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Select Poetry.

How Women Love Dress.

He sat by a window at twilight,
And placidly puffed his cigar.
He gazed on a neighboring skylight,
And thought of his bank stock at par.

Two voices came upward, as high as
The place where he sat, from the street;
Two ladies, on "gored" and on "bias,"
Were holding communion sweet.

Then he mused upon feminine folly
And fashion's absurd excess;
And he said, with a tone melancholy,
"How women do rave over dress!"

"Just get any two of them started,
And they'll talk for a month about clothes,"
He spoke like a hero, strong-hearted,
Who all such frivolity loathes.

"And the way they oppress the poor creatures
Who build all the dresses and things!
They'd like to make marks on their features,
For a little mistake in the strings."

Here a knock at the door. Then a waiter
And a new suit of garments appear.
"O, they've come, have they! Strange they're
not later!"

Quick! Light up the whole chandelier!"
One glance from a proper position
Suffices their fate to decide;
The linings are only Silesian,
The trousers a trifle too wide.

"Well, if I don't pitch into that Schindler!
I never did see such a bilk.
Why, I told the outrageous old swindler
I wanted the linings half silk!"

"O, hang all the scoundrelly tailors!
The collar's a half inch too high,
The trousers—they might be a sailor's!
Now wouldn't I look like a guy?"

Each glance makes him more and more late—
"Why, they look even worse from behind!
I'll blow up the sneaking old pirate!
I'll give him a piece of my mind!"

"I'm done with the scoundrel, that's certain,
Now, if ever I saw such a sight!
May I be eternally—"(Curtain!
The rest wouldn't suit ears polite.)

JOCK'S WIFE.

MR. AND MRS. ELLIOT were an old couple, full of old habits and feelings and prejudices, yet they had a certain aroma of youth about them and were fond of young people. Both were endowed with a very large share of worldly prudence, which had the effect of delaying their marriages till late in life. Perhaps they had not thought of it sooner; but, at any rate, Mr. Elliot had waited till (so far as anything is secure) he had a secure competency before he asked a cousin of his own, of nearly his own age, to marry him.

This late marriage had given them a long spun-out youth, and it had also given them a second spring—a spring, but it was not followed by summer.—Neither might acknowledge this, but felt it. The Elliots were rich in nieces and nephews, among whom they were "Nelly and John;" they might be addressed as Aunt Nelly and Uncle John, or as Mr. and Mrs. Elliot, but all their young connections, speaking of them among themselves, called them Nelly and John.

Very great men are known by their Christian names, and very little men who are generally well liked; if people are not very great and not very ridiculous, and are generally known by their first names, it means that they are lovable.

Lizzie Elliot was her father's eldest daughter, and the only child by the first marriage, but this was a fact that had been lost sight of in the family; even her stepmother seemed to have forgotten it, and her eldest brother—Jock, as he was called to distinguish him from

the numerous other Johns in the connection—appeared to be fonder of Lizzie than of his own sisters; there were only two years between them, and between him and Sibyl there was a difference of six years, which might account for his preference.

Jock and Lizzie were great allies; he was only twenty-three, but he had already a good position as sub-inspector of mines, with a prospect of early promotion. He was clever and prudent; every one who knew him felt that he would never do a foolish thing.

Lizzie Elliot was old: she had been in existence for a quarter of a century, and when she said that to herself, it had a very solemn sound indeed. More, she had had what is called "a disappointment;" so at this advanced age and with this experience, what remained for her but to devote herself to her kindred at Stonylea?

Her father had ten children beside herself, and looking that fact in the face; she had gone for two years to the Continent to qualify herself to be a governess; but there was a situation within two miles of her father's door by John and Nelly, of whom she had been fond all her life, and who were childless.

