DESERET EVENING NEWS.

Published every day, except Sunday, at 1 p. m. Subscription price, in advance, $10.00 per year, $1.00 per month, 25 cents per week, postpaid or delivered by carrier.

DESERET SEMI-WEEKLY NEWS. Published every Tuesday and Friday. Subscription price, in advance, per year, $3.00, six months, $1.75, three months, $1; postpaid or delivered.

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NORWEGIAN COURTSHIP.

Tall? Yes, very. She stood a head above the average man.

Slight? No. That is too poetical a word to be in any way applied to the heroine of this little tale, whose lean, scrawny figure looked for all the world like a series of badly connected angles, and whose stooping shoulders and narrow chest were clad in a faded black jacket.

This garment, with its rusty surface and pulled seams, suited well the sad looking woman into whose dreary life come one little bit of color, which I shall try to describe.

Her face corresponded well with the rest of her appearance, for it was faded and worn, and surrounded by a fringe of straight, dusty brown hair, pulled tightly back from the sallow, weary face, whose one redeeming feature was the eyes—dark gray, and oh, so sad!

She had that expression of wistful waiting sometimes seen in the eyes of a faithful dog who has lost his master, and seems ever to wait, always patiently, and to watch ever expectantly for the beloved face.

She was a Norwegian, named Etta, and lived in our family as cook for nearly a year.

Weeks passed by and early autumn, which had brought her to us, shed leafy tears, and departed suddenly, leaving us all unprepared for winter's advent, which announced itself in a cold, dismal rain.

Up to this time Etta had never received a letter or any communication from the outside world. She never left the house, and scorned the idea of an afternoon out. However, on this drizzly day, there was a surprise, a great surprise, for Etta was discovered holding an open letter tightly grasped in one hand. But when she found herself regarded, it was hastily thrust into a voluminous pocket in her skirt.

Now this pocket was a marvel in itself, as it could hold myriads of things. Why, one day I saw her produce a pillow case, a workbox, scissors and a brass thimble at one fell swoop; at another time—but I am wandering far away from the letter and its consequences.

The mysterious epistle was seen several times again, and these glimpses showed it to be worn and rumpled with much reading. No doubt it would have been read and reread out of existence had not another, fresh and clean, replaced the first.

This I took from the postman, and so had a chance to see the uneven, characteristic writing, the Christiania postmark and Norwegian stamp. It was followed a week later by another, then another.

I became interested, for I felt I was on the track of a real, live romance.

The pale, tired face seemed to grow brighter in those days, and for the first time Etta made frequent trips to the city, returning laden with bundles of every size and description. All her spare time was now employed in sewing. Calicoes and prints were made and laid aside. For some reason or other Etta was replenishing her clean but scant and somewhat dilapidated wardrobe.

Another link in the chain! thought I, and began to imagine the arrival of a stalwart Norwegian lover left in Norway two years before, when she had come to try her fortune in America.

Letters came more frequently, and Etta grew correspondingly brighter and cheerier—she even seemed to try to hold herself more erectly, for often the bent shoulders were suddenly straightened as she went about her work. Her voice, formerly so tired and hopeless, took on a more cheerful tone.

Not the least remarkable of Etta's peculiarities was her manner of speaking; slowly and lispingly came the broken English, which was at first so hard to understand. Such a sad mixture of her mother tongue and this new, strange language, such verbal combinations and misplaced plurals were never heard before.

About this time I mentioned my romantic notions to my mother, but she only laughed, being entirely unable to connect Etta's sad appearance with a lover, Norwegian or of any other land. She called me a romancer, but I still felt sure I was right.

Sooner than I expected came the chance to vindicate myself, for the next day as I sat idly by the window, watching the passers by, my attention was attracted by a queer little figure way down the street, which came on toward the house at a rattling pace, gayly swinging a huge cane and puffing vigorously at a mammoth cigar. At a distance it was impossible to tell whether he was boy or man, such a comical, little figure he was, dressed in a snuff colored suit, with a rose in his buttonhole and the tiniest derby imaginable tilted over one ear.

Gazing laughingly at him, I was just telling my mother to look at that absurd little creature, when what was our surprise to see Etta, the staid, the quiet, dash wildly across the lawn, rush down to the gate, and throwing her arms about the little fellow's neck kiss him first on one cheek and then on the other. The man, after a few quiet but earnest struggles, managed to free himself from her long, thin arms, and looked up into her face, so high above him, with pleasure surely, but without a trace of loverlike ardor.

