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CHAPTER XXIV.

All that day and the next I was too ill to move. The faithful Mary attended me, and Darby, like a tender sentinel, was ever by my side. From them I learned that the ports had been roughly broken upon all that Sir Ralph had gone to London on "most business." Mrs. March had left when that same evening, and amazement was rife in the servants' hall at her sudden departure.

"And Yorke?" I asked Darby, faintly. "Where is he?"

"He left last night," she said. "But he said nothing to me, and begged me to give you this letter."

I lay down weak and faint, and read that letter. It was without prelude or formal address.

"I hear you are ill. I am not surprised. The illness that this illness has been hastened by what occurred yesterday is no concern of mine. Sir Ralph as good as bade me never see him, and I have done so, for I am sick of life. I mean to see you again before I go back to London. I will not write. I have no intention of calling at the house, your husband is away, but I shall be in the plantation by the old summer house every afternoon from 4 to 6 till I see you. Joan, you must meet me, or I will be weak enough to go to you. Ask your heart the motive of unworthy man, but I think you will agree it to the last. Deny yourself if you refuse my request.

"Ever yours, YORKE."

I read the mad, impulsive words with a sensation of rising sense of indignation. When the letter is half, and was just about to call Darby throw it into the fire, when some strange, inexplicable fancy prompted me to preserve it. I put the two letters together, and replaced the letter in its envelope, then turned to the child's scared face.

"Did Yorke say anything to you about the letter?" I asked. "Do you think they have quarrelled?"

"I don't know," she said thoughtfully. "But Yorke seemed very, very sad. He told me he would like to shoot himself."

I shrank.

"Hush, Darby!" I thought, with a passionate sense of feeling. "She is walking on the path I trod, and Yorke Ferrers will mine for you. I want the torture and the pain to end, and be no longer a foe to struggle with, but a friend that blesses every hour we know."

"And for this end," I said, my voice shaken and unsteady, "I am to leave my husband—you are to break faith with the girl who loves you? That is your programme?"

"You put it harshly," he said.

"I put it," I answered, "as it is—as it will look to others—a life branded with undying dishonor."

"Words!" he said passionately. "What are words? Empty sounds—idle breath! Do you think they will quench this fire in my heart?"

"I think," I said lowly, "that the woman who parted us did me a good service. I think that I never loved you, Yorke Ferrers, only my ideal of you—an ideal that every action of your life has falsified—that your words to-day have destroyed forever!"

I raised my eyes, then I looked him fully, fearlessly in the face. The rage and shame that shook me to the core and center of my being robbed me of all softer feeling. I did not care that his face looked white as death, that an agony of appeal struggled with the disbelief in his eyes, that the words I had spoken might be like a knife thrust to his heart. In that moment I cared for nothing—nothing save the longing to repay the heart that once had been so surely mine.

"You don't mean it!" he said at last, in a hoarse, stifled voice. "You—you can't mean it, Joan! You are acting a—a—"

"Acting!" I cried furiously, scattering prudence to the winds—resolved that he should know the truth at last, even at the cost of my own self-respect. "You mistook the part I played. It was not that of a wife ready for the love of another man, but a wife who saw that day by day the husband she loved was drifting from her side for the sake of that other man, whose evil reputation had not even been quite sure of the ruin of this misery that had overtaken her life, and so, in desperation and in pain, or herself to hide it from all eyes—most of all the eyes of the man who would have gloated over her unhappiness, and mistaken reserve for love. Have spoken plainly enough yet?"

He drew back a step. He half raised his hand as if to ward off a blow that would strike him down into depths I had not meant to reach.

"You have spoken—too plainly," he said. I heard the faint wind rustling through the leaves like a spectral whisper, and after all through the still damp air came the sound of a clock the stable clock striking the hour.

Mechanically I counted them. One—two—three—four—five!

"I must go home now," I said. "This interview is useless, you see—only pain and shame to both of us. The best thing we can do is to forget it—to go back to duty, however hard it is. Perhaps," I added scornfully, "some time Sir Ralph will believe in me again."

Shivering, I drew the folds of my cloak more closely round me and hurried away in the direction of the hall. It was so dark that I could scarcely see a step before me. I groped along, feeling my way by the wet branches, till I reached the opening in the wood that led to the path-way. From there my way was easy. In fifteen minutes I knew I should be home once more. My limbs were trembling and unsteady, but the chance to be indoors, safe and in the shelter and warmth of home, gave me strength. I staggered on. I passed the shrubberies, the terrace. I reached the window by which I had left the house. It was closed, and, as I stood it found it had been locked on the inside. I must go round to the front door and ring.

