

WOMEN WHO SMUGGLE.

THEY HATE TO PAY DUTIES AND SO TRY NUMEROUS TRICKS.

If the Lady Smuggler is Pretty, Tearful and Shrewd She May Slip by Men in Custom Service, but there is Quite a Boomerang in Women's Tricks.

One of the unwritten but much-regarded maxims of the Custom House runs as follows:

"Question a man, but watch a woman. She will take \$100 worth of trouble and \$1,000 risk to avoid the payment of \$25 in duties."

On this principle the Surveyor and his men are constantly on the lookout for women who smuggle in lace, embroideries, and dresses. Often it is with women of the highest social standing that they have to deal, and then there are tears and entreaties and many varieties of unpleasantness. Women who act as searchers are always on hand in the Custom House to examine suspects of their own sex or to give expert testimony when necessary on questions of feminine apparel. They are extremely ingenious and frequently discover smuggled goods where they are least expected. A case was that of a young woman who proved her right to some dresses that were in question. In fitting them on, however, the expert felt something between the woman's shoulders.

"What have you got there?" she asked.

"Oh, that's a plaster," was the reply.

"I caught cold in my back coming over."

When she took off the dress the expert felt the plaster again. It seemed loose and very soft. Plunging her hand down suddenly she forced it loose, and from beneath it pulled out some valuable and very fine lace. The plaster was a fake, only the edges adhering to the skin. Many other tales of smugglers' devices discovered are to be heard in the custom house, although there is less of that now than there was formerly. Most of the crooked work done in violation of the customs regulations by women nowadays is the smuggling in of dresses and other articles of apparel. The claim in these cases always is that the woman bringing in the goods intends them for her own use. If she can prove that the dresses are to be worn by herself and are not to be sold she is all right; and women will frequently go to great lengths to induce the officials to believe this. In cases where there are half a dozen gowns, all of different sizes, this is more than likely to be difficult. In fact, it is quite hopeless with the women experts, though it may work with the men. It came very near working in a very fragrant case early in the summer. As it happened, none of the women were in the building at the time that a very pretty girl, probably no more than nineteen or twenty years old, came tripping into the den of an exalted customs official and said with a sweet smile:

"I've come to see about some dresses of mine that were held here. I don't know why they were held, because they are all my very own, and I want one of them to wear to a party tonight."

"Very well, I'll see about them at once, and I have no doubt that, as you say, they are indeed yours, and that you have been the victim of an error, which, I assure you, I profoundly regret," said the official gallantly.

In obedience to his orders the dresses were brought to his office and displayed.

"Oh, there they are," cried the girl, clasping her hands. "That black one is the one I want to wear to-night."

"Ah, yes," said the official. "Now, if you would just try two or three of them on, just to prove, you know, that it is all right. Just a formality, you know. That room over there you can use for dressing room."

Seeing that there was no alternative, the girl followed the dresses into the room and closed the door. For a space of ten minutes there was silence. Then the door opened a little and a voice said timidly:

"Sir, have you any pins you could give me?"

"Certainly, certainly," cried the official, jumping up, whereupon the door closed.

"Plain or—er—safety?"

"Plain, please," said the voice. "Set them down by the door and go away, please."

The official meekly did as he was bidden. The door opened a crack, and a slender bare arm stole out. When it disappeared the pins were gone. Now the official does not pretend to know anything about women's clothes, and he admits that the charming personality of the wearer biased his judgment, but that dress looked all right to him when it made its appearance. True, there were a few little gatherings around the shoulders, but the girl explained that those were tucks.

"They're all to be refixed, you know," she said confidently. "Of course I had to pin them in a hurry."

"Of course. Certainly; yes," said the official. "Now, supposing you try the yellow dress."

Again she disappeared, to come out presently, a vision in a superabundance of yellow. There were tucks and pleats and gores, and frills on that dress until the inspecting judge couldn't tell whether it was bloomers or a ball gown, and his only remark was a feeble hint that it looked a trifle large. Afterward, when he came to recollect it, he said he was sure three of that girl could have got into the dress without

stretching it; but at the time, when the girl said that it was the fashion to make gowns large and fluffy, he assented immediately and said that if she would be so kind as the striped garment the others would be taken for granted. When the girl appeared in the striped dress—or partially in it, to be accurate—the official had a shock. Not only did it fail of closing where it should have closed, but the official had indisputable evidence that the girl wore black silk stockings. She slid into a chair and, curling up as much as might be, looked plaintively at him.

