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The Short and Long of It

By DORA MOLLAN

WHEN Elsa David was old enough to wear her skirts longer, she wore them shorter. For it was the fashion and, oh, so economical! Robert Corbin, who occupied the large front room on the second floor of Mrs. Beebe's rooming house, at the other end of the long hall from Elsa's small one, could remember when his sister had graduated from high school in the glory of a long full train and the awe and admiration which it had excited in his own small self. Right then Robert had decided that his wife should wear a train—always.

Alas for his vow! As his life lengthened, skirts shortened, yet he still dreamed of some day asking some girl if he might buy her skirt material by the yard instead of by the inch.

There was one skirt in particular which Elsa wore. Robert disliked it exceedingly. Bright green plaid, and with it she carried a bright green leather bag. Surely money trusted to the keeping of such a purse was bound to lose all sense of responsibility and come popping gayly forth at the first silly inducement.

And then one day Robert Corbin, returning to his room at noon, ran up the stairs and, stumbling on the top one, dropped his key. The hall in that particular spot was dark. He struck a match and found the key with little trouble. It had fallen beside a bright green bag.

In his room, with the door closed behind him, Robert sat with the bag on his knees. It was shabby at the corners and the handle was worn from much contact with Elsa's fingers. Robert felt a sudden impulse to kiss that worn spot, and was so embarrassed that he opened the clasp quite without meaning to do so and beheld its contents. Two dimes, one nickel, a mirror and a powder puff! Fit cargo, indeed, for such a travesty of a purse!

He would leave it with Mrs. Beebe. No, he would knock on the girl's door. Halfway down brought him within range of the landlady's strident voice, which seemed to be always striving to attain the heights her stature lacked.

"I hope you find your bag, Miss David—and the eight dollars you say was in it—before Saturday night, or I advise you to look for another room."

"You can't hope so any more than I, Mrs. Beebe." If there was a doubting Thomas tone in the landlady's voice there was a rueful note in Elsa's.

Right here Robert Corbin experienced his second impulse regarding that green bag—and yielded. Pausing long enough to take something from his pocket and to fumble with the clasps, he continued on down the hall. "This is yours, I think, Miss David."

Elsa took the bag and her voice said, "Why, thank you, Mr. Corbin!" But her eyes seemed to say that out of a world filled with stupid and clumsy men, he was the most clumsy and stupid of all.

"Now that you have found your money perhaps you will be good enough to pay me," shrilled Mrs. Beebe. And as Elsa stood irresolute, "You don't suspect Mr. Corbin's honesty, I hope?"

With a countenance devoid of all expression Elsa opened the green bag and looked in. Without lifting her eyes she took out a ten-dollar bill and handed it to the landlady. Meanwhile Robert took the opportunity to go on his way.

That evening as Robert Corbin sat in his comfortable, shabby easy chair there came a knock and with a vision of an outrageous green skirt before his eyes the occupant of the front room hastened to answer it. But there stood the princess of his boyhood dreams! A willowy, gracious creature garbed in something soft and clinging and silken and white whose indefinite folds concealed and revealed and which, if it did not terminate in an actual train, at least touched or nearly touched the floor in spots.

"May I come in—and explain—and thank you?" asked Elsa David as she crossed to the worn old easy chair, which immediately took on the attributes of a throne. Finding Robert's gaze somewhat disconcerting but betraying her embarrassment only by an increase of color, the girl began:

"Ever since I was a child and devoured fairy tales I have longed for a train, but when I grew up enough to wear one there weren't any. Now they say long skirts are coming back into their own again. I saw this frock in a shop window—and fell. It took my last cent and I threw my bag into that dark corner purposely so as to have a quarter way truthful excuse for Mrs. Beebe when she came to dun me. Now thank you for coming to my rescue so gallantly, Mr. Corbin, and think your worst of me. Of course I will pay you back as soon as possible."

"Go out and put on that gypsy rig if you expect me to scold you," spake Robert with his tongue, while his eyes said plainly: "You are beautiful in that gown—like the princess I dreamed of when I was a little boy. I wonder? Could I perhaps persuade you to make that old dream of mine come true?"

"I'll do just as you wish," answered Elsa meekly, and then, as if reading his thoughts she fled down the hall urged by that primeval instinct that heeds not changing fashions and endures through the ages.

(Copyright.)

Primitive Home Life

Rural Japanese housewives roll up their beds and store them away every morning. The Samoans have no bathtubs. They bathe daily in the cool mountain streams. Their furnishings are limited to pots or gourds. Pebbles on the bare ground replace carpets. The Egyptian peasant along the Nile lives in a clay house. His bed and chair are a ledge of earth on the side of the room. In Arabia, dinner is served in a huge pot into which the diners dig with their hands and bring forth their portion.