I felt amazed. The whole household would know of my absence now, and wonder, and discuss it. As I hesitated, I remembered that Sir Ralph's little study, where no one else would, received his documents and kept his keys, had a similar window opening on to the ground. It was just a chance that it might be unlocked, but I would try the chance before ringing. As I passed round the house, walking slowly and unsteadily, a sudden sharp report rang out on the still air.

I started, listening to the echo dying away slowly, ominously, dying in the breathless silence of mist and darkness.

What seized my heart then in a spasm of terror. What chilled the death the pulses that had leaped and thrilled with fear? I remember that I staggered up against the wall, that with one last effort of losing strength I tried to utter the cry that seemed stifling in my throat—that, as I uttered it, the darkness seemed to sweep down upon me like a black winged giant, and then—then I remember nothing more.

CHAPTER XXV.

I remember it was dark still when I awoke. A lamp burned low, a strange, faint odor of scents and aromatic essences filled the room. From out of the darkness shadowy forms stole and moved and passed back into obscurity. I tried to raise my head, but I could not lift it from the pillow. My hair as I touched it felt damp and moist, my hands even seemed to have grown feeble, and fell weakly back on the counterpane in defiance of my efforts.

I lay quite still, trying to recall events, memories, thoughts, but I could recall nothing. Then I heard voices, and tried to catch the meaning of the words they uttered—the voices of Mrs. Birket and Mavis.

"What has happened?" I cried. "Why am I here? Has there," faltering, as my eyes turned from one to another of the faces, "has there been an accident?"

"Well, yes," said Mrs. Birket reluctantly; "there has. Mr. Yorke has hurt himself. We think his gun went off accidental like. He was found in the plantation badly wounded. Now, my lady, that's all, and you really must think of yourself, and keep quiet, and try to sleep. Sir Ralph's been pretty well out of his mind about you."

She laid me gently back. The effort had been too much for me. I fainted again. Long, long hours of deep, dreamless sleep. Then I woke again, weak, but with force and thought clear once more. I asked for Darby. She glided forward from behind the curtains—white, spiritual as a ghost.

"Darby," I said, "tell me, how is Yorke?"

Involuntarily the slight arms quivered, betraying what could not be betrayed by the hidden face.

"Oh, do not ask me, Joe!" she cried plaintively. "I dare not speak of it, it has all been so terrible! Sir Ralph says I must not speak. He will tell you when you are strong."

I sighed and turned away. The great dread at my heart lay there still. Worn—oh, when would they tell the truth to me?

Presently I spoke again.

"When did Sir Ralph return?"

"It was that that evening," she said, and again I felt the tremor of fear run through her slight figure.

"Is that very long ago?" I asked.

"Two days. Don't you remember, Joe?"

"No," I said; "it is all dark and confused. I—I went out, did I not?"

"Yes," she said. "I fell asleep, and when I woke Sir Ralph was in the room."

"Sir Ralph!" I gasped.

"Yes," she said faintly; "and he spoke so strangely and sternly. He asked where you were, and I said I did not know—perhaps in your room. Then he rose and went over to the fire, and I followed. As he reached the chair where you had been sitting, he stooped and picked up something. I heard a rustle of paper, then he said something—it sounded wicked and awful, Jo—and without one other word, he rushed out of the room."

"Good heavens!" I faintly exclaimed. I remembered how I had been sitting in that chair reading Yorke's letter. Had I dropped it? Had my husband read it and followed me?

A deadly terror seized me. I put the child's arms aside and rose to a sitting position.

"Darby," I whispered passionately, "you have never told me a lie—never in your life. Tell me the truth now, I must know it—is Yorke Ferrers dead?"

She was silent. Her little face grew bloodless, her little hands went out to mine in faint appeal.

"Don't ask me, Jo—you mustn't ask me; they—they told me not to tell!"

"You just need not tell." I said. "I know!"

I sank back on the pillow faint and spent. What tragedy of horror was this that had seized, red-handed, on my life, and turned it into shame, and treachery, and crime? What evil fate had delighted in making me its victim and its sport?

Behind the child's simple words I read a whole history of woe. The discovery of that letter, Sir Ralph's immediate departure, the shot I had heard, and then last and most terrible of all—Yorke Ferrers' tragic end. My brain grew dizzy.

