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"Were you not suspicious when you were asked to part with your valuables?"

"In a general way I should not have parted with them, not even to a relation of my customer; but the romance of the thing deceived me, the half-vested air of mystery, and above all, hearing the earl's voice so close to me, and every stray word I could catch bearing upon the servant's cunningly told tale. Usually I am cautious myself, but I was fairly 'had' there."

"I suppose the old chloroform business is quite exploded now?"

"Pretty well; for it is rather dangerous, you see. A man may be a bad subject for the drug, and again he may be armed. That kind of thing used to pay best in a railway carriage, like loaded cigars, and narcotics in a glass of wine. My railway-carriage experience was, however, of a different description. Another evening you may perhaps like to hear it."

Queer Ways of Women.

The ways of women are queer.

A woman can faint away at the sight of a bit of blood on her finger, have all the children in the house screaming with fright, require eau de cologne to bring her to and be nervous for twenty-four hours after, yet the same woman can, in perfect silence, stand by and help a doctor perform an operation that may mean death to some one she loves.

A woman can scorn what she calls made-over clothes, can laugh at discriminate charity, and yet the same woman can cry as if her heart would break and take all her spending money to buy an overcoat for a newsboy she met in the street-cars because his face was so pitiful.

She can take two hours and a half to dress to go to the theatre, and then tell Charlie she knows she looks like a dowdy, but the same woman can pack a trunk with things to last her for two weeks in twenty minutes when she gets a telegram saying, "Come as soon as possible, your mother is sick."

She will bake a chicken until it is brown, and then calmly ask the master of the establishment if he doesn't think the English way of roasting is preferable to any other.

She can do most anything she wants, and she wants to do most everything except, thank goodness, wear trousers.

Be Happy To-day.

Putting off trying to be happy is robbing life of its best chances. Now is ours, to-morrow may never come for us. And should it come, we know not what it may bring of sorrow, trouble, and despair. But the happy moments once enjoyed are ours—for ever. We can live them again and again in memory. Every thrill of love, joy, and bliss makes its mark upon the inner self, and the more of these impressions we can secure the brighter and better will be all the coming days. Friends may prove false and undeserving, but they cannot take from us the joy of having once loved and trusted them. Returned affection is a priceless blessing, but the love we give from a full, warm heart is far more to us than any received can be. Its sweetness and mellows our personality, and sows seeds of joy, hope, and happiness, and from them spring the flowers of peace, serenity, and sweetness ineffable.

A Forgotten Six Million.

At the deathbed of William B. Astor, father of the late John Jacob, after everything pertaining to the enormous personal estate was supposed to be arranged, the dying man said,—

"John, what did we do with the six millions of registered four per cent bonds?"

"We have forgotten them, father," answered the son.

"What do you think we had better do with them, John?"

"I think, father, they had better be given to the girls"—his sisters.

"That's a good idea, John. Hurry a man on to Washington specially, and have them transferred before I die."

This was done, and the incident is a suggestive pointer as to the vastness of the property to be disposed of.

The Objectionable Waltz.

The waltz, pretty and graceful though it be, is responsible for the decline in dancing. It renders conversation an impossibility, thereby doing away at one fell swoop with one of the most engaging charms of a partner in the dance. The quadrille is the favorite battle-field of flirtation; the waltz kills flirtation. In the days of the minuet, our ancestors engaged in pleasant discourse while treading the



FIG. 32-33.—No. 4510.—LADIES' LACE COSTUME. PRICE 35 CENTS.

This design cuts from 30 to 40 inches bust measure, and the quantity of material required of 44-inch net, 6 3-4 yards, and 14 yards of ribbon for each size.

If made of materials illustrated, 6 pieces of ribbon and 6 pieces of lace insertion will be required for each size.

No. 4512.—LADIES' BASQUE. PRICE 25 CENTS.

Quantity of Material (21 inches wide) for 30, 32, 34, 36 inches, 4 yards; 38, 40 inches, 4 1-4 yards.

Quantity of Material (42 inches wide) for 30, 32, 34, 36 inches, 2 yards; 38, 40 inches, 2 1-8 yards.

Plain silk for plastron and collars, 1 yard; silk cord, 4 1-2 yards.

No. 4513.—LADIES' TRIMMED SKIRT. PRICE 30 CENTS.

This design cuts from 22 to 32 inches waist measure, and the quantity of material required for each size, of 21-inch goods, 10 3-4 yards, or of 42-inch goods, 5 3-8 yards.

If made of materials illustrated, 4 1-4 yards of 21-inch plain silk, 6 yards of figured silk, and 1 1/2 yards of fringe will be required for each size.

stately dance, and the plain quadrille afforded many of the older of us to enjoy delicious bits of flirtation with those of the other sex whom we admired; for in the dance (as on board ship or in a sleeping-car) many liberties and pleasantries pass for harmless nothings, which elsewhere might be offensive. A revival of the quadrille would please mothers and daughters alike.

Browning and the Young Poet.

Although Browning was probably not so much persecuted as Tennyson by writers of amateur verse, he must often have been hard tested to combine courtesy with sincerity in replying to their uninvited communications. I know of one case in which he got out of the difficulty ingeniously if not quite ingeniously.

A youthful poet, endowed with even more than the normal self-complacency of his tribe, had conceived the crafty plan of dedicating his various works to well known men of letters and forwarding them the MSS. with a request that they would get them inserted in the *Nineteenth Century*, the *Fortnightly*, or some other leading magazine. He once sent Browning a long screed of verses, duly ascribed to him and accompanied by the usual request. A few days afterward he showed me with pride Browning's reply. This consisted of a curtly courteous acknowledgment of the verses, followed by this sentence:

"I have no influence whatever with editors of magazines, a fact which I regret but on occasions like the present."

This was very soothing to the poet's soul, but the word "but" was so hopelessly smudged and obliterated that no one but the poet could make it out. He, reading with the eye of faith, saw it clearly, but to ordinary eyes the phrase reads thus:—

"A fact which I never regret" (smudge) "on occasions like the present."

So exquisitely neat was Browning's ordinary handwriting that I cannot suppose this diplomatic smudge to have been other than intentional.

External Circumstances

Man's highest merit always is as much as possible to rule external circumstances, and as little as possible to let himself be ruled by them. Life lies before us as a huge quarry lies before the architect; he deserves not the name of an architect except when out of this fortuitous mass he can combine with the greatest economy, fitness and durability some form the pattern of which originated in his spirit. All things without us are mere elements, but deep within us lies the creative force which out of these can produce what they were meant to be, and which leaves us neither sleep nor rest till in one way or another it has been produced.