"Isn't it rather short?" he stammered.

"Yes; it looks so, I know, and I'm awfully ashamed"—here she blushed and he blushed in sympathy—"but, you see, I've got some lace to put around the bottom."

"But-er-er-excuse me, but it seems rather small around, doesn't it?"

"Oh, of course something goes under that; black velvet, or something of that sort."

"I dare say it's all right," he began, when a young woman typewriter came in to inquire about a note, and the girl precipitately fled to the other room.

"Has the lady lost her clothes?" she asked sympathetically.

"Certainly not," said the official. Don't you see she had them on."

"Those weren't her own," said the typewriter, and an explanation followed. It ended by the typewriter going into the room and selecting a fourth dress, which she put on herself over her own clothing. She was not a small woman, but there was enough of that dress to clothe her twice. The other dresses were of varying sizes, and when the pretty girl went away she was in tears, while the official swore a mighty oath that he would never presume to judge of woman's apparel again, and the typewriter smiled a smile of superiority.

Another smuggler, with difficulties not so great to transcend, had better luck. As was afterward discovered, the half dozen gowns she brought over were all for one person, but she was not that person. The gowns were for a woman just a little greater in girth. As it happened, Collector Kilbreth and one of his deputies had both left their soft hats in the little room used for a dressing room. The woman found them. She passed the dress test satisfactorily, and wore one of the imported dresses when she left, but when the two officials were ready to go home they couldn't find their hats. On the following day the hats, very much crumpled, came back by express without any explanation.

Later a solution of the mystery came in a round-about way, not necessary to detail here. It is sufficient to state that in the absence of more suitable material a soft hat makes very fair padding.

Sometimes the tests become embarrassing, as in the case of a deputy who was in charge one day. An Irish woman employed about the building in another capacity was called in to testify in regard to some garments of a nature not specified, belonging to an attractive young woman in widow's weeds. The Irishwoman and the widow went into the dressing room together, whence the former presently emerged in great excitement, exclaiming to the deputy:

"She's a smuggler, sir; she's a smuggler. Sure she's after havin' sixteen pair av them, and not wan pair av the size av another. Go in an' see fer yerself, sir."

The deputy hastily went out and got a drink, and didn't appear again that day.

Quite merciless are the regular women experts. Sometimes they will summon the typewriters in the building to back their judgment, and then the whole committee has great fun with the unfortunate victim.

She is a foolish woman who attempts to bluff through a losing game with them. A tall, thin, middle-aged matron, who travels in the interest of a large dressmaking firm here, was caught not long ago with a dozen dresses, not one of which fitted her. But she wouldn't admit it. One after another she tried them on, and insisted that all they needed was a little touching up. The committee picked out the gown that was the most glaring misfit for an exhibit.

When she got into it they trotted her out into the office of the official in charge.

"There, what do you think of that?" inquired the head expert.

"Gracious, ladies, I don't know what to think," he exclaimed, looking at the long, slim figure in a short, full dress, that was as voluminous in circumference as it was scant in length. It reached just a little below the knees.

"This is one of the dresses the lady says she intends for her own use," explained one of the typewriters of the committee.

"Maybe it's a bicycle costume," said the official, who is a kind-hearted man.

"Or a yachting suit," suggested one of the experts sarcastically. "Those sleeves would be lovely in a gale."

"And see the generous fit around the neck, put in another, 'if she was the two-headed woman it would just about fit her."

"She might put accordion pleats on that skirt," was another suggestion; "just to use what's extra."

"I don't care," broke out the victim, defiant to the last. "My dressmaker made 'em wrong. You can keep 'em anyway; I don't want 'em. They don't fit," and she hastened out.

As a rule, however, feminine smugglers break down and confess with irritation rather than shame, for they think it no sin to attempt to defraud the Government.

—N. Y. Sun.

Summer Luxuries in Greenland.

The summer just past was the mildest ever known in Greenland, according to reports brought here on the bark Silicon, which arrived on Sunday from Ivigtut.