I laid my hand on the child's with a sudden nervous pressure.

"Darby," I whispered, "go to Sir Ralph; ask him to come to me at once. Do you hear? At once."

CHAPTER XXVI.

It might have been a long or short time before Sir Ralph obeyed that message. I drew the curtain aside and looked at his face; but even as I looked a sense of something wanting in it—of horror at some awful, subtle change in its every line, in its rigid calm, in its stormy averted gaze, came over me and stilled the words on my lips—the cry of my aching heart.

"You sent for me?" he said, in a voice as unlike his own as was that uttered just.

"Yes," I said faintly. "Won't you—won't you come a little nearer?"

He drew a few steps nearer to the bed, but he did not touch my hand, nor say he was sorry for me, or aware of my pain.

"I sent for you," I said, "because they have all been deceiving me. Something dreadful has happened. I—I want to know what it is."

"You want to know?" he said, and there was so strange a meaning in his voice that it seemed to freeze me with a new and terrible fear. "I think it is you who ought to supply the information."

"Is he dead?" I gasped.

"Yes," he said, stonily.

"How?" I whispered, shivering a little as I turned my eyes away from the icy sternness of his face.

"They say he shot himself."

"He did not!" I almost screamed. "I am sure he did not!"

He was perfectly silent.

"Can't you speak to me?" I cried at last. "Can't you say how it was? Where was he found?"

"By the old summer house in the plantation."

"And by whom?" I gasped faintly.

"By me," he answered.

Then I looked up and met his eyes. Heaven knows what he saw in mine of horror and affright; but the fiery, blood-shot glance that answered them seemed to say, he, at least, felt no regret for the tragic end to that young life.

My eyes fell on his hand as it lay on the white coverlet. It seemed to me that the stain of blood must surely be there. I shuddered, and grew sick with fear.

"Why don't you go on?" I said. "Why don't you tell me the whole thing? Why do you make me drag it from you piecemeal?"

"What more do you wish to hear?" he asked icily. "Do you wish me to lie to you as you have lied to yourself? To tell a pretty fable about accidents? The sound of your voice reckons me. It is false as are its utterances. Do not think," with rising passion leaping into face and voice, "that I don't know he was your lover; that I am ignorant of how you left the house that night to meet him? Do you think to trick me still with a shallow pretense of fidelity—the fidelity of a wife whose heart is another's? It is too late for these things. I was blind a long, long time; but a trust once broken is hard to mend, and mine has gone for ever."

"You are unjust," I said weakly. "If you knew all, you would not condemn—you would pity me."

"Perhaps I do pity you," he said with a heavy sigh. "But your folly has wrecked two lives, and cost one. I have paid—and pay now. From first to last I have been tricked and deceived. No woman who was innocent would have received such a letter as—as this," taking that fatal missive from his breast, "and answered it in person. Facts are facts—you can't deny them. I forbade Yorke Ferrers to cross the threshold of my house. In defiance of your knowledge of that fact you meet him—slyly, treacherously—as only a shameless woman would meet an equally shameless man. If justice has overtaken him, he has but suffered what he deserves. I have told myself a thousand times that I would rather have his end than the misery and shame that are my portion henceforward."

His voice ceased.

I turned away and buried my face in the pillows. I think I only longed to shut out sight, hearing, consciousness of life.

"I am a failure!" I kept repeating to myself over and over again; "a dismal, hopeless failure!"

Mechanically I drew one hand away, and held it up and looked at it.

The sleeve fell back. The slender wrist looked almost transparent. The small, fine bones showed themselves only too plainly now. I let the hand drop again. I was startled when, in hoarse and shaken tones, I heard Sir Ralph say:

"Why do you do that?"

I half turned my head then.

"I was only wondering," I said, "how much more I can bear, and live. Not very much, I think."

"Is it so hard for you?" he cried passionately. "Can think what it must be for me. You have made my life loathsome as a sin! You have tricked me to a crime which I can't regret, however deep the sting of its remorse!"

"Crime!" I gasped faintly.

My eyes met his; the look in them appalled me. So may a man look who has given and lost his all!

"You are too weak to talk," he said abruptly; "and and it can do no good now!" Then his voice softened. "You must try and get some rest," he said. "The inquest is to be to-morrow. I am afraid they'll want your deposition."