What did Miss Elliot do with her disappointment? Did she leave it behind her or take it to Stonylea? She did neither. The truth is, she had drowned it in pride, and then reduced it to powder in a cremation-oven heated by the fire of youth. After this, of course, there was still the powder to dispose of; and she looked at it wistfully, as if it were something that did not belong to her and could not throw it away; there was surely no harm in keeping a little dust.

"So, Lizzie," said her uncle when she arrived, "Nelly and you have made a bargain, I understand?"

"Oh, nothing so business-like as that," said the niece.

"Then you should," he said; "it's always best to know what you are doing, to make a firm bargain. Have you never heard that you should count silver after your father?"

"Yes, I have heard that, but I should not think of doing it; I like to trust people."

"Long may it be so, lassie!" said John; and probably it would be long.

Nelly's prime difficulty in housekeeping was her servant; she only kept one, as in any emergency help could always be had from the hinds' houses, which were only five minutes' distant, or three if people were in a great hurry; and in such a quiet, methodical family one, Mrs. Elliot found, was enough. Enough and more than enough was the incumbent in possession when Lizzie came to her aunt's assistance; so, at least, Nelly thought, with her ideas stiffened in the moulds of forty years back. Janet Paterson, her single handmaiden, seemed to her the embodiment of modern degeneracy. "That girl will ruin herself yet," she said to Lizzie as Janet passed the window, having got an afternoon to herself to make some visits among her acquaintance; "it is really not respectable to see a servant dressed up in that way."

"I like to see a happy face, and she'll never be young again," said Lizzie, speaking feelingly from the borders of the mellow old age she had reached; "but she is certainly striking."

"Striking! A girl going out of this house dressed in that way is not respectable," repeated Mrs. Elliot.

"I think your character and mine will stand it, Nelly," said her husband from his chair, in which he had apparently been sleeping.

Janet had dressed herself in a gown the effect of which was white, although it had a small blue sprig on it, and it was made with all the frills and furbelows of the day. She had a round face, big blue eyes with long eyelashes, rosy cheeks, and the upright gait and bearing of a drill-sergeant, tempered with elasticity and grace. Owing to her appearance, and also as a pleasant variety on the prosaic "Janet," Miss Elliot generally called her Hebe; and the gods would not have been ill off with such a cup-bearer: she gave a strong impression of youth, and an impression of strong youth.

"And if I were to speak to her about

it," continued Mrs. Elliot, "she would probably tell me to find another servant and she would find another place."

"Some might do that," said Lizzie, "but not Hebe: she is a modest, humble, biddable little being, I think."

"Then get her to dress herself like her station," said Nelly.

"If ladies make fools of themselves with dress, what can you expect of servants?" asked Lizzie.

"Has she common sense?" asked John; "it seems to me the most uncommon kind of sense going."

"She never thinks anything about it. She likes to dress herself as any other girl of her age does—that's all; and I must say I like to see her individuality coming out; she is far more picturesque and diverting than if she were tamed down to regulation habits," said Lizzie. "Oh, I declare there's papa and Sibyl!" she exclaimed, and ran out to meet them with a flush of girlish glee not quite in keeping with her time of life.

"Oh," cried Sibyl as she came in, "we came through the village, and I saw Hebe dancing—" A warning look from Lizzie stopped her. "We have had such a capital drive!" she went on, so as not to make an awkward pause.

"What did you say about Janet?" asked Mrs. Elliot.

"I saw her as I came through the village," said Sibyl.

"Yes, she went away after dinner. Has Jock come back?" Lizzie said. (Jock had been away on a continental tour.)

"Last night," said Sibyl. "He enjoyed it awfully: you should drink off his account of it before the foam dies down."

"So I will: is he not coming over?"

"Oh yes, of course he is. He was some weeks at Dresden, your old howff, and saw all the pictures and heard no end of music, and was at Pilnitz and everywhere."

As Mr. Elliot and his daughter drove off, Hebe came in, looking as fresh and happy as it was her custom to look.

"So I hear you have been dancing," her young mistress said to her.

"Yes,"

"I think you should not dance on the road."

