

Forms Made Beautiful

"Some ladies are terribly irregular and crooked in their shapes, and it is my business to straighten them out and make them look as though they had good figures," said an elderly lady to a reporter who had called at her corset manufactory to learn something of her art.

"I doubt," she continued, "whether anybody else than the doctors and the corset-makers—and, perhaps, I might even leave out most of the doctors—has any idea of the extent to which curvature of the spine prevails. Well, if a woman has a backbone that is very eccentric, and a pair of shoulders that seem to have been borrowed from ill-matched people, she cannot be expected to advertise the unfortunate fact."

"Is there any established system of rules for the shaping of corsets?" "Decidedly, but to make perfect-fitting corsets the system has to have as many variations as there are individual figures to fit."

"Many physicians say that corsets produce deformities." "Improperly fitting ones, or those worn too tight by foolish women, do; but I will not make a corset to constrict the chest and compress the lungs, or to pinch the waist to a purely artificial form."

"Then one would imagine a great mistake. When I first went into the business for myself, 35 years ago, American women wore, as a general thing, lean, angular and badly shaped. But since then I have been able to note in them a wonderful improvement, until now I believe they have finer figures, as a rule, than the women of England or France."

"Fat women are conspicuous among your customers, are they not?" "Yes, but I have made them an especial study, and they are no trouble to me. No matter how fleshy a lady may be, I can make her up to look trim and shapely."

"Not at all. I make a great many gentlemen's corsets. Some wear them because they wish to seem less corpulent; others, because they want their support, and not a few who do not really need them, to give themselves erect, graceful shapes, lace and buckle and strap themselves just as carefully as women do."

Who Murdered Morgan?

"I know Morgan was killed," said Mr. Weed, "and when and where he was killed, and who killed him. It was a dreadful murder."

"How do I know?" he asked, repeating his last question. "I know because the criminals themselves confessed it to me before they died."

"Is it possible?" I said, "will you tell the public about it?" "Yes; I have told it partly before. It was in 1834, about five years after the sudden disappearance of Morgan, that, on my trial for libeling the Masons, two men volunteered to be my witnesses. One of these men was John Whitney."

"I think Mr. Weed said the other was the man who had charge of the old fort where Morgan was confined by his captors. He went on: 'I invited them to eat some oysters with me after the trial, and while we were at the table John Whitney consented, in reply to our urgency, to make a clear breast of it about the murder of Morgan. He declared the terrible secret had been a burden on him day and night, and then he told who the men were who left the lodge one dark night to put Morgan out of the way, lest he might reveal the secrets of the Order. He said he was one of the men. The others were Colonel William King, Garside, Howard and Chubbuck. They went to the fort, bound the prisoner hand and foot, laid him in a boat, carried him to about the middle part of the Niagara river, where it was two miles either shore, and then they flung him overboard. When he had told the story, Whitney said he felt relieved. The other witness turned to him and said: 'John, Weed can hang you now.' 'Yes,' said Whitney, 'but he won't.' I thought much about my duty to the public, but it was obviously impossible to convict him unless he would say solemnly in court what he had said to me."

"It was nearly thirty years afterward when I met John Whitney in Chicago, when I was there at the Convention in 1860. He came to me and said he wanted to make a careful confession for me to write down, to be published after his death. There was nobody else he dared to trust to it, he said. I agreed to commit his dreadful secret to paper as soon as the Convention adjourned. The hour it adjourned he was waiting for me at my hotel. I was in the depths of disappointment, and was busy with a hundred things, and I told Whitney that I should come back to Chicago shortly, and would then attend to it. We exchanged letters after that, but he died suddenly and I never saw him again."

"The Chicago papers," I said, "ought to look up his relatives or friends there, and see if he left any document or told his secret." "Yes," he replied, "it would be well. It is strange, by the way, that every one of those five murderers is dead, and all but one died violent deaths. Col. King committed suicide, and Garside was kicked to death by a horse."—Corr. St. Paul Pioneer-Press.