The mountains for the first time ever known are bare of ice and snow, and wild animals are accustomed to extreme cold have been compelled to go further north. Birds are plentiful as well as other kinds of game, particularly grouse, and a number were shot by the Silicon's passengers. Blueberries were plentiful for the first time in many years. The water about the southern coast of the island was warm enough to bathe in, a luxury in which the natives seldom indulge. Those on the Silicon who took an Arctic bath for the first time say that they have met with colder water often on the Jersey coast. —Philadelphia Record.

AT THE HOUR OF DEATH.

IN A PHYSICAL SENSE ACCIDENTS ARE BETTER THAN ILLNESS.

Testimony of People who Have had Narrow Escapes—No Pain in the Sensation of Being Suddenly cut off—Thoughts of a man When Sliding Down the Alps.

Dr. Heim, the celebrated geologist, and professor of the Zurich University, declares that sudden death by a fall, by being run over, by being swallowed up by machinery, water, or by snow avalanche is the most beautiful way of leaving this life—is indeed preferable to any other mode or fashion of departure for the unknown regions.

"To drop from a precipice," says the doctor, "means, subjectively speaking, as glorious an end to the victim of accident as death on the battle-field. It strikes man suddenly without asking one to become acquainted with those nasty emissaries of bodily dissolution, sickness, and pain, while the mind is clear and during increased mental activity he takes flight, without the least feeling of uneasiness."

"I have looked into the faces of many Alp climbers who met death by unlucky falls," said the professor, "and, like others failed to read of previous sorrows, of fear, anxiety, pain, or terror."

"The relatives and friends of persons having suffered sudden death often lament their fate for a special reason that has no existence in fact. They dream of horrible tortures to which the departed, in their opinion, have been subjected. Others get over the shock by saying to themselves, 'Thank the Lord, it was over in a jiffy.' In reality, there was nothing to overcome. The death agony—if, indeed, we can speak of such under the circumstances—did not last a minute, neither was it of a second's duration. If it had been its photographic counterpart would appear on the victim's face; but if you take ten people who died in their bed and ten who expired in their boots and contrast their features you will find that the facial expression of the latter is pleasant, more tranquil, more hopeful, than of persons who apparently departed this life well prepared for the long journey, and, in many cases, resigned to their fate."

"I have viewed the bodies of the brothers Wettstein, who recently died by falling off the Jungfrau. The face of both these young men bore the stamp of serene happiness. I am quite sure that, as they were rolling to their graves, they experienced the same lofty feelings that I and others underwent while standing at the threshold of eternity. Their happy and composed features indicate that at the time of death they were above physical pains, that they had made their peace with God and the world; a conciliatory feeling dominated their minds; they were rushing down into a blue, rosy, magnificent heaven so soft, so blissful—and then suddenly all was still."

"In case of accident followed by sudden death the state of unconsciousness is not preceded by any pain, and while the body is approaching this condition a second is equal to a thousand years in duration to the mind of the stricken person."

"When the loss of consciousness occurs it does so with infinite suddenness. Death, following in the wake of unconsciousness, works no change physically or mentally perceptible by its victim; the state of absolute quietude, of painless expunction remain unshaken."

"No, there is not even that feeling of paralyzing terror in facing sudden death, or what appears like sudden death, which overcomes one in the event of lesser danger. Neither myself nor the half hundred rescued victims of Alps climbing whom I have interviewed on the question experienced anything of the sort at the supreme moment. Our feelings—those of myself and my colleagues in danger—corresponded in all respects, were serene and resigned; our mode of thinking was uncommonly rapid, but at the same time full of self-possession."

"Before I relate my own experience, 'how it feels to die,' I will give the interview I had with the well-known Alps wanderer, Sigrist, who recently had a backward fall off the crown of the Korpstock Alp, Switzerland. This is Herr Sigrist's report:

"Although I fell backward from the tremendous height, I experienced none of the anxiety which occasionally attacks us in dreams at supposed falling accidents; on the contrary, I felt as if I were carried downward slowly on giant wings that protected me against collision. During the whole duration of the fall consciousness never left me. Without feeling the least bit embarrassed or frightened I reviewed my situation and the future of my family, and the various features of my own and their cases passed before me with unequal rapidity. I have heard people say that in falling a great distance one loses his breath; I never lost my breath, and when my body finally bounded against the rocks at the foot of the glacier I became unconscious without experiencing any pain whatever. I felt nothing of the many wounds on head or limbs received during my journey down the precipice from coming into contact with rocks and masses of ice. The moments, when I stood on the brink of future life were the happiest I ever experienced. I remember clearly reading the provisions of my life insurance policy

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with my mind's eye; the big sum of money which death was bound to bring to my loved ones I saw before me counted out on a green cloth table, all in crisp bills and shining gold."

