

TWENTY YEARS AGO.

I've wandered through the village, Tom, and sat beside the pen where you are still reducing rock as you were doing when I left you back in eighty-four—ah me! How time does fly! Excuse me while I wipe a briny teardrop from my eye.

The same old bricks are in the wall—you couldn't eat the bricks! The same old warden's watching you, to thwart the same old thief. But few are left to greet me, Tom, and none is left to know. The way they came to send up you, just twenty years ago.

Your cell looks rather different, Tom—the bars have been replaced by new ones stronger than the bars your trusty friend defaced. But the same old lockstep's still in vogue—you journey to and fro with little of the awkwardness of twenty years ago.

You know I was your lawyer, Tom, and when the sentence came you tried to make me shade my fee, and said I was to blame. But I had done my duty—you are doing yours, I know. So let us, pray, dismiss the theme of twenty years ago.

—W. F. Kirk, in Milwaukee Sentinel.

FIREPROOF

By Morice Girard

ELL, Gerald, you seem strangely distraught to-night; is it toothache or love, man?" exclaimed the jovial rector of Menstone, the Rev. Harry Ingold, a squarson of the old school, now fast passing away.

Moutjoy started as the older man laid his hand on his shoulder. "Not toothache, I'm thankful to say. I've never been troubled with that in my life."

"Then it must be the other thing," Ingold linked his arm into his friend's and drew him into a recess. There were several of these convenient resting places in the great ballroom of Mellans Castle.

The scene was certainly not one which favored either melancholy or abstraction. Sir Harry Gayter, the owner of Mellans, was giving a ball to inaugurate his shrievalty of the loveliest county in England, in the eyes of, at any rate, its inhabitants. Devon. It was an affair of the elite of the county, with a large military, naval and marine element thrown in, to give a touch of brilliancy and color to the ensemble. It may be doubted whether more beautiful women or finer bodies of men had ever before responded to the hospitable invitation of the lord of Mellans Castle than on this particular occasion.

From the alcove to which Ingold and Moutjoy had retired glimpses could be obtained of the dancers as they floated past on the carefully polished floor. Gerald sat forward, looking eagerly at the couples gracefully circling round to the tune of a waltz, played by the marine band from Plymouth, stationed in the whispering gallery.

The younger man was so intent and preoccupied that he seemed already to have forgotten—at any rate, he was oblivious of—the propriety of his companion.

Ingold looked at the fresh, strong, handsome face with evident sympathy. He knew perfectly what was passing behind that inadequate ill-fitting mask. He knew that every time the revolution of the dance brought Bertha Reeve and her partner, Lord Dayre, into Moutjoy's line of vision, a hardness came about the flexible mouth, and something very like pain showed itself in the clear gray eyes.

"You don't think Bertha would ever look at him, do you, Gerald? Why, she could crumple him up in the palm of one hand. She is the finest girl in the room, and that's not saying little. And he! Why, he has the intellect and frame of an under-sized monkey!"

"What does it matter to me whether she looks at him or not? Besides, you never know what a woman thinks or what she likes."

"Don't you? I do. I never was a marrying man; but not the most inveterate husband in this room, or anywhere else, for that matter, can teach me about what a woman likes or dislikes."

"Perhaps, then," he remarked, somewhat testily, "you will tell me what they do like?"

"Well, above all things, some one stronger than themselves—more inches, more fibre, more strength. Only a woman who wants a title, and can content herself with that and nothing more, will marry Dayre; and I can assure you, with all the confidence in life, that woman is not Bertha Reeve."

"I cannot help thinking sometimes—" Gerald said almost under his breath.

"That Bertha cares for you—loves you?" put in the parson.

"Almost that," Moutjoy assented, after a pause.

"Why don't you take your courage in both hands, and ask her?" Gerald looked at his friend.

"How can I?"

"Why not?"

"You know the state of my exchequer just as well as I do. I have the oldest name in the county and the poorest property. My pedigree is as long as my rent roll is short. Bertha is Miss Reeve, of Reeve, the richest girl in the west, absolute mistress of herself and all her belongings. If she were poor I would ask her to go with me to Canada, or somewhere, and we would make out life together somehow. But as it is! Would not me say I was a fortune hunter? Nay, should I not feel like one myself? I cannot even talk to her like I can to other girls. I should say that she thinks that fellow Dayre a genius by the side of me. Look at them now."

in the world was slipping from his grasp, and his fate was being decided while the band rested from its labors, and the gay assemblage prepared itself for the next item in the programme.

