

WOMAN and HER WORK.

The members of that well known literary institution, the Vagabond's Club of London have paid a graceful compliment to their fellow workers of the opposite sex, in the dinner given lately to distinguished literary ladies. Dr. Cowan Doyle presided as chairman with Mr. Douglas Sladen, and Mr. Burgin as vice-chairman. One of the happiest features of the entertainment was a charming speech by the ever popular author of Sherlock Holmes, in which he remarked that literature has one profession in which men and women stood on an absolute equality. When fiction in particular was considered, he said, the great names that rose to the lips were so many of them women's that no one could contest the position of the women writers. "Nor," he added "were they all alike." One might be tempted to speak of their grace, and their roosting influence till one remembered the grim nightmare of "Wuthering Heights." One might think of them as conservative, till rebuked by remembering the many pleas put forth by women of late years for civil and religious liberty. Action was found in Ouida's novels, and humor in those of Mary Wilkins and Rhoda Broughton. "But," concluded the gifted speaker, "the competition was unfair; for it was well known that a charming heroine made a charming novel, and when a lady novelist desired to draw such a female character she had but to consult her own self to understand all about it, while a poor man could rely on nothing more than memory, and imagination!"

Is it any wonder that the literary ladies present were delighted and thought Dr. Doyle not only the most delightful, but the most clever of men?

Amongst the guests at the chairman's table were "Helen Mathers"—Miss Mathilde Blind, Mrs. Flora Annie Steel—the Indian novelist—"George Egerton"—Mrs. Clairmont—Mrs. Andrew Dean, "Annie Sevan" and "Florence Fenwick-Miller, all of whom replied to the toast of "our guests."

With reference to my remarks of last week regarding the wreck of the "Drummond Castle" I see that all England seems striving to express the gratitude her people feel, to the gentle Bretons for the pious care bestowed upon England's dead at the time of the wreck. Not only has the Archbishop of Canterbury written them a letter of thanks, but the members of the House of Commons have virtually recorded a vote of thanks to them, by bringing the matter up in the House, and causing their action to be circulated in the newspapers of Great Britain, and the Queen has telegraphed her gratitude, and M. M. Sabat and Pelle, French journalists of some distinction have had ten thousand copies of the telegram printed, and distributed amongst the inhabitants of the different islands.

I feel sure these humble folk must feel deeply gratified by the prompt recognition which has been accorded to what was in their eyes, I have no doubt, but the simplest and most spontaneous of christian duties. But these good people are very poor, and I hope most sincerely that it will not be long before we hear that the gratitude of our Mother country has taken a tangible form. I do not imagine for a moment that these poor people are looking for any pecuniary reward, but in their circumstances it could not be otherwise than welcome.

An inexpressible touching feature of the funeral service, and one which will appeal to the hearts of all mothers, was the tenderness with which the body of little Alice Reed, the youngest of the victims, was borne to the grave. In the sad funeral procession to the churchyard of Natant the little coffin, in some way they managed to procure a coffin for her in spite of the scarcity of wood—was carried in turn by the mothers of the village preceded by a little Breton girl carrying a beautiful wreath of flowers.

The pathetic scene has already formed the subject of a very beautiful painting by an English artist Mr. Forester entitled "One Touch of Nature."

The sofa cushion craze which seemed to be undergoing a period of eclipse for the past year or two, has revived wonderfully of late and bids fair to take a new lease of life, though under somewhat changed conditions. When the collecting of sofa cushions first became a recognized pursuit amongst those who could afford to indulge in a hobby; it was almost entirely confined to the gentler sex, and its object was the acquisition of the greatest possible number of cushions in the most artistic, and beautiful designs, and the most varied sizes, shapes and materials the more expensive, of course, the better. A dozen cushions was considered a respectable collection and the matron or maid whose sofa was overburdened with a dozen and a half, no two of which were alike, though all pretty, and harmonized, or contrasted prettily with the rest of the furniture, felt that she was almost in a position to defy competition.

But now all this is changed, and very little of the original fad remains—except the cushions—in the first place the number of cushions required to form a collec-

tion, has increased to such an extent that a sofa, or even two sofas proved unequal to the task of supporting the burden, and therefore the luxurious if rather cumbersome divan came into existence and became a feature of every properly constituted drawing room. The larger the divan the more cushions it held, and therefore in the anxiety to supply the new demand beauty design became subservient to originality and the older the cushion, no matter how ugly it was, the more it was prized.

Stranger still, the fashionable bachelor took up the hobby and became quite as eager in his search for something new in cushions as his feminine rival, and no more acceptable Christmas or birthday present could be found for him than a sofa cushion of some new and strange variety. In fact, so firm a hold has this hobby taken upon the jeunesse d'ore of the day, that a recent magazine article mentions one young New Yorker of fashion whose sitting room divan displays no less than thirty cushions, all of white silk, but each bearing a different device. One set of these is a sort of memento of his college career, the first bearing only the name of his Alma mater—"Columbia" worked in pale blue, the second the diamond shaped pin of a Greek society in black and gold, and the third a cunningly worked sheet of music, a memento of the college glee club. Other cushions commemorate different incidents in his career, from the device of a regiment to which he once belonged to the relic of some especially kind and unfortunate love affair, represented by a shattered heart.