"Mine?" I cried, almost springing up in bed. "Why mine? I can tell them nothing. I—I know nothing. I was at home when I heard that shot!"

His face blanched. He walked to the door, then suddenly recrossed the room, and came back to my side.

"What shall I do with this?" he said hoarsely, and held towards me the torn fragments of that fatal letter.

Then, for the first time, the full horror of the situation flashed across me. The scandal, the opprobrium, the disgrace! I clasped my hands imploringly.

"Burn it!" I said in a whisper.

He looked at me at the letter half-hesitated, then walked over to the fire and threw it in. The flames caught it; for a moment it writhed and quivered like a sentient thing, then turned into dull gray ashes. Once more he came towards me.

"It was for your sake," he said, low, and stern, and cold again. "It may spare you one pang more. But its destruction makes no difference in my belief."

He moved away again. This time I made no effort to stay him. My eyes followed him mechanically. He opened the door, closed it; the room was empty—alone.

"He is very tall," I said to myself in a strange sort of whisper.

It was such a foolish remark—such an altogether inappropriate remark after such a scene, that I was less startled by it than by the weak little laugh that left my lips.

"You must not laugh," I said again. "No one laughs when—when death is in the house. Death! Death! Whose death?"

Then a shriek burst from me that seemed to curdle the blood in my own veins as I heard it; but it was so madly exhilarating, so full of wild, thrilling, inexplicable relief, that I found myself repeating it again and again, and yet again.

Then suddenly something in my brain seemed to snap, and all the space around grew peopled with strange forms, and all the air seemed full of voices that clutched and wailed in fiendish echo of my own, and, fighting wildly, desperately with the forms, and deafened by the voices, I lost myself in the chaos of a wild and awful dream, from which I cried in vain to escape.

CHAPTER XXVII.

[Extracts from a journal of Sir Ralph Ferrers, kept for two years succeeding the mysterious death of his nephew, Yorke Ferrers.]

It is all over at last, that hateful business of the inquest. Heaven forgive me if I have kept anything back that would have thrown light upon this tragedy!

And now let me go back to that night, and put down, for my own satisfaction, what I have not breathed, and think I never shall dare to breathe, to a living soul.

On arriving at Monk's Hall that terrible evening, I, as before stated, went to Joan's boudoir. I had left her ill. I had parted from her coldly, and I wished to know how she was. The child was there alone, but left to work her sister. I went over to the fire, and to the chair in which she had been seated. Close beside it lay a paper, as if dropped in haste. I took it up. I knew the writing only too well. It was that of Yorke. The letter was in two halves. I thought she must have intended to throw it into the fire, and failed to notice that it had fallen short of the mark. I read it—every word.

Oh, what did I think as I took my way blindly in the direction of the ruined summer house? Of what does a man think when the hand he loves best stabs him relentlessly to the heart? Who would not prefer the death of the creature he loves to her lasting, eternal dishonor—or, at least, that has loved?

The blinding mist came down upon me—the darkness set itself like a fire between me and the path I sought. In the stifling grip of chaos I grew confused; the suffering which enveloped me drove reason fully, and left but one thought whirling and reiterating itself in my brain: "If I find them together, I will kill him! I will kill him!"

Suddenly I heard a shot. It seemed so close that for a second I almost fancied it had been aimed at myself. I stood as if turned to stone, listening, listening with every faculty concentrated in the ear for any sound or cry. There was a faint rustle of the close-growing shrubs—and no more, so far off, that it might have been made by the wind, or the passage of some scared bird, frightened from its nest. That was all. I collected my startled energies. I rushed on. I made of the open space where the old summer house stood rotting in ruin and decay. The moon was less heavy here. I went forward a few paces, listening at intervals. There was absolute silence.

The newspaper has stated most of these facts, and the further course of action I pursued. I need not repeat them at length. But the newspapers know nothing of the one thing I do record that night. Only a trifling thing, yet a thing that has been immortalized by the great tragedy of the world's greatest genius—a woman's handkerchief, a little gossamer thing, and in one corner embroidered with the letter "J."

He was dead, quite dead. He lay there alone in that awful moonlit solitude, lay as there as I had turned him, face upwards to the silent sky, whose tranquil radiance seems to pierce the clouds, finish, sightless, now and forever hopeless as my own accusation, pervious as my presumed revenge.