"Dr. Heim gives the following description of his journey down a mountain side which, as he fully expected, would end in certain death."

"I was coming with two friends from the summit of the Santis, in St. Gallen, when, at the height of 5,400 feet, we found ourselves opposite a snow field lying between two mighty rocks that had to be traversed. It was a perilous path, running steep for several miles, it seemed. My companions hesitated to take it, but I decided to slide down on both feet standing up boldly. I went down with unequal velocity, but there was no danger until I made a movement to save my hat, which the current of air was carrying along. I fell and lost all control of my limbs."

"Quick as the wind I flew against the rocks to my left, rebounded, and was thrown upon my back, head downward. Suddenly I felt myself carried through the air for at least 100 feet, to finally land against a high stone wall. At the instant I fell it became evident to me that I was to be thrown against the rock, and I did my utmost to avert that calamity by digging with my fingers in the snow and tearing the tips of them horribly without knowing it. I heard distinctly the dull noise produced when my head and back struck against the different corners of the rock: I also heard the sound it gave when my body bounded against the snow wall, but in all this I felt no pain; pain only manifested itself at the end of an hour or so."

"For this reason, say, the victims of more or less sudden death by accident, such as falls, drowning, explosions, by being run over or swallowed up by machinery, die a happy death. They know their fate, but have no time to regret it. They know that pain is in store for them, but have no time to feel it. Their main feeling is one of surprise, but not unpleasant surprise. In all cases where death follows the unconsciousness, the victim died immediately, without interval, the victim should envy. This summer an old lady whose two sons had been accidentally killed said to me: 'Oh, if they only had opened their eyes once, while I held their bleeding heads in my lap.' Poor woman, unconsciously she wished her beloved boys a moment, or moments, of the most excruciating pain, of dread and terror. I explained the case to her as above outlined and made her poor old heart rejoice instead of weep."

"I reckoned that my descent down the mountain side lasted 5 or 6 seconds; it would take me two hours to describe the thoughts and feelings I underwent during this short space of time. And all my thoughts, notions, and ideas were thoroughly consistent and coherent, not mixed up and jumbled up as in dreams. First, as already intimated, I saw the possibility of a parachute to myself. Ten to one I will be a dead man upon my arrival at the bottom of the mountain. If, however, find myself alive and fully conscious I will have to take some of the vinegar-ether which, on leaving the Santis, I placed in my vest pocket. A good thing, I must say to myself, that it was there. I would scarcely be able to reach for it if it was still in my knapsack, where I used to carry it."

"I will take two or three drops of the ether on my tongue, I continued in my thoughts. That will revive me and keep me from taking cold. But what about my stick? Ah, that may be useful if I live, and besides it is a beautiful alpenstock. I will keep it. And, true enough, I held on to it. Then I thought that it might be well to take off and throw away my spectacles, that they may break and thereby injure my eyes. I reached for them, but was unable to do so as intended."

"Thus I spent several or may be only one precious second in egotistical circumstances. After that my thoughts turned upon the consequences which my death would have for my family. I must try to save myself for the sake of my wife and children, I argued. The friends that were with me are probably lamed by terror and I must double their energies by calling for help, if I can. A good way to spur them, I thought, would be to cry out. 'I am all safe, but must have a drink at once.' Then I managed to be present when the news of my death reached home. I heard my wife and children cry and lament and I tried to console with them. I even cracked jokes in this endeavor. 'Again I saw with my mind's eye the confusion that would reign in the university on account of my failure to begin lecturing.'

"That brought back to me all my struggles, my early training, my trials and small triumphs. My life from childhood to manhood glided past my mental observation like a living picture vivid, impressive, joyful, and sorrowful as it had been. Tableau followed tableau in quick succession, each figure being distinct, and incidents being perfectly and completely pictured. When I had arrived at my present state and condition I saw a magnificent blue heaven opening to receive me. All was serene happiness, while rosy and violet clouds marked the horizon. Into this heaven I floated with perfect equipoise, with beautiful anticipation, while my mundane eyes perceived my body flying through the air and saw the snow field below. I heard a dull thud; I had struck ground."