There seems something specially incongruous in blank despair gripping the heart under such conditions. The brilliancy of the lights, the beautiful dresses and conspicuous uniforms all seemed to mock the gnawing pain at Gerald's heart.

Bertha Reeve and Lord Dayre passed the alcove. As they did so these words fell softly as they were spoken, on two pairs of ears: "I hardly know what to say; it is all so unexpected. You do not wish me to decide to-night?"

"May I come for my answer tomorrow?"

Then the speakers passed out of hearing of those involuntary listeners.

"I cannot stay here," Moutjoy said, in a hoarse whisper, very unlike his usual tones. "The air of the place chokes me. I shall get away without any fuss. They won't miss me. If they do, make some excuse to Sir Harry and Lady Gayter. Say I was taken bad, or something."

With a squeeze of the hand Gerald slipped out of the alcove. He had just found his coat and hat, and was about to go, when he was arrested by the sound of a door opening. He was glad that the stables were likely to be deserted. He had not brought a groom himself. In his present state of mind he hated to make out even trivial explanations and excuses.

With some difficulty he managed to find his own mare among the hundred horses tethered wherever standing room under cover could be found. The carriages were outside in the great yard.

Gerald was just issuing from the stables when he heard a great shouting from the direction of the castle. He let go his mare's bridle; she galloped out of the yard and disappeared. Moutjoy smelt burning wood. He ran toward the entrance of the courtyard. When he reached the great gates his heart stood still. All the basement and ground floor of Mellans were in flames. Panned and lined, as the fine old rooms were, with oak, dry as tinder, centuries old, with a great staircase of similar material in the centre, the castle was just adapted for rapid conflagration.

As it turned out afterward, when investigation into the cause of the outbreak was made, the fire originated with the overturning of a lamp in the butler's pantry.

Gerald rushed to the main entrance, before which a crowd of guests were standing. They all seemed paralyzed with fear. The young man brushed them to one side. He could see Bertha Reeve nowhere. She must be in the burning building still. And there was Ingold, too, the man he loved best in the world.

Gerald dashed into the hall, meeting overwhelming smoke. He was choking, and his eyes were smarting and red hot. He could hear the cries of girls, the shouting of men above. In his frenzy he could have flung himself into the flames which danced before him.

Then an arm was laid upon his shoulder, and he was half dragged, half led, out. It was the parson, whose courage was of that order which rises calm and resolute to the greatest emergency.

The men, under Ingold's direction, were bringing up long ladders. Up and down they went in relays, bringing in their arms fainting women. The gentlemen above either helped by handling inanimate burdens to the rescuers, or stood back to wait their turn.

Half a dozen times Gerald had been up and down the ladder he had made up his own. Ingold was at the next. On each journey he had brought some one to the outside air and safety, and then handed her to another willing helper to take away. But that some one was not the girl for whom, with glad prodigality, he would have given his life. Then at the last, when almost all were saved, Gerald saw Bertha. He jumped from the ladder top through the window and ran to her. The flames were at the back of her, and had begun to sting her light dress. Lord Dayre was still by her side. Just as Moutjoy reached her she was over come and tottered backwards. Lord Dayre, with a quick effort, saved her from falling. There were now only these two and Gerald left at that end—the most dangerous part of the great salon. Some devil seized him, whispering in his ear: "She has half given herself to Dayre; let him save her!" For years the memory of that terrible lapse haunted him.

"Take her, Dayre, and carry her down!"

The peer was hardly able to support Bertha's weight, much less carry her down the ladder. He glanced at the window, filled with the eddy smoke; then he turned to Gerald.

"Curse you," he said; "you know I can't do it. Take her yourself!"

"If I do," replied Moutjoy, "I take her for good and all."

Then he gathered the girl up in his arms and carried her down the ladder. Lord Dayre closely following.

In the afternoon of the following day Gerald rode over to Reeve to inquire after his mistress.

Dressed in a tawdry, looking very white and interesting, she received him in her boudoir.

"I came to ask after you," he said. "To confess—to ask forgiveness."

"For saving my life? It surely is easily obtained."

"I had the devil in me!" he cried. "So you have come to me for absolution?" she said. "Then you shall have it without any pains and penances since you saved my life." She added, looking at him with a half smile, "Lord Dayre only asked me whether I would cure to be one of his party for a yacht-ing expedition. Even that I would not promise offhand. Had it been what you thought—"

"Bertha!"

