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Depends Upon the SHORTENING Used

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:: Over the Nuts and Wine ::

By FRANCES COURTENAY BAYLOR

Fashionable Pets.

New York, it seems, has imported a brand-new imbecility from Paris in the shape of dolls for grown women. They come expensive, costing from $45 to $125, and are dressed like Miss Flora McFlimsey, of Madison Square. It is an inspiring sight to see the smart set visiting with their dolls, taking their dolls out for auto rides, clasping them to their hearts as they go down Fifth Avenue or walk in the park, gushing over their own dolls, envying other women's dolls—just prize idiots! They don't want children of their own; they find that means self-sacrifice and work and staying at home. They are blind to the fact that the alleys of New York are filled with poor little motherless and fatherless creatures who are pining for love, for care, for a caress, a romp, for a woman to wash the dirty little face, button up the apron, braid the hair, cook "cookies" and a good meal, mother up the long-neglected waif and stray of the public streets. A true woman never looks at one without a pang. Yet here are women (so-called), rich, young, strong, dandling dolls. Isn't it disgusting! "Come here to your mamma and let me see how your new diamond bracelets look, my precious popsy-wopsy," sounds fascinating, doesn't it? Talleyrand would have admired them. He said he married his wife because she was a fool. He added, "And I needed rest." A betise for a clever man; for there is nothing so restless and unsettled and trying, so perennially inimical to all peace and comfort, as many a man who has tried the experiment can testify abundantly and mournfully.

Fashionable Dogs.

For a long time poodles were all the rage. Then pugs entered the field, and their hideousness was considered far more attractive than the silky coat and soft eyes of the King Charles spaniel or even the clever French poodle. Then it became the ambition of fashionable girls to be followed everywhere by huge mastiffs or collies or a dachshund. But now a West Highland white terrier is the fad of the day, and every woman with any claim to being "a leader of society" must not be without one. It would be low to have a fox-terrier, a Great Dane or a bulldog. To be seated firmly on that dizzy, enviable eminence, madame must have a thoroughbred West Highlander. For many generations the Malcolms of Poltalloch, in the West Highlands, have kept and bred these dogs, and they are said to come from the dogs of the Spanish Armada that swam ashore when the ships were wrecked off that rocky coast. James I. sent some of them to France as a present. But only now have they become fashionable.

A Fashionable Poodle Barber.

Like the rag and bone man, and the cat's meat man, the poodle barber is a purely European invention. The haughty spirit of the free-born American revolts from shaving dogs for a living, so even in this country the Italian, the Frenchman, the Greek, alone shaves the fashionable poodle, and will now have to devote himself to the up of the West Highlander's tail, if he would make money from "a swagger clientele."

Maggie Tulliver's Dog.

Was it not a Yorkshire terrier that Bob Jakin besought Maggie to accept as "better nor any human"? That, no dog is, nor ever could be; but there is something perfectly delightful in the faithful, affectionate, uncritical love of a dog, especially when one is ill or sad, or simply low-spirited. But sensible people do not adore them and lay the ninny over them, prefer them to the human beings around them, kiss and caress them rapturously, bathe them in perfumed water, clean their teeth with Sozodont, order for them rubber boots and an umbrella and diamond and ruby collars, appoint a maid to take them out walking, send them across the Atlantic to be buried and set up a $1,000 monument for the dear deceased, as the fashionable gump does.

Little Black Pages.

In Sir Godfrey Kneller's day, every woman of fashion in London had her own little darky from Guinea or Senegambia, clad in a fantastic family livery and cap. He carried his mistress's fan, or vinaigrette or parasol or wrap or beads or prayer book. He was as tricksy and as now, and described as "a pickle" and "a perfect handfull" and "an outrageous little villain" in the romances of the period; immortalized by Sir Godfrey's pencil; also Sir Peter Lely's.

The Freaks of Fashion.

