

and others wear low necks as full dress, so some of us cover our best qualities and others brazenly expose those which affront the social instinct. If, however, our souls went naked and unashamed, no one would ever think of hiding his generous and affectionate impulses; while as it is, many a beautiful ego swaggers about clothed in impudence, superciliousness, and snobbery, or skulks through life in a shrouding cloak of artificial exclusiveness.

Whosoever takes his life briskly enough to gather wide experiences and leisurely enough to extract the full flavor from them will find endless amusement in stripping the raiment from the souls he meets and noting how seldom this raiment has set off the ego to its best advantage. Some external characteristics hurt others like a wayward hatpin, and these should be removed by due process of law, while some others are merely comical, like hobble skirts and plug hats. A young naked soul is as beautiful as a naked baby; but both lose their shapes with the wearing of fashionable raiment.

In company with thirty of his fellows, the author was forced some fourteen years ago to bare his body seven times in one day at the Third Avenue Recruiting Station in New York City. The first time he was hot with indignation, the second time he merely grumbled at the buttons, but when for the third time he stood forth naked and unashamed in the midst of his similiarly glorified fellows, he politely asked the sergeant in charge if he might not remain thus until it was finally decided whether or not he would make a sufficiently presentable corpse in case his uniform were shot completely away in the heat and bustle of battle. The sergeant being properly conventionalized would not permit it, and the incident is offered merely as personal testimony to the swiftness with which a deeply ingrained prejudice melts away before the rays of a frank and natural test.

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