Curiously enough these trophies are not all the gifts of fair friends, designed and worked for sheer love of the recipient a few are; but the great majority are made to order and honestly paid for in current coin.

A romantic, but rather morbidly imaginative young widower rejoices in the possession of a divan of black velvet on which repose a set of six cushions made out of the dresses of his departed wife. It must be painfully suggestive of a bier, to his friends but doubtless the contemplation of it is a comfort to him, and serves in some inexplicable manner to lighten his grief.

The autograph cushion is a distinctively feminine fancy and though far from being either artistic or beautiful it is rather new, which is ample reason for its existence. In the first stages of its existence it consists merely of a square of smooth surfaced canvas, upon which the owner's dearest friends are requested to write a few words in pencil, a sentiment, a quotation, a motto—with their names attached, even a sketch will do, or a hieroglyphic, and these tender or commonplace sentiments are straightway embossed in dainty embroidery of silk, by the proprietor of the canvas. When it is full and a marvellous object it is, the cushion is ready to be made up, and form an ornament, or a disfigurement, just as one thinks, to her drawing room.

At the same time the matrons and maids who love pretty things but do not go in for fads, continue to make four or five big filled cushions out of the prettiest satens they can find, pile them carelessly on their divans and repose comfortably upon them in blissful disregard of the fact that they are neither original nor startling and contain no "life history."

I do not know whether all fashion writers feel the same dislike to describing mourning garments that I do, but sometimes I think they must, else the descriptions of mourning costumes would not be so few, and so meagre as they are even in the best fashion journals.

It seems strange that this want should be so apparent considering that so many people are left in the world who still believe in showing their grief for lost friends, in some outward way as well as by "wearing the heart in mourning," while the outward attire remains the same as usual. However, the etiquette of mourning varies so little that the subject should not be a hard one to deal with, so they have not much excuse for shirking it as they do. One of the greatest changes which has taken place in mourning apparel during the last year, is the modification of the mourning veil. The exaggerated length of crape reaching to the hem of the dress, which was once affected by those who mourned either for a parent, a child, or no longer seen, being replaced by a drapery which extends only to the

waist line at the outside, and very often but little below the shoulder. A widow's veil may be a little deeper and sometimes reaches to the knee, but the shorter ones meet with more approval, and instead of the heavy and unhealthy crape, or the scarcely less cumbersome nun's veiling of past years, the very lightest of materials are chosen for summer wear.

A rather thick quality of silk muslin with a dull finish is one material much used by widows. Another favorite texture is a soft silk canvas of unusual fineness, and lightness of weight, which is scarcely thicker than the muslin. Both of these materials are made up with a hem-sticked border an inch and a half deep, or a hem the same depth of English crape. The square of nun's veiling once so fashionable, may still be purchased and being less in demand, they are much less expensive than formerly.

It seems to be a well established rule that all bonnets accompanying long veils shall be small and close fitting, and except a facing of either crape, or the veil material no trimming is used, the veil completely covering the rest of the bonnet.

For widows who have passed their youth the veil is arranged in the simplest and plainest manner. One square end is taken divided equally in the middle and then drawn over the bonnet crown in flat, close plaits, these are pinned down at the sides with either pins, or plain slide brooches of dull jet. Young widows have the veil draped more elaborately, but after the first few weeks of mourning the veil is not allowed to hang over the face, the custom having been pronounced a most unhealthy one, by all physicians. After the first year has passed the long veil is usually discarded, and one of Brussels net edged with a fold of crape, substituted. The narrow ruche of white bordering the front of a widow's bonnet is no longer considered in the best form for young women, though elderly widows still cling to it. The white border is supposed to attract more attention to a young and attractive widow than is pleasant, so it has been discarded. Elderly widows wear deep white cuffs and collars of hemstitched white lawn, with their deepest mourning.

For first mourning, cashmere, Henrietta cloth, and nun's veiling are still the chosen materials, with dull silks for trimming after the crape has been laid aside, or by those who consider crape unhealthy. Foulard silks, and dull lustreless serges follow, when the mourning is being lightened a little, while for church, and very best, when the wearer is beginning to go out a little a charming new material is the dull silk grenadine, which, with etamines, and canvases are most suitable materials for summer wear. These fabrics may also be worn even for the deepest mourning, as well as the lightest, and they are trimmed either with folds of the material or bands of English crape. All trimmings should be dull and lustreless, no cut jet, or glossy silk being admissible.

For second mourning none of the shades of violet or lavender are permitted now, all these colors having become so fashionable for ordinary attire that no mourning significance attaches to them any longer. Black and white for both dress and hat is the only combination allowed for second mourning.