On closer inspection it proved to be such a funny, rosy, childish face that it was impossible to look at it without laughing. Etta seemed to find it so, for, smiling happily, she escorted him back to the house, her long arm linked in his short one, almost lifting him from the ground at every step, and presently we heard the low murmur of their voices in the kitchen below.

Not the least queer thing about this queerest of queer men was a yellow shock of hair, plastered down in carefully arranged scallops all around his chubby face. I suppose it never occurred to him that the back of his head was ever seen, for there the hair stood straight out in bristly points.

Soon Etta appeared, and blushing and hesitating, said, "My cousin haf comed from Christiania."

That was all, but my theory was proved, and I made use of that tiresome and aggravating phrase, "What did I tell you?"

Days came and went, and so did the little Norwegian, but nothing was said of an approaching marriage. Parcels poured in upon us, and Etta sewed steadily on. Each afternoon Auguste (we learned his name) appeared, apparently propelled by the regular motion of the big cane. Somehow he always seemed like a piece of machinery, for his appearance never changed—always the snuff colored suit, the little hat and the buttonhole bouquet; and he seemed to go and come mechanically, enveloped in a cloud of smoke puffed from the big cigar.

Etta owned one thing strangely out of keeping with her other possessions. It was a large gold watch, attached to an old fashioned chain, from which dangled two or three old, foreign looking charms of fine workmanship. She was very fond of it, as it had belonged to her mother, and wore it always, till at last it seemed almost a part of herself. Seeing her without it one day, I exclaimed immediately, as I thought she must have lost it.

She waited a moment before replying and then said slowly, "I haf lend it to my cousin."

She then told me that Auguste was a barber by trade, and had come to America with money she had sent him for the trip.

After the disappearance of the watch Auguste came less frequently, and as time went on seldom appeared oftener than once a week. There was no more sewing, and Etta began to look more as of old. Little by little the happy light faded from her face, and the gray eyes became sadder by contrast, perhaps, than before.

A time came when weeks passed without a sign of the little Norwegian, but one day a letter arrived for Etta in the same crooked writing. Some time later in the day, going into the kitchen, I found Etta leaning on the table, the letter crumpled in her clinched hands and her face buried in her arms.

I touched her gently on the shoulder, but got no other response than the low, stifled sobs which shook the poor, thin body from head to foot. At last she raised her sorrow stricken face, and lifting her eyes to mine said slowly, with her lisping accent, "I haf to go way; I haf sorrow, great sorrow."

She would tell but little of her story. She was to have married her cousin in a few weeks' time, but he had tired of her, and that day a letter had come from him, first begging her to forgive him and then telling her that he had sold her treasured watch, and by the time she got that letter would have sailed on a vessel bound for Norway.

"Shall you, too, go home?" I said.

Slowly and sadly came the answer, "No," and I felt that with the utterance of that little word she gave up all hope, and renounced forever all thought of the happiness she had been picturing for herself the last few months, as she sat sewing steadily, only pausing now and then, with a little flush in her pale cheeks, to softly steal a hand into her pocket and touch the letters she always carried there.

Next morning Etta could not be found. In a corner of her room stood a little hair trunk labeled with a Norwegian address and filled with the garments so recently finished. It was corded up and sent to Christiania; it may have reached its destination or it may not, its fate is as uncertain as Etta's own. The poor woman, tired, disappointed and hopeless, had vanished that night, taking with her little else than her sad, sad thoughts.

I often picture her with her stooping shoulders and pallid, tear stained face, every vestige of love and hope gone out, wandering away into the night and gazing up at the stars, so serene and far away, as she murmurs, "Forsaken, forsaken."—F. L. C. in Boston Herald.

Artistic Receptacles for Orchids.

Ordinary clay pots, subject, however, to some variation in shape, are the receptacles most commonly employed among our orchid raisers and, from a cultural point of view, are unobjectionable. But, as American Garden says, their appearance is then so similar to plants that live in the earth that one of their chief distinctions is lost. The French have holders specially made for orchids, some of which are here reproduced. The manger form shown at Fig. 1 is especially useful for the decoration of walls where ornamental foliage plants of ferns or trailing habit are mingled with the orchids in the happiest manner. These panniers are found admirably adapted to the culture of bromeliads of small size, many ferns such as adiantums, certain polypodiums, davallias and the selaginellas. They can be made the most pleasing additions to greenhouse and conservatory, the upper parts of which are often bare of vegetation. The log form (Fig. 2) is said to be better than the heavy logs or pieces of bark on which the Brazilian oncidiums, cattleyas and lælias of spreading form are grown.