She had been here. That I knew. Perhaps she had been arranged for their flight; perhaps they had parted, thinking to meet on many hours had passed, and their part never again on this side of heaven. Perhaps—but why pursue conjecture further? He was beyond the reach of my vengeance—of her love. As I thought of her, I knew she must be near. Had she heard the shot? Would she return?

I left him there and hurried back. My feet seemed winged. I reached the terrace, and was rushing round to the door, when I stumbled against something—a woman's prostrate figure. The shudder of dread that shook me told me who it was even before the faint light revealed her face. I knew her to be Joan—innocent or guiltless, shameful or pure she was mine—the keeper of my name, the holder of my honor, the creature I had loved, and reverenced, and worshiped, and who had foiled me with such trifles as drive a man mad. She was mine, and I must try and shield her from the consequences of her evil and her weakness.

It is all over now. No suppositions have been available. No question raised. Sir Ralph has received the blame and sympathy due under the circumstances, and has filled his place in the resting place of the Ferrers, and I, Joan, am the sole mistress of work and hear the door fall dull and heavy on the coffin lid, and go homewards again with my secret in my breast, knowing that neither for myself nor for shame, nor for pity, will I ever whisper it to living soul.

They tell me she is mad. The shock of recent events following her brief, terrible illness, has been too much for her brain. Doctors come, the excellent, the greatest, but they give me little hope. I listen to them, one and all. I assent—say to myself, "At last my punishment will begin—the suffering that is my portion." The dreary days come and go. The place grows more hateful with each. Once Yorke Croft comes over to see me, but—what! is not terrible to be grateful. I deny myself to her. I cannot see her, knowing what I know, and I am not sure whether the sight of her grief would not waken in me a similar weakness.

The child comes and goes with noiseless tread. We do not often speak, but we understands me, I think, and her quiet sympathy is the only thing that soothes my restlessness, or stems the torrent of burning thoughts. I know one thing will give me relief—absence—and at last make up my mind to go abroad. I shall go and forget—forget the haunting faces of men and women. Never the sickest solitudes, to the most remote and most perilous of wilderness. There is nothing to keep me. Yorke's estate and past, his affairs have been settled, boxes of papers and letters, which I lack courage to examine, bearing the superscribed instructions of my dictation and hers.

I call my lawyer to. I make all necessary arrangements for my absence, of my death. I say—in case that a month or 40 years must provide for my absence. Yorke's papers I endorse in a letter to Joan, and seal, with instructions that they are to be burned unread in case of my never returning to me. Those with all my and all the necessary authority for acting in my absence I give into the lawyer's charge.

Darby will remain here under the care of a governess. I have engaged her for Joan has two attendants besides her faithful maids. Mrs. Birket, old and feeble as she is, promises to do her best to look after the household. For a thing with all these me to engage another strange housekeeper. And so, feeling I have done all I can do, I make up my mind to leave the place for a year, perhaps more. One—a dead remains. To see my wife, to take farewell of that last words, which I read that remains of my once happy days, have [illegible]

She was lying on the couch in her dressing room, that and the adjoining bedchamber are the only rooms she now uses. Beside the couch was a chair—Darby's little chair. I saw it as I knelt down out to it as if something to support me. A pang of pain came—my wife's face—

"Do you know me?" I asked her at last.

She put her hand to her forehead. Her face and eyes—perhaps the firelight—were wonder.

"He was very cruel," she said. "And it was so hard for me!"

"She always says that," Darby explained quietly. "I don't know what she means. You were not cruel to her, you know."

"I hope not," I said, looking down on the child. I never meant to be.

"For she loved you," the child went on, "very much. She loved you in that fashion. Sometimes I think you must not know, still," mournfully, "she was sometimes so very sad. I think she was afraid of you a little."

I looked back at the couch—saw the weak arms—

"My darling," I said, "you must not be afraid of me. I will be—I will be—"

(To be continued.)

Wild Horses.

Wild horses are getting to be quite numerous again on the flats in the Texas Panhandle and in Beaver county. They are very troublesome as they lead away the horses belonging to the cow men and ranchmen, and when a fine pet-mated horse once gets with a wild bunch it's an all day's job, and sometimes it takes several days, to catch him. The largest old crow bait alive of the gentlest family horse, after associating for a few days with these outrangs, seems to forget his raising. In the old time a likeness of his forefathers seems to crop out in him, and although formerly he may have allowed himself to be caught anywhere, he will not then permit a man to get within half a mile of him. About the only way to secure a horse of this kind is to run the entire bunch down and corral them, or to rope the ones wanted. Nearly all stockmen have lost horses in this manner, and the mustang instead of being looked upon with respect and with covetous eyes, as in the past, is now considered an intruder and a pest, and is shot down whenever opportunity offers. Some horses become so cheap, there is no object in catching and taking care of them, and the most valuable horses fall a victim to the lead bullet of man as now classed in the same category as the coyote and other "varmints."