"I should have had no hesitation at all."—London World.

Teaching School in Persia.

Persian servants are always summoned and addressed by their masters as "children." When Mr. Wilfred Sparrow became tutor to the children of the royal family of Persia he was greatly amused by the daily customs of the little princes. He tells of his first day in the schoolroom:

We were in the middle of a lesson when Akbar Mirza, the magnificent, laying down his pen and taking of his spectacles, complained of the heat, which was 105 in the shade. "It is hot, yes, sir," he said.

I made no reply, whereupon he resumed his work; but in a moment he lifted up his voice once more. This time his tone was loud and imperious. "Bacoolan!" (child) he cried.

To my amazement, in stepped the stately general, and stood in an attitude of grave humility at a respectful distance, his head bowed and his hands clasped folded at the waist.

"Ab-likhmerdan!" (drinking water) was Akbar's word, and smart the scribe's action. Out he went, and back he came with a silver teapot in his hand. Very solemnly and slowly he went the round of the class, and raising the spout to each thirsty little mouth in turn, waited in patient silence until the imperial thirst had been quenched. While one little prince was being served, his neighbor, eyeing the silver nipple, sucked his lips in anticipation of the refreshing draught. As for me, it was mine to revel in the humor of the scene, which was followed soon after by an interlude in which our friend, the major, in full dress, was summoned by Bahram Mirza, the imperious, to clean his shoe.

These interruptions tickled my sense of humor, undoubtedly, but they achieved a more useful end than that. They were the means of showing me that the first thing I should have to teach these youthful Kajarers was not modern languages, but rather the first principles of self-help, self-reliance, self-dependence.

Personal and Political Enemies.

When Irishmen do differ, they differ all over. There are plenty of Irishmen in the House of Commons who have not exchanged a word with each other for years. Indeed, during the days when the old split subsisted it was quite a common thing to see Irishmen separate themselves even in the dining-rooms according to the group to which they belonged. In France it is pretty much the same thing, for there political differences follow the same lines as religious and social cleavages, and, therefore, are the more acute. I never expect a French politician to speak of a political opponent in any terms but those which would rightly be applied to a man who ought to be in penal servitude and had just escaped the gallows. But even in France there are mitigations. Old Grey, when he was President of the Chamber of Deputies—although he was a very stout Republican—used to play billiards with Paul de Cassagne, the swashbuckling Bonapartist. In Germany the Socialists are so bitter in their hostility to all other sections of the imperial Parliament that any one of them who would venture to accept an invitation from Count Buelow, the Chancellor, would lose all his influence with his colleagues; in fact, he would be politically ruined.—T. P., in M. A. T.

A Grave Error.

Advertising men are critical of their own and others' productions. They criticize the ad. or booklet from the standpoint of technicalities. Is the language clear—informing—grammatical? Is there an original idea, and is it well worked out? Is the illustrator's work clean-cut and effective? Is the printing all it should be? The reader of advertising is critical, too. But his or her criticism is entirely from the standpoint of the article offered—its quality, utility, price. Good printing, clear language, pretty illustrations, and fine ideas are hardly regarded, though readers are swayed by them beyond question, and perhaps criticize them unconsciously. But the proposition set forth is the chief consideration with the reader, and while the advertiser should never lose sight of technical details he will do well to remember that his opinions of good advertising are quite secondary to those of his readers. To look upon advertising entirely from the technical standpoint is to make a grave error.—Printers' Ink.

Food in China.

"The food of the Chinese consists principally of rice and fish." That statement has appeared in nearly every school geography or history that has been published since the flood. "It's all faldorol and faldoodle," said a concessionaire from the interior of the great empire. "The streams were fished out ages ago, and you seldom find fish in the interior. On the coast—yes. Much fish is eaten. But the main food of the Chinese is pork and chickens. Mutton and beef are rare. Less rice is eaten than you would imagine, but there is an abundance of palatable vegetables, and you would find no difficulty in making out a good dinner!"



Fashion in Handwriting.

There is a fashion in handwriting just as there is a fashion in clothes; but, fortunately, the modes of calligraphy change with less weathercock-like facility than those of chiffons do. There is also a vast amount of character revelation in handwriting; so perhaps even if it became the vogue to alter the handwriting as often as the hat, women would be unable to conform to the rule, says Home Chat.

