

WOMAN and HER WORK.

I think I could afford it that I would flee away, not to the uttermost ends of the earth exactly, but to some far distant city, at Christmas time, and purchase the few souvenirs I intended giving my friends, as far away from the said friends as possible.

and goes home feeling almost as proud as you felt yourself. On Christmas morning you each present the other with the same thing, and worst of all each knows exactly what the gift cost. Not that it makes the least difference in



TWO HANDSOME HOUSE GOWNS.

The elegant house gown on the right is of rough Himalaya stuff bound with fur and with waist of velvet to match. That on the left shows a dark gray cloth gown with facings of maize peau de soie, with silver braiding. The buttons are of oxidized silver.

ble! There [are] decide! drawbacks attending the selection of Christmas presents in the city in which one lives, and one of them is the danger of duplication. You see a charming little piece of china, a lovely calendar, or some pretty book, and without pausing to think that the dealer has a good many more of the same pattern ready to produce the moment the one in the show case is sold, you secure your prize with all possible haste, and have it sent home, or perhaps you are so afraid of some mistake being made, and the precious purchase being lost, that you carry it tenderly home yourself, as I often do; and you feel so pleased with yourself, that you are quite inclined to be haughty over your own good taste.

Ten minutes later your most intimate friend walks into the same shop, and having an equally cultivated sense of the beautiful, she at once pounces upon the

reality, since the value of a gift does not depend on the price that is paid for it, but still there is an uncomfortable feeling about it. And that is another serious drawback to buying one's present in the very bosom of one's family, as it were; everyone knows so exactly what everything costs that the price of a present might almost as well be written on the back. We are all looking for some suitable presents, at the same time; we make a tour of the shops and unfortunately everything is likely to be marked so plainly with the price, that even when you do not buy, you can scarcely help knowing what it costs, and even if the price mark is private there is sure to be a polite clerk at hand to translate it for you; so like love, and a cough, it cannot be concealed. It really is very annoying to see some pretty thing which looks as if it cost a dollar and a half at least, and present it to someone with quite a grand



DINNER or DANCING GOWNS.

The gown on the right is of rose pink faille with three piece skirt, the whole trimmed with flat insertion and ribbon. Honiton lace forms the bertha. That on the left is of maize taffeta frosted with white, bound with skunk fur on the bottom and sleeve caps. Point lace bertha, three piece skirt.

duplicate of your choice, which has just been dusted carefully and exposed in a prominent position in the window or show case. Quite naturally it never strikes her that you have only just left the shop, triumphantly carrying the twin of that pretty thing, but it does cross her mind that it is just what you would like; so she buys it,

air and then feel with a sudden flash of inspiration that she has seen it before, and knows the retail price was thirty-five cents. After it has happened a few times you begin to agree with Emerson, and think nothing in this world is really bid.

I begin to be of the opinion that the custom of marking the price of an article in

legible figures is really a most reprehensible one! In fact I have been convinced of it ever since I bought a prayer book for which anyone would have thought I had paid a dollar, and left the actual price, 35 cents, clearly written on the fly leaf! I had not intended sailing under any false colors or pretending that the book cost more than it really did, but there was something so "bludgeoned pointed," as Oscar Wilde would say so absolutely brutal, in the appearance of that cold cruel announcement "price 35 cts." which stood out in bold relief on the clean page, that I almost made up my mind to tell everybody exactly what their present cost, in future, and have no misunderstanding on the subject, and nothing to dread in the shape of unexpected discoveries.

There are people who make it sort of a rule of their lives, to examine every article in the fancy shops, at Christmas, and they have an unpleasant habit of committing the prices to memory, and pouring out whole volumes of undesirable information on the subject. They will tell you of the lovely things they saw at one shop, the delightful novelties that are to be had at another, and the wonderful



HATS FOR THE COMING WOMAN.

The large hat on the right is of drab felt with draped bows of drab velvet and cornflower blue crepe. The fancy feather is drab. The upper one is white velvet, bound with astrakhan and trimmed with prune ribbon. The flat hat is white beaver with white moire bows and white wings. The bonnet is of white surah and ottoman, for a small girl. The flat hat is dark blue felt with wide ribbon and peacock plume.

display at still another, "the loveliest smoking jackets at Manchester's for ten dollars," cheaper ones without the quilted silk facing for eight, and silk handkerchiefs for 75 cents; the very broad hemmed ones are a dollar but the others look just as nice."

You did not feel that you could afford to buy your husband one of the more expensive lounging jackets, so you contented yourself with an eight dollar one, and when you decided upon half a dozen silk handkerchiefs for your brother's Christmas gift the exigencies of your purse compelled you to be satisfied with the 75 cent ones. Both presents are now reposing in your lower drawer securely locked away, and the future recipients are sitting near you listening with interest to your visitor's remarks. They do not usually take much interest in such matters but the one has been thinking lately how much he would like a nice house-jacket to lounge about in, and the other has announced that he wishes some kind friend would give him half a dozen good silk handkerchiefs for Christmas. Both of these little circumstances influenced your choice of presents for them, and it makes you feel so pleased to think they both know now that you selected the cheaper qualities for their gifts.

It is a curious phase of human nature and affords food for reflection, but I am afraid we all have an unhealthy longing to know the price of things, hidden somewhere in our inner consciousness. We have a lady of French extraction who "works out" with us, and on the Christmas day just past we presented her with a gift which pleased her exceedingly; in fact she was so delighted that her emotions overcame her, and found vent in the eager query, "How much it cost?" Of course it had a sordid sound, but it was a touch of human nature all the same, even if it was on the rough! We may not show it so ingenuously, but all the same a stifled thirst to know "what it cost" exists in most of us, and as the knowledge tends to rub the bloom of novelty off the best Christmas present in the world, and sometimes leads to awkward complications, I, for one, would fain roam far afield when selecting holiday presents and try to find something which has the charm of novelty, and about which there is some uncertainty as to price.

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