Scions of Ancient Race of Mayas Still Exist

Representatives of the ancient Maya race still live at Cozumel, nine miles off the coast of Yucatan, Mexico. They are direct descendants of that half fabulous and mighty race which built the ruined wonder cities of Yucatan; which offered human hearts to Kukulkan, the feathered serpent god, at Uxmal; which flung sacrificial maidens, decked with jade and gold and flowers, into the deep subterranean pool at Chichen-Itza. Having seen those mystery cities, those sacrificial altars and that pool it gives you a start—as if you had miraculously pulled aside the curtain of time—to behold Maya faces in the living flesh, faces that we so often call Aztec. Yet there on Cozumel those faces still exist by the hundreds. A short and stocky race, almost beardless and with coarse black hair, they remind you of the Japanese. Though all memory of their former imperial glory has utterly departed, they still speak the ancient Maya tongue, for thousands of years even before the Spanish conquest. This tongue, by the way, is one of the very few aboriginal languages that have ever stood off a white man's speech. Even today, Spanish controls only the cities of Yucatan. The country at large still conducts its business—especially the chicle business—in Maya, and on Cozumel you hear it everywhere.

Wise Parent Will Stay Young With Children

Whatever else parents do, let them hold fast to imagination. If they have ever believed in fairies, let them not shut the fairy people out now. Let them not make growing up like traveling along a level road where everything must eventually disappear behind the horizon, but let them make it like the ascent of a steep hill, where the view constantly widens as one goes higher and nothing once seen is ever again shut out. Then they will never say to their children, "You're too young to understand," and what is quite as important, their children will never need to say of them, "They're too old to understand." What is even more important, they will never reach the deadly dull state of being completely grown up, because they will realize that if we have wings we can never reach the place where we cannot go higher.—Parents' Magazine.

Odd Scottish Structure

John O'Groat's house was located on a spot on Duncansby road, the northeast extremity of the mainland of Scotland, marking one of the limits of that country. It is also the terminus of automobile and cycling record rides from Land's end, Cornwall, which is the southwest extremity of England, a distance of 994 miles. According to tradition, in order to settle a family dispute as to precedence an eight-sided house with a door and window in each side, which contained an eight-sided table, gave each of the eight brothers of the Groat family the power to enter his own house and eat at his own table in company with his brothers.

Short Canal-Boat History

The first canal boats were for freight only and provided quarters merely for the captain and crew. But the demand for passenger accommodations brought canal boats with two cabins, one at the bow and one at the stern, with cargo hatches amidships, the forward cabin for women and the after cabin for men. Within a few years passenger traffic became so heavy freight was carried entirely on freight or cargo boats, while fast expresses were operated for passengers alone. The boats were drawn by two or three horses, which followed a towpath along the bank. The express boats averaged about 4 miles an hour.

Goldsmith Couldn't Dictate

Dictation is no new thing, though commoner today than of old. A friend of Oliver Goldsmith once suggested to him that he use the services of an amanuensis, to avoid the physical labor of writing. He tried it. It did not work. He paced up and down the room while the amanuensis sat and waited for the words to be set down. At last Goldsmith turned to him, put the agreed-on fee into his hands, and dismissed him with these words. "It won't do, my friend. I find that my head and my hand must work together."

Chocolate Ancient Beverage

Chocolate was a favored drink on this continent long before the arrival of the white man. It was extensively used by the Aztecs and before them the Toltecs. A Florentine who had resided in the West Indies finally introduced chocolate into Italy, whence its use gradually spread through Europe, though not without opposition. Its introduction into Prussia was prohibited by Frederick the Great. A famous Paris physician, Bochot, on the other hand, proclaimed cacao one of the most noble of discoveries, far more worthy to be the food of the gods than nectar and ambrosia, and Linnaeus, noted Swedish botanist, who gave cacao its scientific christening, coined a name, "Theobroma," from two Greek words, meaning "food for the gods," which remains its scientific name today.

A Promise

Although she had never been married at all her views on remarriage were very strict. So, of course, she had to call on the young divorcee and tell her so.

Frankness was one of the virtues on which she prided herself, so the conversation had not progressed far before she declared to the young bride, "Pardon my saying so, but don't you think you might have waited more than a month after your divorce to marry your second husband?"

"Oh, do you really think so?" replied the bride, "I'll make it a point to wait longer next time."

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Hats

Hats, today, are for service every day. Our stock has been small, but each week we have gotten just a few new ones in. On Friday, October 25th, we shall have a new lot arrive that we expect to mark $2 98, value great and styles new. $3.50, $4.00 and $4 50 values in this lot. This sale lasts for Friday and Saturday only.

Corselettes

Styles of Dresses are changing so that every woman, young and old, stout or slender, have to wear some kind of corset to make a proper foundation for the dress. Our department has Brassieres, 25c to $1.00; Corselettes, $1.00 to $5.75; Corsets, $2.50 to $6.00. Nemo Flex and Nemo.

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