They are usually only freaks, and last only a short time, but sometimes they hold on for centuries as wasps-nests have done, and circus rouging, and the pointed shoes that we see in some of our shop windows to-day. These latter came into vogue in the time of Francis I. ("All-is-lost-save-honor" Francis, the kingly), and the points grew and lengthened till the courtiers fastened them around the leg as garters, and even then they became such a nuisance that they were abolished by edict, and common sense again ruled at the fashionable world of France. At Vauxhall and Ranelagh days the men turned out in enormous wigs, mauve or pink and blue, and white and yellow satin or velvet coats and silk breeches, enormous muffs and whalebone stays, while the ladies' towering headdress necessitated leaving the top of every sedan chair open, and their hoops required nice management to get in one at all, and their patches, paint, frills and furbelows were a sight to see. We have a letter in our dispatch box describing "last night at Vauxhall." Lord ——monson, fine in blue and silver, the handsomest buck of his day, arm in arm with Colonel —— and the French ambassador—all three evidently in their cups; the biggest muffs I have seen—inclined to be quarrelsome. Lord —— trounced his footman for forgetting to put his snuffbox in his smallclothes, and broke his fine cane all to bits—which gave us a pretty fright."

The Ancient Estimate of Fashion.

"Wherever money and silly people are to be found, there are ridiculous excesses to be seen," said Xenophon, hitting the nail fairly and squarely on the head, all those centuries ago. People of birth and of breeding are restrained by refinement and good taste from becoming mere tailors' and dressmakers' models; from indulging in the mad fad of the moment to an absurd extent; from all excesses. They were born in the purple. They are too proud to submerge their own identity and do anything merely because somebody else does it. They know how to spend money most lavishly, but not foolishly. They keep their balance perfectly; the notoriety, publicity of the brass band and limelight set in society offends the refined sensibility of a gentleman, a lady. They are not climbers; they have nothing to gain and nothing to lose by fashions and what is called "the smart set." Where they sit has been the head of the table so long that they never think of their "position" at all. One cannot be more than just a simple gentleman. Crowns, coronets, estates are the accident of fortune to the gentleman—convenient, agreeable it may be; perhaps only burdensome and undesirable—but essential? Not in the least! Liberty, independence, quiet, some honorable occupation, their altars, hearths and friends, with the welfare of their country—these only are essentials to such.

We have a great number of charming people in the South who are not advertised in the daily papers at all, and might be said not to be "in society" at all, according to the newly arrived. Many of them can't afford to waste money, some of them are repelled by the tinge of vulgarity, artificiality, ostentation of much modern "entertainment for man and beast," as the English inns put it, the club house of quid pro quo substitutes for the beautiful, real, neighborly, kinsmanly, old hospitality of Virginia and the South. Some of them have found out that the warmth of your own fireside, the companionship of your own family and congenial friends, your work, your books, are worth all of the yellow luncheons and green dinners and pink teas that were ever given, no matter how "swell." Some people are so intent on being "swell" that they have lost all idea of courtesy, unselfish kindness, sincerity, without which no one can possibly be well bred. Virginians (indeed, all gentle folk) are an independent lot. They find it possible to enjoy a good dinner with everything they are going to eat in plain sight and easy reach, piping hot and mighty good in good old English style, rather than follow a Russian fashion, which sets one down to the tables of most people of ordinary means before a waste of white tablecloth, a few bonbon dishes, generally half filled, and a dusty fern on its last legs, till an inexperienced protemporaneous servant serves intermittently in elaborate courses a half-cold, spoiled dinner.