"Not dance?" Hebe said in a tone of surprise: it was as natural for her to dance when she had an opportunity as it was for the myriads of gauzy insects that filled the air on that summer evening to advance and retire, to dart and to wheel, in a way that might have given valuable lessons to all the dancing-masters in Europe.

"Well, not on the road. Who was your partner?"

"I don't know," said Hebe.

"It might be better not to dance on the road with people you don't know," said Lizzie.

A grave, puzzled expression appeared on Hebe's face; evidently, the notion of stiff decorum of this kind was new to her.

Miss Elliot had taken a strong liking to this girl—why, she could hardly have told, probably because of her innocent nature and unfailing brightness of spirit. At times she was plain-looking and almost coarse, and then again her face seemed as near beauty as it was possible to be; and this was its charm—its constant variety and mobility.

Hebe went to bed that night, her reasoning powers not having found rest for the sole of their foot regarding the dancing question; and her young mistress, on gaining the sanctuary of her own room, took a look at her heart, which the mention of Dresden had gently agitated.

She had gone thither to study many things, and lived in the house of an aunt, a sister of her step-mother's, who was there for the education of her family, where she met a young artist, a countryman of her own, who was haunting the "old masters" in the picture-galleries. Old masters are no doubt very fascinating, but young mistresses are even more so, as the old masters would be the first to admit if their opinions could be got at. German gutturals are charming, and so is the crash of grand music; but steep all these in an atmosphere of love, and what have you? Something vastly too good for this world, and which consequently won't keep—something that shows like nectar for the gods, but which with a little time dulls

down into excellent domestic beverage—goods, wholesome, and strengthening, but not nectar. However, the nectar was taken from Lizzie's hand while it was yet nectar. After she was engaged to Mr. King (that was the artist's name), and her mother and aunt had corresponded on the subject, and people generally had been duly apprised of the fact, some one told her that Mr. King had a betrothed already in England. She asked him if this was true.

"Well," he said, "what if it were?"

"You ought to marry her."

"You think so? You mean that?"

"Yes," she said with all the coolness and dignity she could muster, "if she will marry you, and you don't change your mind again."

"You have considered the thing, and that is your advice?" he said.

"That is my advice," she echoed.

"Very well, so be it," he said; and they parted.

He went back to England, and she wrote home that the engagement was broken off by mutual consent; which good-natured people translated as meaning that she had been jilted. That was three years ago now, and since that time she had heard nothing of Mr. King.

Jock visited Stonylea next day, and gave his sister a full account of his travels, telling her all about the people she had known in Dresden. She listened eagerly, but the name she waited for did not occur in his narration, and she was disappointed, although she tried to make herself think she did not care; but she found it difficult to believe a fiction of her own making, and it was a fiction, however much she might wish it to be a fact.

"How did Lizzie enjoy your travels?" Sibyl asked her brother.

"Oh, very well; but she is a curious creature, Liz: she is what I call notional. She is always taking an extraliking to something or somebody, without considering if it is reasonable or where it is to lead her."

"Is she?" But she is good."

"Excellently good, as she is given to think every one as good as herself."

"There is no one in particular that she is making a hobby of just now, is there? It won't do her any harm to think John and Nelly as good as gold, and it won't injure them."

"Oh, she entertained me for about half an hour last night with the innocence and beauty and piquancy of the servant they have—Hebe she calls her; and I looked at the girl and said she would make a good figure in a landscape, and was vexed after I had said it, thinking it would put her in mind of King, and then made bad worse by telling her that all her geese were swans. I believe King's good qualities existed nowhere but in her eyes."

"Oh," said Sibyl lightly, "she has forgotten King long ago; you need not distress yourself about that. But I think we should go often to Stonylea; I should not like her to feel dull."

"I'll go as often as you like when I'm at home."