But to return to the question of style, or fashion. The woman who writes what is called the Italian hand has almost died away with the old days in which the penny post had no existence and letter writing was a real art. We scribble now, whereas when twenty hours went further than they do now women produced wonders in the art of calligraphy.

The gentle nurtured and carefully educated girl of the very earliest days wrote a sloping hand, formed her letters clearly and carefully, made very long tops and tails to those letters that require them, and took a pride in forming her end strokes with delicate finesse, falling off again to a fine, light finish.

She was very particular about the formation of her capital letters, using many a quaintly wonderful flourish; and she endeavored, as best she might on her closely lined papers, to preserve an even line, employing sometimes ruled note paper, or using beneath her paper a sheet of ruled paper, the lines of which gleamed through the top sheet and proved a guidance to her pen.

Many men of culture and refinement also adopted the Italian style of handwriting. Those who have seen the signature of that great surgeon, Sir James Paget, will recognize the sloping character of the calligraph, the light and dark up and down strokes and the length of the looped letters. But in Sir James Paget's case, as in that of many other men of his marvelous intellectual power and unobtrusive modesty, flourishes of a pronounced type were absent.

Miss Braddon's handwriting tends toward the Italian style with pointed letters, well defined tails, and a distinct difference between the up and down strokes.

It used to be cruelly said of women who wrote an ill-formed, unrecognizable hand, that they were unable to spell; and of a truth in many cases this was undoubtedly so. In ancient days, of course, neither men nor women could be blamed for bad spelling. Until the standard of orthography was settled, how was it possible for anybody to spell correctly? Still, there is no doubt that until girls were as carefully educated as their brothers, numbers of them did adopt a form of handwriting that left the spelling of their words most questionable as regarded accuracy.

A Woman's Appearance.

There was a time when a woman going to look for a situation put on her oldest or poorest clothes either to excite sympathy or to demonstrate that she was very hard up indeed. But all that has changed, and the woman who goes in search of work presents as good an appearance as possible, appreciating that it multiplies the adverse odds to appear out at elbows and on the verge of poverty, says the New York Sun.

There are women who contend that to be well dressed is only within range of a few. But there are others who have given the question considerable care, and they assert that it is within the power of all, provided the matter is approached from the standpoint of common sense. Failure is due not to want of money, but to want of appreciation of merit or demerit and to a certain slavish order of mind which leads to a blind following of fashion, without seriously considering whether it is the fashion for one's self or not.

Here of course lies the difference between the dressmaker and the artist in dress. The purses of many are not long enough for the demands of the latter, and therefore it is more incumbent on the majority to study seriously the requirements of their own physiques, so that they may supply to the dressmaker the want which is so costly in the hands of the artist, namely, the knowledge of certain inflexible lines on which their clothing must be built, and to which the reigning fashion must inevitably give way.

The pity of it all is that woman in the pursuit of the beautiful in dress does not always study it from the end and object of it all—to present one's personality in its most attractive guise—is common to the sex, but attainment is reserved for the few. Possibly this arises from the fact that, though women may be fully alive to their attractions, they show a lamentable ignorance of their defects.

Indeed, a full realization of both is indispensable to success in this important matter. For all-important it is, though many rank it among the trivialities and possibly the snares of life. The self-respecting woman is well groomed, well dressed, presenting in herself an object of respect.

The critic judges one by the outward adornment rather than the inner virtues of one's soul, and possibly does not go far wrong in taking the former as an index of the latter. Slovenliness of the body is very nearly allied to slovenliness of mind.

"Keeping In" a Fine Art.

It requires a peculiar gift for a girl to keep herself "in the swim," so they say. A worldly woman said: "Fact and money alone will keep a girl in

Simple Fashions

New York City.—Deep yoke collars make a characteristic of the latest waist and give all the drooping, long-shoulder effect that is required by fashion.



WAIST WITH FANCY YOKE COLLAR.

lon. The very attractive May Manton waist illustrated shows one of a removable sort and allows of high or low neck or of a convertible one, as the waist can be made high and covered with the yoke collar, or low and worn either with or without as occasion demands; or, again, the yoke collar can be omitted altogether and a yoke above the shirtings only used, making a shirred waist with plain yoke that gives quite a different effect. The model is made of white crepe de chine, with trimming of Venetian lace, but innumerable suggestions might be made, all the soft materials of the season being well adapted for shirtings.