Hungry people in a big family eat up the diminutive lamb chop long before the green peas arrive. They often get half through the meal without a glass of water. And they spend their appetite on the wrong dish, not knowing what is coming. Some people neglect to be born "fashionable" just as they forget to be born rich. They actually prefer to be comfortable. They are totally insensible to the fascination of a small French roll tied up with a huge bow of pink ribbon. They don't care a pin about a chandelier wreathed in smilax set above a steak like shoe-leather, a poor soup and worse vegetables, with a high-art pudding like Mme. de Stael's "airy nothing," and mineral waters to end with. They resent huge handsome silver dishes, handed around by a foreign footman in livery, with white cotton gloves, with five weazened croquettes or six small potatoes in the middle, no matter how fine and French the label. "Men are brutes," vide the suffragettes; they are not aesthetic, they are generally the possessors of good, honest appetites, and after a hard day's work they want a good, honest, hot, abundant supply of "wittles," regardless of fashion. Of course, in very wealthy, stately homes, where plenty of the best servants are kept, dinners a la Russe are all very well. But in this country they are generally a ghastly farce. The old English fashion of serving food is vastly more sensible and comfortable. In old Virginia days, when there was grace, a turkey at the head of the table and a ham at the foot, flanked by a pair of ducks on one side and a pair of chickens on the other, five or six vegetables, a royal pudding and cakes galore, with wine, milk and coffee, a host who carved beautifully to choose tidbits for a guest and a couple of negro men with silver salvers behind the master and mistress's chair to serve, and at least two covers laid for unexpected but ever-welcome guests, people lived indeed. The comfort, the friendliness, the abundance and the refinement of these dinners for 365 days out of every year cannot be surpassed. When we get the sun and air trust, people will not dine at all; only nibble furtively in back pantries or slip a scientific tablet out of a waistcoat pocket at the office, or privately gorge breakfast foods while madame is politically engaged, caucusing, canvassing, voting. Even lunch counters will become the dreams of a prosperous past; truly fashionable people will be known by their guided food pills in pearl studded boxes, hand-painted; eating will be considered vulgar, and only billionaires will dream of more than one meal a day.

"The Smart Set."

Here is a significant little poem, and a clever one, written by a Southern girl (Miss Emma Bulloch, of Savannah), and worth quoting. President Roosevelt is a cousin of hers, and that family certainly have ink in their blood:

"As a bit of information, matrons proud,
And maidens fair,
Won't you kindly tell the meaning
Of the cold and glassy stare,
The haughty air disdainful,
The expression really painful,
That now seems to be your trade-mark
Everywhere?

"'Tis most frigid, I have noticed,
If by chance you have to meet
Some poor, shabby gentlewoman,
Whom you're fairly forced to greet,
At a fete—without compunction
Called 'a charitable function,'
For the Fresh Air Fund, or Invalids' Retreat.

"I'm relieved that it relaxes,
When you're with the chosen few;
Safe within the magic circle
Always en rapport with you,
At your lunchings and your dinings,
At your punchings and your winings,
Where you feel no need to question
Who is Who.

"Now, I'm only seeking knowledge,
And I may appear a fool;
I am out of date, I grant you,
Of the old, old-fashioned school,
Where birth and breeding counted,
And no social climber mounted,
And where courtesy and kindness
Were the rule.

"So, then, just for information, matrons proud,
And maidens fair,
Won't you kindly tell the meaning
Of the cold and glassy stare,
The haughty air disdainful,
The expression really painful,
That now seems to be your trade-mark,
Everywhere?"

Lady Selina Vipont.

Somewhere, in one of Bulwer's novels, he paints "a woman of ton," and said of her: "Lady Selina Vipont was never rude. But she could be excruciatingly civil." She made use of excessive conventionality to keep off ill-bred people, and found that it presented the surface of a billiard ball and was a very valuable weapon for the purpose. There was nothing that could be taken hold of, yet the deed was done.

A Feminine Invention.

There is no sort of doubt that what is called "society" was invented and is almost altogether sustained by women. As a general thing it bores the men tremendously. "Unless he is looking for a wife or trying to get rid of one, a man never goes out," a French wit has said, and though this is a bit overstated, few men ever get into a full dress costume and go to a ball or party with a good grace though they often shine when they get there. They enjoy a civilized dinner with agreeable people more than any other form of entertainment, and hate an afternoon tea most. A roomful of chattering married women, spinsters, "buds," one man and two boys, seems to be too much for them entirely; they fib outrageously and fly. The trouble, the expense, the worry of one "season" would last any man a lifetime, and they never can be brought to see why women never tire of the booths of Vanity Fair, or very rarely. They will all be open and in brisk operation soon all over the country. Tons of pasteboard will be adroitly placed on hall tables with a "Be quick or they'll catch us"; or "I am so thankful they are out; I owe some 110 visits already"; or "I hope I didn't look as glad as I felt when the maid said they were out." A great deal that is done is a purely mechanical waxwork function, as was proved by the lady at a Washington reception who, in reply to her hostess's gushing, "So glad to see you. How are you, dear?" replied, "Dead"; and got a "So glad! Delightful! Pass right up." And was pushed by a stout party right into a huge rubber plant, recovered herself, and went on being dead all down the line of receiving ladies. Mrs. Frelinghuysen, of the Arthur Cabinet, used to declare that she had to go to bed sometimes for three days "to rest her official smile," while her daughter, one of the most brilliant women of her day, never got beyond, "One lump, or two? And did you say cream?" the whole season, save at dinners, where she was delightful. "What on earth do they do it for?" asks mere man. And indeed it would be hard to tell; certainly not for amusement.