Lizzie was not dull, however, nor likely to be so: she was a young woman of energy and resources, and dullness was a thing that had never entered her head. Besides, she was in a position of command; she was, virtually at least, mistress of the situation, and that to a person of energy and ability is to be prized. For one thing, she was seized with an enthusiasm for educating Hebe; she saw perfections and attractions and possibilities about that young person which no one else could see. Not that Hebe was without admirers; on the contrary, in her own class she was quite a belle and attracted numerous admirers; but Lizzie grudged her to the ordinary workman, and she had formed a small romance—not exciting or sensational by any means, but still a plan with the romantic in it.

After a time, Lizzie took Jock into her confidence as to what she was doing. Jock had been at home all his life at Stonylea, and now when he had time he very often drove one or more of his sisters over. To her delight, rather to her surprise, her brother approved of her plan, for he was given to check romantic flights in his sisters, and she had expected him to frown on it.

"There's no use in speaking of it to every one," she said. "If I were to tell John, he would say in his quiet way,

'Oh, ay, try it,' meaning, 'You will never make anything of it;' and Nelly would put it down altogether. I hesitated even about telling you, for I thought you would laugh at me; but I'm glad I did it. I'll go on and prosper now."

"Always tell me everything," said Jock. "But there's this risk; after you have got your maiden moulded, some one may snap her up. She may marry a respectable ploughman reap what you have sown. You must be prepared for that risk; she is not without admirers, you say?"

"Plenty; everybody admires her but you and aunt and Sibyl, and several ladies who have been here; they think her extra plain-looking."

"You should positively interdict followers," said Jock; "you'll never get a girl to attend to lessons that has her head filled in that way."

"Well," replied Lizzie to her brother, "I could not have believed that a creature with as much original sense and ability as Hebe could have been so ignorant as she is; and she has no thirst for information; she forgets a thing as soon as she hears it. It is very curious, for it is so delightful to know, and one would think she would feel it so awkward not to know." And Miss Elliot gave a few details of her efforts.

"If it were not that am fond of her I believe I should throw it up."

"Miss Elliot," said Hebe one day, "a man comes here every week selling tea; do you want any?"

"None," said Lizzie; "we have a good stock laid in. I doubt he'll find it a poor business in this district."

"I told him nobody here bought tea at the door, but he said he had it very good and very cheap."

"Fifty years ago he might have had a chance, but the time is past for selling tea in that way. Poor creature! Is he old?"

"No—young," said Hebe.

"Well, next time he comes you can give him some bread and milk, and tell him that he need not take the trouble of calling here again; we don't want tea."

"He'll be here this afternoon," said Hebe; "this is his day."

"What is he like?" asked Miss Elliot.

"Something like a gentleman; if he had not come to the back door, I would have taken him for a gentleman."

Punctual to his time the tea-merchant arrived.

"Do you need any tea?" he asked. He had stepped in through the porch, and was standing in the doorway opposite Hebe.

"No," she said, turning round from looking at herself in the little glass that hung by the window; she had just been planning below her chin a knot of bright crimson ribbon, the finishing touch to her afternoon toilet, and had seen the wide-awake, curls and spectacles of tea-man in the glass by the side of her own face.

"Would you be kind enough to ask your mistress?" he said.

"I've asked her already," said Hebe shortly.

"And what did she say?"

"She said she had a good stock of tea, and did not want any."

"But," said the man, "a good stock of tea is not a stock of good tea; mine is a very superior article, grown in India—a new thing in the market, you might tell her."

"I know she does not want it."

"Just be good enough to ask her," he said persuasively.

"It's no use disturbing the old lady; she does not want tea. I know," replied she.

"But you need not disturb the old lady; tell the young one. You have a young mistress, have you not?" he asked.

"How would you feel if you knew?" Hebe said, considering the question uncalled for.

"Your kitchen is a picture," said the man, leaning against the door and looking all round.

"You can come in and take a seat if you like, and I'll give you some bread and milk."

"Oh, thank you," said the man; then bending over the cat he said, "She is