FOR WOMAN'S BENEFIT.

Beautify the Finger Nails.

Finger nails can be made strong and of a delicate pink tint by the use of the following recipe: Melt two drams of pure white wax and add a few drops of almond oil, then mix in the yolk of an egg until a paste is formed. The nails should be rubbed every night with this, and gloves should be worn.

A Fad in Jewelry.

Elastic bracelets that open at touch of a spring just far enough to permit one to pass one's hand through, and then close firmly round the wrist, are new, pretty, and in no danger of being lost. They are of gold and come in a variety of hand-some designs. Some are in scrolls, others in beautiful entwined rings, each one studded with a single pearl, ruby or emerald. As watch bracelets they are excellent, as they stay in position instead of endangering the watch itself or its time-keeping virtues by constant slipping up and down on the arm.

Exercising Queenly Authority.

The National Magazine tells this story of Queen Wilhelmina: "Two of the court children were missing one day and grave fears were entertained as to the probability of their being kidnapped. A prolonged and careful search resulted in finding no traces of them and two attendants were arrested as suspicious characters. On further inquiry it was learned that these two children were last seen playing with the little queen the previous day. On questioning her as to their whereabouts, she said that they were locked up in an old cellar that could be reached from the courtyard. It seemed they refused to do her bidding, and so exercising her prerogative as chief executive of the kingdom, she had imprisoned them for rebellion."

Employment in the Attic.

A story is told of a woman who was left to support herself after middle life. She had no idea of how to go to work to make money, and, though never having had an oversupply of this world's goods, she had been in comfortable circumstances. She had some wealthy friends, at whose extravagances she had often exclaimed, saying, "You throw away enough for some people to live on."

When she became penniless, in trying what she could do so as to retain her independence her mind turned to this so-called waste of her friends. She asked them if they would let her have what they threw away, feeling that this was not asking charity. So it was agreed that as things were no longer needed they should be put up in an enormous attic, covering the house.

Here this ingenious woman went twice a year, sorted the stuff all over and sold and disposed of it to such good advantage that she asked help of no one, and was able to live in modest comfort, at least, on her own exertions.—New York Tribune.

Women as Small Farmers

An important experiment will be made with the object of forming settlements of women in different parts of the country for the cultivation of the land, and thus enabling them to add to their incomes by the sale of fruit, flowers, vegetables, poultry, eggs, honey, etc. The idea was started by the Countess of Warwick, and an institution has been opened in connection with Reading college, where they will be trained specially for the work. It was founded for the definite purpose of enabling women over the age of 16 to obtain a thorough training (theoretical and practical) in the lighter branches of agriculture, viz.: Flower and fruit growing and packing for market, especially fresh fruit, tomatoes, mushrooms, etc., bee and poultry keeping, dairy work. The council of Reading college have consented to provide the necessary courses of instruction, and to recognize the Countess of Warwick's Hostel as a place of residence for women students. The full course of instruction will extend over two years, but those who wish to do so may join the short courses and special courses.—London Telegraph.

The Younger Generation's Clothes.

Consider the younger generation, how it is growing this winter most rapidly into very advanced tailor made fashion. With the little girls this is most noticeable, for they are as close of skirt and as braided of body as their elders. And the small boy—there are few articles of his father's wardrobe he does not possess in miniature. It is true, of an evening he only wears a dinner jacket, as the hammer coattails are not yet his, but very impressive is his little bell crowned silk hat and the ample frocked coat in which he trots to church, to family weddings, and to such functions as the law made. It is entitled to participate in. The military activities of the time are also reflected in juvenile raiment, for the knee breeches of him who is still in the interest is immediately peg-top'd by short cloth and blue cloth and show a band of narrow black braid down the outside of either leg. The coat sweet on the pattern of an officer's fatigue jacket, looking all straight from hip line to chin, and this with a dark blue fatigue cap, braided in black, gives a fair idea of what the approved autumn school suit should be. Straight buttoned dark blue cloth coats, with a couple of capes, are what the little men wear over these suits on chilly days, and to further emphasize the exceeding manliness of their wardrobes, the school-boys, when in full dress, wear shirts that have board bosoms and lofty stiff collars. A touch of gayety is lent in scarlet velvet waistcoats with gilt buttons that the older masculines might profitably adopt, just as some of the small dinner jackets have their lapels faced with sky blue or bright red satin. Altogether the little boy is a very pleasing object to contemplate these days, even if he is a trifle progressive.