In the Landes.

The peasants who herd sheep in the Landes sit all day long on tripod stilts high up in the air above the marshes and knit, knit, knit as they watch their flocks, and every woman in an official position ought to have one for those awful receptions. She would look as if she were standing to receive her hundreds of guests for hours. In reality, she would be comfortably seated.

The Men.

Women bear the brunt chiefly of all this, but the men do not come off scot free by any means. They tell a delightful story in London of "Beauty Trevor" (we'll say), a remarkably handsome young fellow, even for his class in England, a guardsman, a crack shot and a man so unusually clever that he is in great demand for dinners, so much so that he has become a first-class military strategist. He has an appetite like a plow boy's after a day on the Scotch moors or in English stubblefields, and knowing that he is expected to make himself agreeable to the lady who falls to his lot to take into dinner, he has evolved what he calls "the Trevor humbug system," and thus describes it: "I bow solemnly and take the chosen one in with all my own grace. When we are seated, I never open my lips until soup and fish are over. Then I say, 'Beastly day,' which fits nearly every one of our 365, and take a long look at the lady. Then I am deaf and dumb and apparently shyness itself till the roast and vegetables are disposed of and a couple of entrees secured, but I contrive to cast a favorable eye upon the chosen one between mouthfuls, though still dumb. Then when I am sure I've got my dinner—I don't care a bawbee for what follows—and some good wine below my belt, I suddenly attack the fortress with, 'Do you believe in love at first sight, Miss Smith?' and turn in and make myself as agreeable as I can. It accounts perfectly for my previous absentmindedness, it works to a charm. I feel an awful sneak when the girls blush so, and can't help laughing for the life of me, they look so deliciously conscious. But, man alive, I dine out three nights a week at the very least out of the season, and every night in it, and I have got to get my dinner." He has beautiful dark Byronic eyes and lovely teeth. He is 6 feet 1 and a great athlete. He is heir to an old name and fine estate; he is the merriest scamp in England. "The Trevor humbug system" is naturally a brilliant success, and is commended to our Virginia gilded youths, many of whom are quite as good-looking, as well born and as charming as any to be found anywhere else in all the world.

Heartiness.

Out of fashion is heartiness in these days. Humbug has always held its own in society everywhere, though not often as pleasantly as in Beauty Trevor's case, and always will. But nowadays a faint bat of the eyelids, a limp upstairs handshake, an air of long-suffering boredom does duty in most of our cities for the special, personal, warm welcome that has always been so charming in the South. "To suffer and be strong" is certainly the motto for what is called "a society woman" now. She goes through enough fatigue and exposure every season to kill a prize fighter, so she must be strong. And it is quite evident that she suffers, so little real mirth mingles with her speeches and actions, so much does she seem the victim of circumstances and a martyr to position. Yet she has her consolations. She is photographed as a professional beauty or a leader of society; she is paragraphed along with baseball experts and inventors of remarkable shoes and whiskeys and patent medicines, not to mention the murderers of the moment, the bank defaulters and the candidates for office. She likes peaches with the bloom off, and adores the whiff of the footlights and confounds notoriety with distinction—more's the pity! And no deck hand works harder for his wages. Hers are vanity and vexation of spirit, chiefly, poor soul.

Solomon's Experience.