"It is an open question to me whether the above described sensation of going to heaven is not a very strong argument for the teachings of the christian religion. The mind of man becomes clear and pure on the threshold of eternity; it becomes the most wonderful machinery for thought and observation. Its retrospective faculties are marvelous—can its prognostics be waved aside?"

"After finishing off all earthly affairs, making peace with man, the independent soul sees the heavens open, all around is beauty and happiness, a world steeped in blue and roseate tints. I should say here that I am far from being a pronounced religious man. No period of my life have I been given to speculating much on the teachings of the church, but when about to die I experienced all those sensations which are ascribed to deeply devout persons during their last moments on earth."

"I have heard a man say on his death bed: 'I see the angels; I see Christ opening his arms to receive me,' and classed these utterances with other delirious ravings I witnessed. Today their significance, to my mind, is no longer doubtful, especially as the testimony of Sigrist, above quoted and that of many others proves that my experience was not an exceptional one. Recorders the following facts: I, like the others, had about made up my mind that I was to die, which means that I was to enter upon a new lease of life in eternity. The rapidity of perception peculiar to a person in that state then placed me into my new sphere even before I was ripe for it, which is a perfectly natural psychological process, but if there be nothing beyond this life, as atheists assert, why the heavenly phenomena? Why not a blank instead of a paradise? When consciousness left me a black veil flitted across my eyes. My mind's eyes were filled with heavenly visions to the last. Who will explain it all?"

"To return to actualities, I will repeat that during my downward journey time seemed to stretch indefinitely and the faculties of objective observation, subjectively feeling, and thinking worked simultaneously without interfering with each other."

There was no confusion, no perplexity; my calculations were logical; I acted with lightning rapidity.

"I thought to do so, too, when I began to cry out, as intended, 'I am all safe; bring me water,' or words to that effect, but I had actually lain perfectly still, without the least mental or physical performance, for over half an hour before I gave that sign of returning life. My friends who had watched me from above and afterward sat at my side for a considerable while say so. Without seeing them I took the vinegar bottle from my vest pocket, reached for my spectacles, that rested at my side, and felt of my back and limbs to find out if any bones were broken. The fact that I failed to notice my friends, and did not even look for them, is explainable only on the theory that I continued thinking where I had left off in my selfish calculations when unconsciousness overcame me; it was the instinct of self-preservation that dominated my feelings upon regaining life. Forty minutes I had been dead to the world and to myself, and at the termination of this period I felt the same selfish being as before. I cried for help, because, having no recollection of the comatose state in which I had been, I thought my friends at least a mile or two away, as they were at the time when I reached the foot of the mountain."

"And did the heavenly thoughts recur to you, also? was asked the professor."

"No," said Dr. Heim; "I experienced them only at the moment of standing on the threshold of eternity. Then my soul rose gloriously to the occasion, but the certainty of death being removed, my material instincts and spirits triumphed."

Dr. Heim has collected a great mass of testimony from other victims of accidents, who, like himself, escaped death by a miracle. The majority of the persons whom he interviewed are, besides his own countrymen, Englishmen, Germans, Tyroleans, Hungarians, and Bohemians. Some of them record experiences which correspond with the above-described sensations, adding that at the supreme moment of heavenly phenomena they heard the most exquisite music."

A poor woman, Frau Frank, who was before the assizes in Berlin the other day for having murdered her two children by asphyxiation, and having tried to commit suicide by the same means, made similar declarations, and by them worked upon the feelings of the jury so successfully as to secure a sentence in her favor. Frau Frank said: "I never felt happier in my life than after inhaling the coal gas and when feeling the approach of death. As long as I was able I rose every few minutes to look at my children, who slept peacefully and with a happy expression on their little faces. I kissed them, and they seemed to respond to the caress unconsciously. Oh, Ju'gs! it was a terrible awakening for me when I saw the good Sisters at my side. My only consolation is that my little ones are happy."

"How do you know that they died happily?" asked the judges.

Frau Frank answered: "Little Margaret and little Fritz both awoke several times from their slumbers and smiled at me, oh, so happily."

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