Gowns for the Trousseau.

If the saying is true that all the world loves a lover, it is also true that all women are interested in wedding trousseaux, no matter whether the outfit is to be for themselves or for somebody else; and certainly every woman who is to be married wishes, very naturally, to provide a suitable outfit for herself. It is supposed that the trousseau shall contain what is sufficient for a year at least; but of late it has been rather the fashion for women not to buy gowns enough for a year, but simply to buy what is necessary for the time being, and put the money aside to buy what will be necessary the coming season. This is vastly more sensible now that fashions change so often and not only the fashion in gowns, but in materials as well. Lingerie does not change so every year and consequently a good stock of it can be laid in. Pretty underwear is something every woman likes to have, and should be well provided with. When having a trousseau the best plan is to find out just how much money can be afforded, and then what is necessary should be bought first, leaving for the last what might be called luxuries. It is very pleasant to own two or three silk gowns, but they are not a necessity. A street gown, on the contrary, is a necessity, as well as one or two smart and becoming gowns for house wear, and at least one gown that is suitable to wear at evening entertainments. There is no greater mistake made than for young people to give up their social life as soon as they are married; for while they are sufficient to each other for a time, it is not human for them to wish for the companionship of somebody else after awhile, and then they will want to be entertained as well as to entertain.

Every woman who can afford it should have a wedding gown. It need not be of silk or satin, or any of the more expensive materials, but it is prettier to have it in white, and to wear with it a veil. There are many inexpensive white materials that can be bought now that are extremely pretty, and the gown need not be elaborately made.—Harper's Bazar.

No "superfluous Women."

The government has published a map showing for each state in the Union the number of unmarried men and unmarried women over 20 years of age.

With a peculiarly childlike faith the census officials believe they know the exact ages of all the unattached females, and accordingly they are grouped in five-year periods. In that particular the statistics are manifestly untrustworthy, but apart from that the figures are absolute.

And they are very astonishing. They show definitely that the "surplus woman" is a myth. There is no surplus of women. There is a shortage of 2,200,000. There are in the United States 5,427,767 bachelors over 20 years of age and only 3,224,494 unmarried women above that age.

But this is the least astonishing part of the matter. The chart shows that in absolutely every state there is an excess of bachelors over maidens.

Even in Massachusetts, where tradition says the home of the "surplus woman," there are 226,084 available bachelors and only 219,257 spinsters.

In Rhode Island there are 2 per cent more bachelors than unmarried women, in New Hampshire 9 per cent., in Connecticut 20 per cent., in New Jersey and Virginia 22 per cent., while in Idaho the excess of bachelors over maids is 1000 per cent., there being 16,584 unmarried men and only 1756 women. Wyoming and Arizona closely follow, while all the far western states have reason to regard woman as one of the "precious metals," because of her scarcity.

But the one fact of greatest interest is that there is in the country not one single state which has not men enough to furnish a husband apiece for all its women.—New York World.

Fashion and Fancy.

A black silk and wool fabric has a satin stripe in bright color.

Crepe is not as perishable as it might seem. There is a waterproof variety which is very serviceable.

Many of the cloth costumes designed for youthful wearers are still made in round waisted style, with fronts very slightly bloused.

Medallions, open work blacks, mohair and other silky wool braids in sapphire effects are very fashionably used as a garniture for stylish cloth costumes.

The chief points in the new jackets and cloaks are their length, especially in the back; the cloaked frills attached to them and the enormous medici collars and revers.

Velvet is a favorite material for this season's wear. Not only is it used for wraps, but entire costumes are composed of it. It is of light weight, which is a great advantage.

The new purple or plum red tailor cloths, velvets, satin brocades and Henriettas are exceedingly antique and beautiful, and very becoming to either a blonde or a brunette with color.

Waistbands are once more in favor. Some new fall jackets are belted around the waist or have a belt at the back. Short basques are universal and finished with a belt made of broad ribbon, of piece material or of velvet or satin.