A great Oriental King found just such in his wonderful environment. He had power, absolute power; he had prestige, being accounted the wisest of men; he had wealth, a palace superb in sandalwood and ivory carvings, fountains, gardens; he had 20,000 horses in his stables; he had singing girls and dancing men, and an army and a kingdom and magnificent jewels and numerous wives. Yet it was a sad, dreary, weary old man, who wrote, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit." It is not in the power of the world to fill and content a single human heart. God and home and heaven can alone do that, for the human soul is far greater than anything it sees, far bigger than this whole wide world. The Russian poet Derzhoven, who wrote, "Thou art, and therefore I can be" in a poem called "God," which has been magnificently copied on tablets of gold and vellum and hangs in Turkish, Chinese and Japanese temples, as well as Finnish ones, fully appreciated the great fact that so many of us do not see that "God is our only home." "We are fish out of water, birds without air, flowers without sun, beings without lasting joy, peace or usefulness, until we find our all, ourselves in our native element—Him," says one of the saints.

Societies.

The enormous increase of societies in the world seems to be a good, rather than bad feature of our modern civilization, if not stupidly overdone. It seems to draw people near to each other and to make for solidarity and united efforts of great value, both to communities and the country at large. "The fashion of this world passeth away," but honest brotherhood will always bind men gently, but firmly together, and make for strength and happiness. The only one I ever heard of that seemed to have no raison d'etre was a small one, got up in one of our richest cities by some immensely rich young men, "to bury each other." It does look as if they might have found something more cheerful and more necessary to do; but when I last heard of them (from a member) they seemed only eager to begin and impatient over the general good health of the order and the small chance they had of sporting a most imposing costume and highly theatrical properties in the near future. Smith, aged sixteen, had a hat that he longed to witch the public in—a sort of combination of a drum major's busby, with a policeman's helmet, from all I could gather; and he said, "Of course, our own families could do it, but it wouldn't be half as much fun!" In this world everything depends on the point of view. "Jones, of Yale, got in a hole at Atlantic City and very nearly drowned, and we really felt sure we had one thon. But the fellow got all the water rolled out of him in no time, and got up and walked off, and, of course, it was all off!" he said its entire seriousness. Like Holland House, he was "fully prepared for sickness and death," and pined to be a mute.

Boys.

There is no change in the fashions for boys, nor ever will be. They are turned out on identically the same pattern that they were 10,000 years ago. On the monuments of Egypt, Rome, Greece, Pompeii, as on the cave-dwellers' walls, and Rugby and the great French and German schools, we see them doing what they have always done, playing truant, leapfrog, hockey, drinking from jugs they were sent to fill, pulling chairs from under the unsuspecting and elderly, stealing cakes and rides and pennies, filling their pockets with a miscellaneous collection of strings, knives, stones, snakes and sandwiches and apples, and being generally and particularly boys! Wendell Holmes thinks that every one of them ought to be put in a barrel and fed through the bung-hole till he is twenty-one, but some of us delight in boys. Two Rugby boys once got up a wager over a couple of spiders, long their pets. It was a question of which should run quickest across a pair of big meat dishes in the doctor's pantry. Well, the affair excited a great deal of interest in school circles, and when it came off there was a big circle of eager faces around the board; for £20 was the stake. A's spider wandered all over his dish, in full freedom and leisure. B's dashed across his dish like mad. The stake was paid, and then B just roared. "O! I say! I can't take the money," he gasped out. "I heated my dish red-hot." Bless the boys. Long may they wave and keep all their delightful qualities! It is something in this world of change to know that we have always got and shall always have "the boy."

Frances Courtenay Baylor

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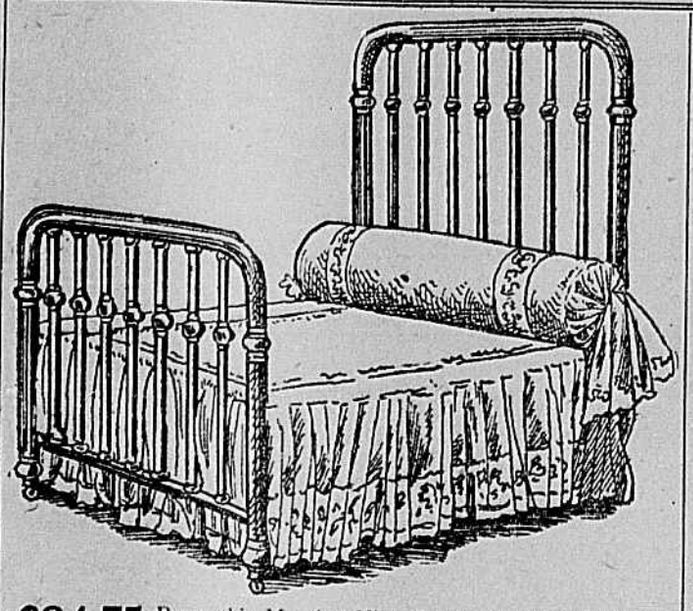