The waist is made over a fitted lining and is itself shirred at the upper, gathered at the lower and is closed in

gown, thus necessitating the possession of as many hats as gowns. It is artistic and effective and can be managed with a little extra cost if one has taste and skill for managing one or two black and white hats with different trimmings, which can be adjusted by deft fingers in a few moments.

Muslin and Batiste Robes.

Some handsome muslin and batiste robes, entirely hand sewed, were seen a day or two ago. One of these robes was of gray batiste, embroidered in black and white. The skirt was trimmed with several embroidered ruffles, the fulness supplied by tiny hand-run tucks. The waist was tucked in the same way and embroidered in a light, graceful design.

The Newest Gloves.

The newest gloves for reception and evening wear show delicate pink, blue and mauve linings. A spray of flowers, to match the lining, is often embroidered or painted on the back of the glove. Forget-me-nots, violets and arbutus are favorite blossoms.

Leaf Trimmings.

Leaf trimmings are among the notable successes in millinery. Violet leaves and rose leaves are used to decorate the edge of the hat brim. In many instances they cover it.

Robe Gowns.

Robe gowns of voile or similar light fabrics, combined with lace and fringing, are often very beautiful.

Black Velvet.

Very smart is a black velvet gown trimmed with white satin whereon is braided silver cord.

Blossom or Shirt Waists.

Bandings in Oriental colors are to be noted among the features of linen and cotton waists as well as of those made from wool and silk. This smart and novel May Manton model suits materials of all sorts, but is shown in heavy

A Late Design by May Manton.



visibly at the back. The yoke collar is circular and can be finished separately or with the waist, its neck edge being finished with a stock, or it can be cut off at indicated lines and the berth portion only used, or, if liked, the lining can be faced to form a yoke, the shirtings at the upper edge of the waist making the finish and the entire yoke collar omitted. The sleeves are mounted over fitted linings and are full at the elbows, shirred at the shoulders and finished with gauntlet cuffs, that are omitted when elbow sleeves are desired.

The quantity of material required for the medium size is four and one-half yards twenty-one inches wide, four yards twenty-seven inches wide, or two and five-eighths yards forty-four inches wide, with five-eighths yards of all-over lace and three and one-quarter yards of applique to trim as illustrated.

The Spring Shirt Waist.

The salient features of the styles for spring, in all waists, is the extreme breadth of shoulder; indeed, in many of the imported models this breadth reaches half way to the elbow, hence yoke effects promise to be a prominent part of all the dressy waists and also of a great number of shirt waists, whether of pique or of thin lawn. Long epaulette straps, bands of let-in lace, folds, shirring, sleeve caps, etc., are all pressed into service in the development of the new model. Plain shirt waists are given a modish touch by an inserted band of lace or embroidery simulating the drop or 1830 yoke.

Linen Collars.

Linen collars of the stiff sort are in again, after a season of disfavor, but while the severely plain linen collar is seen, the modish stiff collar bears an embroidery of dots or tiny flowers or scrolls. Sometimes its edge is scalloped and buttonholed, sometimes its narrow stiff linen hem is joined to the collar with open work, and altogether it is a linen collar of a distinctly coquettish type that is with us now.

A New Idea in Hats.

A new idea, or, rather, an old one revived, is that the hat must match the

white linen with bandings of the same material. The vest effect, obtained by the narrow front, is exceedingly becoming and quite novel, yet in no way detracts from the simplicity and usefulness of the waist, which is equally well adapted to the entire costume and to wear with a separate skirt. Fronts, back and sleeves all are tucked to simulate box pleats, which give tapering lines at the back and provide fullness over the bust.

The waist consists of fronts, centre front, back and sleeves, with fitted waist and sleeve linings that can be used or omitted as preferred. The centre front is plain and is stitched to the right front, hooked over into the left beneath the tuck, so making the closing invisible. The sleeves are tucked to be snug above the elbows and form full puffs below, the centre tucks being extended to the cuffs, so giving the line that is so notable a feature of the season.

The quantity of material required for the medium size is four and one-quarter yards twenty-one inches wide three and five-eighths yards twenty-seven inches wide, or two and one-half yards forty-four inches wide, with one and one-half yards of banding five inches wide to trim as illustrated.



BLOUSE OF SHIRT WAIST.

eight yards forty-four inches wide, with one and one-half yards of banding five inches wide to trim as illustrated.