

proposed to put his terrible inventions. The doctor found no difficulty in believing what I told him, and it evidently gave him a profound respect for his deceased *confrère*. He agreed with me that it would be dangerous to meddle with the tube which the corpse clasped in its rigid hand, and promised me that even if an autopsy should be necessary, he would see that the tube remained undisturbed. I think he was a little shy of coming too closely in contact with the body, lest the professor should have died of one of his new diseases. At any rate, he decided to accept my theory that Schwartz had died of heart-disease, and persuaded the Syndic that an autopsy would be quite superfluous.

Professor Schwartz was buried within twenty-four hours, with the Purple Death still in his right hand. The police were easily persuaded that it contained some holy relic, and that it would be impious to meddle with it. When the funeral was over, I left the place as soon as I could pack my boxes, and surrendered the lease of my villa. I have never seen it since, and never want to see it.

On my way back to England I passed through Berlin, where I went to see an eminent bacteriologist, and asked him how long microbes inclosed in a tube containing gelatine would retain their vitality. His answer was, "For ever, so far as is at present known." That answer has poisoned my whole life. Six feet underground, in the grave of Professor Schwartz, lies the Purple Death, waiting until the day when the cemetery will share the fate of all cemeteries, and be cut up into building lots. Then the tube will be exhumed and broken, and the pestilence that is to sweep away the teeming millions of Europe will begin its work. Sooner or later, this is morally certain to happen. I have sometimes thought of exhuming the coffin of Professor Schwartz, and searching for the fatal tube, but to do this would be to invite the catastrophe which I dread, for in all probability the tube has become unsealed by this time. My only hope is that an earthquake will some day bury the cemetery too deep for any spade to reach the grave of my poor mad friend.



A WOMAN'S DAY IN TOWN.



PROPERLY to appreciate a day in town, it is absolutely necessary to live in the country, and so profit by the thorough change of scene. It is delightful to start early, amidst the messages and farewells of the family assembled on the doorstep, and to drive through the fresh crisp air to the station, exchange greetings with friends, have a chat with the station-master, and finally, newspaper in

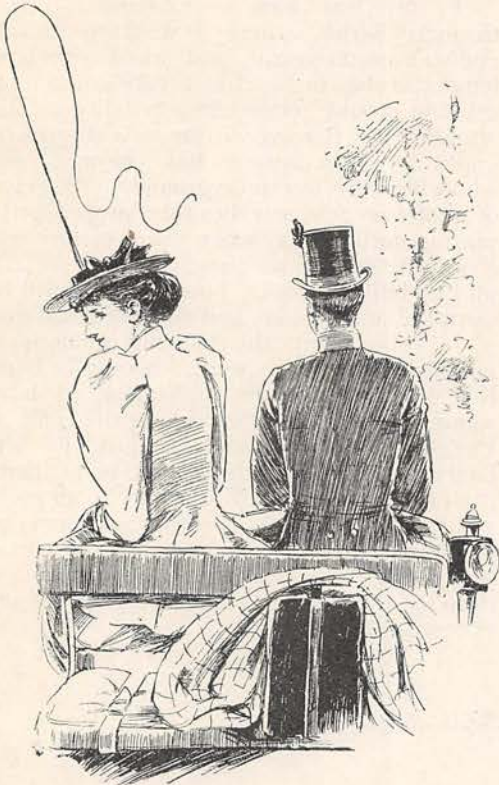
hand and favourite seat secured, enjoy the unwonted luxury of an early look at the news.

The first thing to be done on reaching London is to dispose of the shopping for

"the house"—not paying amusing visits to an elegant dressmaker or a charming milliner, but downright marketing at the stores: laying in the delicacies and condiments not to be had in the village at home or even at the nearest town, and seriously testing cheese and bacon.

Jack has, of course, made out a list of materials for his fretwork. Tom wants nails and hinges for a box he is constructing. Mary must have silks for her embroidery; and nurse has dictated a column of requirements, such as gloves, stockings, braces, needles, cottons, tapes, buttons, flannel, house-cloths, and dusters, as if they need not be paid for. Buying these goods is the prose of shopping, and the work is put through with speed.

