

My First Dance

BY C. L. J. '10

My first dance! Shall I ever forget it or how grand I felt in my new dress-suit with a diamond in my stiff white shirt-bosom? to be sure my diamond was only paste but I contented myself with the assurance that the voluble shopkeeper from whom I had purchased it had told me with an empathic nod of his head that "it looked quite the real thing, sir," and that he had sold dozens on 'em sir, dozens." My collar was very high, my shoes pinched, and my new white kid gloves felt very tight and uncomfortable.

"Hello Jimmie!" said cousin Jack Hazlitt, coming up to me with an air of ease and assurance, acquired—as I enviously thought—by three years in college. "Why aren't you dancing? Don't you know how?" Know how! Had I not taken lessons all last winter from Monsieur Leclaire? Oh yes, I told him confidently I could dance.—"Come on then and I'll introduce you to Daisy Stewart, an awfully nice girl, I can tell you. So clever and a Senior," said Jack enthusiastically. In a few moments I was bowing awkwardly before a tall, slim young lady with dark hair and a long trailing white gown, I stammered out a request for a dance, and she smilingly accepted my clumsily proffered arm. Clever! A Senior! whatever should I say to her? thought I, wildly casting about in my mind for a suitable topic for conversation. Just then the music commenced and I thought with relief that it was not necessary to talk when dancing, I looked with some dismay at her trailing gown and felt my soul fill with a horrible fear, lest I should step on it.

The waltz was a familiar one but it failed to restore my equanimity. I capered wildly about, stepping on that hated gown, and becoming more and more confused. Presently Miss Stewart declared that she was tired and suggested an ice. Glad to escape, I led her from the crowded hall and soon procured her an ice and a seat.

Once again I had to face the vexed problem of something to say. What could I talk about anyway? History! Ah! a happy thought, "S-say" I stammered, "w-wasn't it awful about Mary, Queen of Scots?"—"Why, what happened her?" said Miss Stewart in surprise. "Dont you remember? She had her head cut off," suggested I in astonishment.—"Oh did she? I had forgotten."

That attempt at conversation had failed. There was an uncomfortable pause, during which Miss Stewart foot tapped the floor impatiently. I must make another effort. In desperation, I once more plunged into history. "Henry VIII must have been a wild chap, eh?" I returned. My fair companion evinced some slight show of interest. "Henry Yates, did you say? I don't know him, what year is he in?" My heart sank, "I am afraid I do not know his dates," I admitted uneasily. "Is he here this year?" she enquired. "Oh no," I exclaimed, "I think he is dead," then tentatively. "You know he had eight wives,"—"Did he? perhaps he was a Mormon," suggested Miss Stewart in a slightly bored tone. "Do you think so?" I asked. "I am sure I do not know. Suppose we talk about something else," she said indifferently. With all my heart, but what would we talk about. I was in despair. I dared not approach history again. There was a long pause; to my perturbed mind it seemed to last for hours. While I was frantically wondering what on earth would interest a clever Senior, Jack came rushing up, with "Sorry, old boy, but this is my dance." Sorry! well, I was not, with a deep inward feeling of satisfaction I saw her rise to go. "Good-bye. So glad to have met you," she murmured with a charming smile, as she moved away, leaving me standing in open-mouthed wonder, to see cousin Jack, laughing and carelessly chatting, lead her back to the crowded hall.—C. L. J. '10