 200 years it has been known how oil would smooth the ruffled surface of the sea and prevent the waves from breaking, and ships in the whaling trade have often saved themselves from foundering by this means. But until I made my voyage it was not known how small a quantity of oil would accomplish this result. Generally a gallon of oil would enable my boat to lay 'hove to' in a gale of wind for 24 hours and be safe. I did not make this voyage in a spirit of recklessness, but simply to practically test the experiment." Mr. Fondacaro then described how he made use of the oil. It was inclosed in small bottle-shaped bags, each bag containing about half a gallon. In case of a gale of wind, when it became necessary to lay to, a large bag attached to the bow of the boat was thrown overboard. This the sailors call a floating anchor or a drag. This kept his boat's head to the wind. Two of the small bags of oil were then thrown overboard, one fore and one aft. Each bag had a small orifice, through which the oil escaped slowly. It circled around the boat, and prevented the sea from breaking over her and overwhelming her. "Of course," said Mr. Fondacaro, "the oil does not diminish the size of the waves, but renders them comparatively harmless by preventing them from breaking."

A HINT TO MR. IRVING.—During the last run of "Hamlet" at the Lyceum, a simple-minded provincial friend of a member of the company was, under favor, allowed a sight of the performance. He was in town for the purpose of doing "the lions," and clearly Mr. Irving's Hamlet was one of them. It is reported that he sat through the tragedy unmoved, except by the wonderful completeness of the production, from a scenic stage carpenter's and costumer's point of view. In his day he had seen many Hamlets. On rejoining his friend he expressed his admiration in general terms; but there was one drawback to his satisfaction. He was quite astonished, he said, that a man like Mr. Irving had not introduced some new dialogue and "business" into the gravediggers' scene!