Bedouin Marriage Customs. Professor W. Robertson Smith, the Heresiarch of the Free College, has been writing some interesting letters to the Edinburgh Scotsman during a voyage in the Hejaz. In one of his latest letters he says: "I spoke in my last letter of differences that are observable in marriage customs, and generally in the place of women in the Hejaz and Yemen. In traveling between Jeddah and Suez, I obtained some additional particulars on this head, from the waylay of Yemen, who was my fellow-passenger. Mustafa Pasha is a very superior type of the official Turk—a man of good education and observant habits, who has served in Syria as well as Yemen, and appears to have made a careful study of the habits of the people over whom he rules. I learned from him that the Bedouins of Yemen have various traditional usages which they know to be inconsistent with Mohammedan orthodoxy, and are, therefore, careful to conceal from the Turks. But there is one custom among the Aseer which, shocking as it appears to outsiders, is openly avowed and defended from the Koran. The Aseer Arabs are accustomed to contract marriages of a temporary character by verbal agreement. The so-called marriages may endure but a day. It is, in fact, no more than a nominal contract to avoid the name of immorality. With this it naturally goes that no weight is laid on the chastity of unmarried women. A man who contracts such a temporary marriage as I have described may already have a regular wife. In that case, he visits the new wife in her own home, or visits the wife already installed. The wife tells me further that, not only in Yemen but among some of the tribes of the Syrian desert, the wife claims the right to leave her husband at will, and take another spouse, and also, that it is a recognized practice for husbands among some of the latter tribes— he specially named the Aseer—for husbands to make an exchange of wives. All these were obvious remains of early polyandry, and confirm the observation that the introduction of Islam was marked by great social reforms, of which we know but little, but which, in all probability, were at least momentous as the innovations in religion which are generally regarded as forming the essence of Mohammedanism. I find, on turning up the traditions of the prophet in Bokhara and Mowatta that the system of temporary marriages which still lingers among the Aseer was well known in Mohammed's time and abolished by him after considerable hesitation. There seems to have been a good deal of discussion on the subject even after the Prophet's death, as at one time he had conceded the practice to his followers."

Many a man dreads throwing away his life at once who shrinks not from throwing it away by piecemeal.

A Blind Man's Duel.

It is doubtful if any theatre ever afforded such volumes of romantic incident as the deck of the old-time Mississippi steamer. In the old days before railroads traversed the continent in every direction, and the West was a wilderness, New Orleans was the Mecca of travelers, and the fleet, wave-borne palaces of the inland sea, carried thousands of pleasure-seekers to the South. It was then that life was a carousal, and men and women surrendered themselves to the most lavish enjoyments. Gaming was a custom and courage an instinct. Men were as prone to broils as the sparks to fly upward. Conspicuous among the fierce and rollicking habits of the steamers was Captain West, a noted duelist. One day he was engaged in a controversy with a gentleman whom he met on the deck, whom he accused of staring at him impudently.

"Why do you look at me so intently?" demanded the Captain. "I am not looking at you," calmly replied the stranger, his eyes meanwhile fixed in a stony glare upon the duelist's face. "But you are, sir!" "I am not."

The Captain turned away, but a short time afterward he felt those stony eyes were again upon him and following all his movements with pitiless ferocity. It became increasingly annoying, and the Captain at last determined to make an end of it. Stepping up to the stranger, he inquired, with suppressed passion: "Can you fight as well as look?" "Perhaps so; I never tried it. Place me, however, in position, and I will do my best."

The singular conduct of the stranger had by this time attracted universal attention, and whispered conferences regarding his remarkable appearance agitated little groups of persons all over the boat. In a short time, however, the vessel rounded to a landing for wood, and the parties to the impromptu duel went ashore. The stranger was led off by a negro servant, who seemingly picked his way. Indeed, from the intense interest he was manifesting in the encounter, the colored servant was apparently more deeply interested in the encounter than his master. But the time allotted for the preliminaries was brief, and the men were speedily put in position and pistols put in their hands. The word was given, and two ringing reports flashed out on the air. Captain West fell pierced to the heart. The stranger stood erect, calm and dignified. His second rushed up to him. "Are you hurt, sir?" "No. How is it with my antagonist?" "Can't you see? You have killed him."

"No. I am unable to see." "You can't see?" "No. I am blind."

And he was. The tragedy was a nine days' wonder, and all sorts of rumors were rife as to the identity of the fatal stranger. But who he was and whether he went was a mystery never solved. The circumstance went to make up an incident in the dark and bloody memories which made famous the olden time.