English crape is more fashionable than ever for trimming handsome first mourning costumes, and sometimes almost half the dress is composed of it.

A handsome first mourning dress is of Henrietta cloth with the skirt trimmed from waist to hem with gore-shaped bands of crape. The bodice is largely composed of crape and has wide cape-like epaulettes over the smaller sleeves.

A pretty dress for second mourning is of silk canvas and black and white striped taffetasilk. The silk forms the sleeves, and the plain bodice over which is a sort of low necked sleeveless guimpe in blouse shape, of the canvas. The skirt is plain, made loose from the foundation and slashed at the hips to a lining of the striped silk.

For the hottest weather dresses of pure white with black trimmings are permitted even in the deepest mourning; lovely gowns of mull and pure white batiste, with the skirts bordered only with a deep hem, or three deep tucks are made for midsummer wear; no frill or flounce of any kind is permitted with these white mourning dresses, their absolute plainness, and the black ribbon stock collar and belt worn with these, forming the sole line of demarcation between mourning and festivity.

Time to Call a Waiter
Guest (facetious)—"The cheese seems to be active; it has already reached the far end of the table."
Host (startled)—"Waiter, stop the cheese."

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HIS NERVE WAS THERE.

This sort of Centipede Was Harmless, but He Didn't Know It.

The Hawaiian Islands are almost as well off as Ireland. St. Patrick drove all the venomous insects and reptiles out of the green isle, but the Hawaiians claim that the reptiles and insects left on Mr. Dole's domain are in no sense of the word poisonous.

People who have particular dealings with venomous insects imported from the islands make the same claim. A local fruit importer said yesterday: "Very frequently we receive consignments of bananas and pineapples packed in dried grass and leaves. In taking the fruit from the boxes it is not uncommon to find a big centipede crawling along the stalk between the bananas, doing his best to get used to the California climate."

"Tuesday afternoon I was opening a box of bananas and pushed my hand through the straw to get at the stalk. I felt around for a few seconds and thought I could feel something moving around on the back of my hand. I had often heard of the presence of centipedes in fruit shipments, so I carefully withdrew my hand, so as to make as little commotion as possible. Imagine my surprise and alarm to see a five-inch centipede slowly crawling up my arm. I was about to strike it when a fruit packer, standing near by, warned me to make no attempt to get rid of it, but to let it crawl off at its leisure. I had forgotten the fact that they were not poisonous, and I know that if I had not been so careful, I would have sent it to my stomach through my blood."

"I looked at it with fear and trembling, but did not dare to move a muscle. It lifted its head and seemed perfectly satisfied to remain where it was. I could hardly restrain myself from making a quick motion and shaking it off, but my companion warned me again and again to keep quiet. All I could feel was a tickling sensation. The tickling increased, and I was almost ready to faint with suppressed excitement. Finally the centipede looked up at my sleeve and slowly made for it, moving all the legs in unison. The sensation by this time was unbearable and I feared I would be unable to remain calm until the thing got entirely off. My flesh seemed to shrink away as the horrible creature proceeded, but in a few more seconds, every one of which seemed an hour, it had settled itself comfortably on the fabric of my clothing, and with a motion quicker than I was ever known to make before I routed it with a stick and sat down, perspiring from head to foot. It was the most thrilling experience I ever figured in, and it made me sick the rest of the day."

"My companion began to laugh as though he would die of merriment, but I saw nothing particularly humorous in the situation. "You are crazy," he said, "to get frightened over a little thing like that. Do you not know that Hawaiian centipedes are not poisonous? I told you to keep quiet just to see how long your nerve would last. If the thing had sunk every claw into your flesh it would have only caused a little swelling and nothing more. I have had several of them strike me, and apply a little ammonia or salt water, and cure it up in half an hour."—San Francisco Call.

COMPOUND

tom flange. Four inches of slack gravel cover the decking, which is sloped toward the center of the bridge for drainage purposes.

A layer of felt is laid between the timbers and the planks they rest on, and the iron work in contact with decking and ballast is asphalt.

This method is found very satisfactory in reducing the noise of passing trains, and it is to be hoped that its principle will soon be largely adopted in this country. Already the fact that some consideration is due to one's neighbors in the matter of piano practice and other domestic noises is becoming recognized, and quite a trade has sprung up in the "deafening" materials.

Of these, probably the most in request is mineral wool, a layer of which is placed under the floor, in the walls, and over the ceiling if need be. In a room thus surrounded the most rabid musician can do his worst without interfering in the least with the peace of mind of the rest of the inmates of the house.

Another easily-handled material which forms an effective dam for the vibration of sound waves, and which is not open to the objection which mineral wool presents, of turning powdery, is a quilt composed of long, flat blades of sea grass, which cross each other at every angle, forming innumerable air spaces, which give almost perfect conditions for cutting both heat and sound.—Baltimore American.

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