FRENCH ORCHID HOLDERS.

To those who are willing to take a little extra trouble or expense is recommended the octagonal form, shown at Fig. 3, which is especially adapted for strong specimen plants. For stanhopeas and acinetas an especial shape is made (Fig. 4), with a bottom of copper wire through which the flower shoots can find ready egress. The foregoing are only a few of many forms which these receptacles take on, and which can be bought in France. Here, however, they must be constructed, which is not a difficult matter.

These may be made of any wood that does not readily decay. American Garden, already quoted, advises against the mistake of oiling or varnishing them, as is sometimes done, for thus the surfaces are rendered unsuitable for the plants to attach themselves and are detrimental to their well being.

The Care of Blankets.

For real comfort and service the blanket is the most desirable of all coverings, and if one understands how to care for her blankets and how to wash them properly an expensive blanket is more economical in the end than the perishable comfortable. A facing of fine cheese cloth a quarter of a yard in depth across the upper edge of a blanket serves to protect it from soiling, and this may be replaced several times before a new blanket will require washing. All bed coverings should be well aired frequently. Choose a bright, windy day and hang them out of doors for an hour or so. It is well to whip blankets lightly with a rattan dusting stick. If treated in this manner they will not require frequent washing. When it does become necessary to wash them, rip off the cheese cloth protection, whip out the dust, and if bound with colored braid, remove it and replace with white.

[illegible] — Chicago Herald.

Decorating the Home.

One needs to live a little while in a house before completely furnishing it, [illegible] the wants of taste by degrees, and it is far more interesting to add a picture here, a statuette there, a little stand in this corner and a portiere over a [illegible] door from time to time than to do it all at once. It gives one something to look forward to. Whatever a woman's position, she should have a voice in decorating her own house.

A house ought to be an expression of the people who inhabit it, it should partake of their individuality, and it cannot do this if everything is put into the hands of a professional decorator. A woman should have a scheme of color and an idea of her own for every room, then she can get what aid she needs in carrying it out from the best furniture and carpet warehouses, where there is always a good man of taste who is ready to give advice.

In one of the most charmingly furnished houses in the city, where the rich embroidery of some of the hangings, the exquisitely draped tables, beds and mantels, the tasteful arrangement of furniture and bric-a-brac, and the luxurious divans and couches, with large, soft silken pillows and cushions, all give the impression of a lavish expenditure of money. The head of the mistress did much of the work, while she personally planned and supervised the whole.—Art Interchange.

Children's Ears.

Mothers are becoming agitated over the question of children's ears. It is being suggested that flaring ears are now very much more common than formerly, and the prevalence of these disgraceful head appendages is ascribed to the discarding of the caps which our grandmothers—some of our mothers, indeed—wore night and day. What the race has lost in aural beauty, however, it has certainly gained in immunity from head colds during infancy, as these caps kept the little pates they incased in a condition of tenderness and susceptibility that made them easy prey to drafts.

Mothers and nurses may avoid disfigured ears by a little watchfulness of their manner of putting their charges in crib or bed. For such youngsters as may have escaped such care and thus come into the possession of ears rampant an "ear cap" may be procured, which is a set of tapes keeping the ears close to the head, to be worn at night.

"German Syrup"

G. Gloger, Druggist, Watertown, Wis. This is the opinion of a man who keeps a drug store, sells all medicines, comes in direct contact with the patients and their families, and knows better than anyone else how remedies sell, and what true merit they have. He hears of all the failures and successes, and can therefore judge: "I know of no medicine for Coughs, Sore Throat, or Hoarseness that had done such effective work in my family as Boschee's German Syrup. Last winter a lady called at my store, who was suffering from a very severe cold. She could hardly talk, and I told her about German Syrup and that a few doses would give relief; but she had no confidence in patent medicines. I told her to take a bottle, and if the results were not satisfactory I would make no charge for it. A few days after she called and paid for it, saying that she would never be without it in future as a few doses had given her relief."

Coughs, Sore Throat, Hoarseness,

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