Didn't Think he had Better Have Any More. We met him on the train. He wasn't a very healthy specimen of method, and looked as if there had been a drought when he was planted. He had found this out in some way, and had evidently determined to make up the deficiency by keeping himself continually moist in his journey through life.

He walked up to the water tank and told the man in the looking glass to give him some gin. The man didn't answer him, and he told him that he'd be darned if he wouldn't go next door and get what he wanted. He walked into the next car, and saw another man in a looking-glass. "Want some gin! Yes, that's what I said: 'Want some gin,'" he repeated, as the looking-glass man repeated his words. He saw this by the movement of the other man's mouth.

"Don't you sink I had better have any more?" he asked, shaking his head and putting on a complacent grin. The man in the looking-glass shook his head and grinned too. "Well, so long as you are so polite 'bout it, I'll drop on myself. I'll break that next do' feller's jaw one of these days, 'n' don't yer forget it."

How a Married Woman Goes to Sleep.

There is an article going the rounds entitled, "How Girls go to Sleep." The manner in which they go to sleep, according to this article, can't hold a candle to the way a married woman goes to sleep. Instead of thinking of what she should have attended to before going to bed, she thinks of it afterward. While she is revolving these matters in her mind and while snugly tucked up in bed, the old man is scratching his legs in front of the fire and wondering how he will pay the next month's rent. Suddenly she says: "James, did you lock the door?" "Which door," says James. "The cellar door," says she. "No," says James. "Well, you'd better go down and lock it, for I heard some person in the back yard last night."

Accordingly James paddles down stairs and locks the door. About the time James returns and is going to get into bed, she remarks: "Did you shut the stair door?" "No," says James. "Well, if it is not shut, the cat will come up into the bedroom." "Let her come up," says James, ill-naturally.

"My goodness, no!" returns his wife, "she'd suck the baby's breath!" Then James paddles down stairs again and steps on a tack, and closes the stair door, and curses the cat and returns to the bed room. Just as he begins to climb into his couch his wife observes: "I forgot to bring up some water. Suppose you bring some up in the big tin." And so James, with a muttered curse, goes down into the dark kitchen and falls over a chair and rasps all the tin-ware of the wall in search of the "big tin" and then he jerks the stair door open and howls.

"Where the deuce are the matches?" She gives him minute directions, and adds that she would rather go and get the water herself than have the neighborhood raised about it. After which James finds the matches, procures the water, comes up stairs and plunges into bed. Presently his wife says: "James, let's have an understanding about money matters. Now, next week I've got to pay—"

"I don't know what you've got to pay and I don't care," shouts James as he hurries around and jams his face against the wall; "all I want now is to go to sleep." "That's all very well for you," snaps his wife, as she pulls the covers viciously; "you never think of the worry and trouble I have. And there's Auntie, who I believe is taking the measles."

"Let her take 'em," says James, sticking his legs out as straight as two ram-rods. "It seems to me you have no sense nor feeling," whines the wife, "and if you had any respect for me you would not cat onions before you come to bed. The atmosphere of the room from the smell of onions is horrid!" "Well, go down and sleep in the kitchen, then, and let me alone," says James.

Hereupon she begins to cry gently, but about the time James is falling into a gentle doze, she punches him in the ribs with her elbow and says: "Did you hear that scandal about Mrs. Jones?" "What Jones?" says James, sleepily. "Why, Mrs. Jones." "Where?" "I declare, my wife, 'you are getting more stupid every day. You know Mrs. Jones that lives at No. 211 Well, day before yesterday Susan Smith told Mrs. Thompson that Sam Baker had said that Mrs. Jones had—"

Here she pauses and listens. James is snoring in profound slumber. With a snort of rage she pulls all the covers off him, wraps herself up in them, and lays awake till 2 A. M., thinking how badly abused she is. And that is the way a married woman goes to sleep.