Next comes a visit to any art gallery that may chance to be open. Pictures by Burne Jones are sometimes on view; and what a pleasant interlude it makes to pause before some of the poems in colour of this artist! To spend twenty minutes beside "King Cophetua" or the "Pygmalion" series, or to wonder at the marvels of the "Seven Days of Creation," is to go away helped and refreshed for the rest of the day.



"IT IS DELIGHTFUL TO START EARLY" (p. 119).

We wish next to go to St. Pancras, perhaps, on the way to lunch with a friend living on the Midland Railway. How many women from the suburbs know exactly how to go from the middle of Regent Street by the cheapest route to that station? We do not, at all events; so we ask policeman X1, and a conversation ensues.

"How shall I get to St. Pancras?"

"Do you want to walk?"

"No; I wish for an omnibus."

"Then take a 'bus as goes there!"

"Of course; but which of them does go there?"

"You get into one marked *Walworth Road*, and it'll put you down at the door."

We wait and watch, and feel cross at not having asked

policeman X1 what is the colour of the 'bus we want. How is it possible to look all over green, yellow, blue, and red vehicles to see if *Walworth Road* is among the things written there? We go presently to the oasis a little further up the street, where stands another policeman.

"What is the colour of the omnibus going to St. Pancras?"

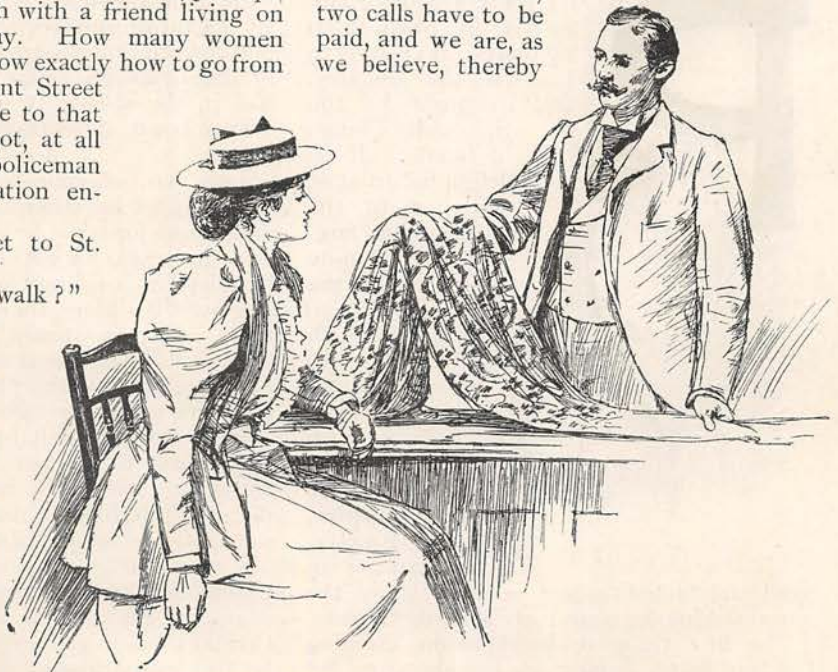
"A blue Favourite will be the one, ma'am; they comes by here."

Again we stand patiently, this time with more hope, but, to our dismay, policeman No. 1 re-appears, and marches across the road, saying—

"If you'd 'a done what you was told, you'd 'a been on the road to Pancras by now. You've missed your 'bus, and you'll have to wait ten minutes."

Talk about grandfatherly legislation: here was a specimen! This policeman took us in charge, and returning to the first position, kept guard till the right omnibus came, when he put us safely in and departed.

The middle of the afternoon finds us again in the busy thoroughfares, and we enjoy a walk down Bond Street, and note the beauty and small numbers of the articles in the shops—each thing having plenty of room to be shown in, and being well worthy of inspection; then we go into Oxford Street, where the enormous quantity of materials and goods strikes us, the things heaped up and sadly crowded. After this, two calls have to be paid, and we are, as we believe, thereby



"BUYING THESE GOODS IS THE PROSE OF SHOPPING" (p. 119).