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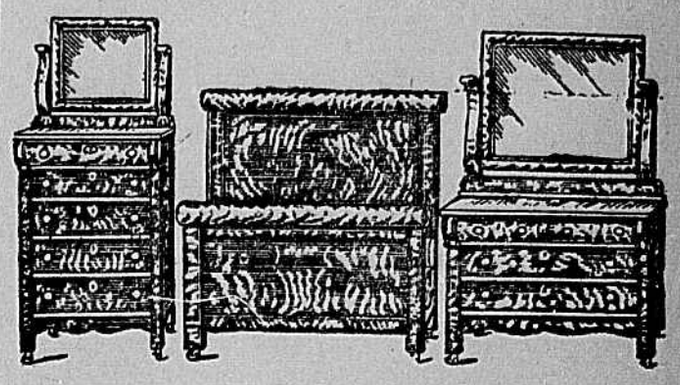

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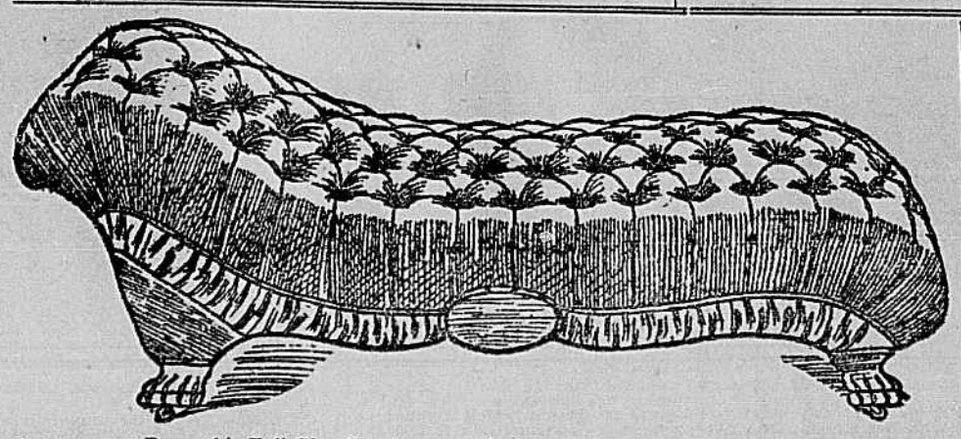

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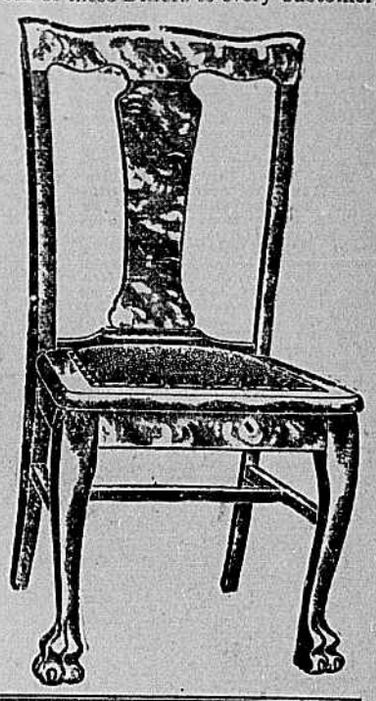

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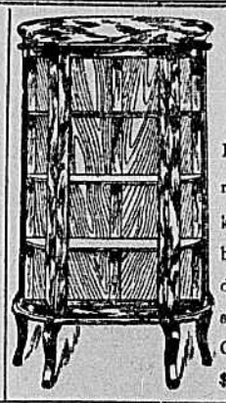

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