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"Have you had much dealing with actresses?" "Oh, yes, and very pleasant people they are, always wanting the best, and willing to pay well for it. Lotta is among my customers, and I have made corsets in old times for some famous ladies on the stage, I can tell you. Among others I remember now that I have made for, were Jenny Lind and Fanny Ellsler. Actresses always want their corsets to fit very tightly, so as to show their shape in the best advantage. I have never been in their dressing-rooms, but I understand that very often they wear their corsets next the skin, or with only a very thin gauze jacket beneath. Some society ladies do that, too, and even in cold weather, when they are going out, will endeavor to find warmth in a tight-fitting suit of chamois skin, rather than put on comfortable, healthful clothing, for fear the beauty of their shapes may be affected. I have heard or read of a lady who was going to a grand ball, and she actually starved herself for days beforehand, so that she might get into the splendid dress she was to wear on the occasion. The night came; she got her corsets laced on her so that the dress could be put on, and she still could breathe. The dress was put on. Then nature demanded some sustenance. Upon serious consideration, she concluded that she could hold one dozen of the very smallest oysters without the corsets and succeed in swallowing, but the twelfth she had to leave on her plate, though she felt as if she was starving for it. There was absolutely no room for that twelfth very small oyster. The story is told of a French woman. I hardly think an American woman would be so foolish. She would at least have had the daring to swallow the twelfth oyster, if she wanted it, and trust to Providence for the consequences. But the fitting of corsets depends upon the style of dress in a very great degree. If a lady is going to wear one of those long-bodied, close-fitting corsets, she must be shaped to match it, and would have to have a very different corset from that which she would wear under her wrapper about home when no callers were expected. "Gentlemen callers!" Not necessarily. Women dress more for each other's inspection than they do for gentlemen's admiration. They know that a man's eyes are much more likely to take for granted the reality of a pretty figure and much less apt to detect small defects, as a general rule than women are. Men admire, women criticize. Women know each other's little tricks and devices, and instinctively arm themselves against each other's scrutiny, even when they may be the dearest friends and have no apparent immediate fear of betrayal.

I use the very best French coureille, a linen fabric of great strength, and whalebone ordinarily; but I also make corsets of both farmer's satin and real satin ones are generally wanted by actresses, and I make them of all colors, blue, green, crimson, white and so on. Woven corsets have gone out of repute. They were very ingenious, but could not be made to fit so perfectly as those made by hand to individual measurements. It is not enough to know that a woman is so many inches around the waist. That is only a foundation for further knowledge in fitting her. But that is as far, practically, as the ready-made or woven corsets go. As for cost, that depends on materials and horn, instead of whalebone. But I make none lower in price than \$5, and from that up to \$20. A corset worth \$50 would not be astonishing, but then the value would be in the ornamentation and embroidery, and for practical use it would be no better than one that cost \$10 or \$12."—New York Sun.

His Name. My wife hez jes' presented me wid de finest boy in dis country," said Black Bill, entering a Little Rock magistrate's office, taking off his hat and slinging prescription from his brow with a crooked finger.

"Yes, gemmen," he went on, "de finest chile I eber seed. An' Ise jes' got a \$20 gold piece right heah to gib to de man what can guess what I hez named him. Ter keep yer from spreadin' ober de whole universe ob names I'll state dat hits a Bible name." "Abraham?" guessed some one. "Nor sah." "Paul?" "Nor sah." "Job?" "Nor sah." "Elisha?" "Nor sah." "Guess agin." "Nicodeus?" "Keemer comin'." "Abimeelish?" "Try me agin." The guessing ceased after a time and finally Bill remarked: "Ise named dat boy Judas Escarut." "What?" said the magistrate, "Judas betrayed our Savior." "Can't hep hit. Dat's de boy's name. Judas has been slighted. Nobody hez eber had de inamoral courage ter name a chile fur dat man. Dat ain't de main reason why I names him Judas. Ise got de Bible ter stain me in gibbin de chile dat name."

"How does the Bible sustain you in desiring to perpetuate that name?" asked the magistrate. "Hits dis fact, Chris, in remarkin' of Judas, dat hit would hab bin better fur dat man ef he hadn't bin born."

"Well." "An' considerin' how many men's is opened at the doo' when I goes home wid a side ob meat, it would hab bin better fur dat boy ob mine ef he had neber seed daylight. I knows what Ize a talkin' about. I take de Scripture from de references. In de futur, ef I finds dat de boy hez made an impression on hisself, den I'll charge his name ter Jim."

Howells said once in an after dinner speech that such was his stern impartiality as editor of the Atlantic Monthly, that on one occasion he respectfully declined one of his own contributions.

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