"TAKE A 'BUS AS GOES THERE!"

along, and apparently take in the situation at a glance.

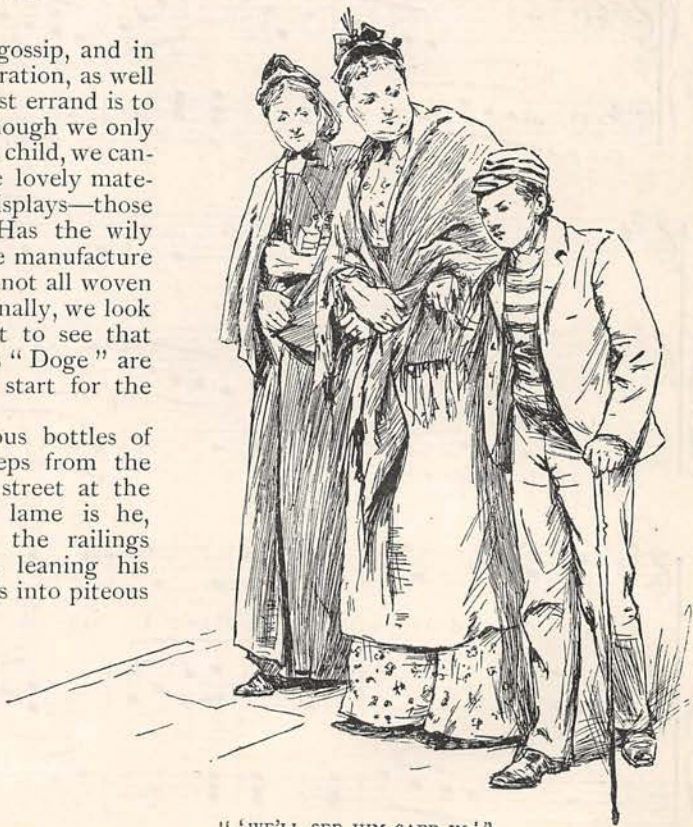
"Rheumatics, is it? Bad things, them, when they ketches yer like that. Cab, mum? Lor' bless yer, no!—frighten his poor mother out of her wits, it would! Tuppence for a 'bus, if yer like; we'll see him safe in;" and one good soul takes the bottles and the other pulls the boy's arm through hers, and off they go towards the Strand, leaving us with pleasant memories of their rough Good Samaritan-like faces.

An express train soon takes us back to the woods and fields, and the scent of wild flowers and gorse is like a breath from heaven on our faces as we alight at the little roadside station. The yard is crowded with vehicles, from the coach of the local magnate, the trim broughams and phaetons of the lesser luminaries, to our own little cart, into which we gladly scramble, and with a pat to the mare, and a glance to see the small groom has not broken his limbs in his frantic jump to the back seat, we are off up the hill, and soon once more at home, where the lawn seems greener, and the flowers of brighter hue than ever, after our few hours of absence.

IVOR MERLE.

posted up in the latest town gossip, and in novelties of furniture and decoration, as well as dress and "chatter." Our last errand is to an æsthetic draper's, where, although we only want stuff for a frock for a small child, we cannot resist an examination of the lovely materials and colours the shopman displays—those things with Indian names! Has the wily Hindoo ever had a finger in the manufacture of any one of them? Are they not all woven in Manchester or Bradford? Finally, we look in at the National Gallery, just to see that Moroni's "Tailor" and Bellini's "Doge" are still in their places; then we start for the station once more.

A poor lad with two enormous bottles of medicine is coming up the steps from the Charing Cross Hospital to the street at the back of it. As we pass, so lame is he, and so hindered, he clutches the railings for a step or two, and then, leaning his face against the cold iron, bursts into piteous sobs. What can we do? There is but little time, yet the poor lad must not be left here. He is a martyr to rheumatism, it appears, and all the help we can think of is to give him money for a cab to his home. Two motherly-looking women, however, come



"WE'LL SEE HIM SAFE IN,"