

FOR TALKIN'S SAKE.

“ **A** ’ THINGS in keepin’! That’s whit I like to see—all—things—in—keepin’.”

The two ladies came on at the Central Station and the remark was made by the first comer as she climbed into the compartment.

“ Eh, me, but I’m gled that’s owre!” she continued, falling into a corner seat. “ As I wis sayin’, I like to see a’ things in keepin’. If you’re gaun to be in murn-ins, ha’e everything black an’ be dune wi’t. The idea o’ her standin’ yonder at the grave side wi’ a white hannel’d umberella was fair he’rt renderin’.”

“ It was maist unbecomin’ onywey,” ventured her companion.

“ Unbecomin’s no’ the word for’t. There’s far mair in it than meets the eye; ye’ll see yon yin merrit afore a twalmonth’s owre her heid. Yin man’s no’ enough for some folk.”

“ Men’s no’ so easy picked up as a’ that.”

“ Mebbe ay an’ mebbe no’, but if ye get them wi’ the tear in their e’e, as the sayin’ is, there’s nae sayin’ whit’ll happen. Noo, you jist listen to this—an’ I’m no’ yin that talks for talkin’s sake—ye’ll hae mind o’ Jean Scott?”

“ Ay! her that merrit the widower.”

“ Ay, an’ whaur do ye think she picked him up?” It wasna a case o’ ‘Meet me by the Gowan Lea’ wi’ Jean—naw!—she pickit him up in the cemetery—the cemetery o’ a’ places—waterin’ the floo’ers ye ken—

awfu' kind an' sympathetic-like—"Can I get a drap o' water for ye?"—that's hoo it was dune!"

"I didna like her hat!"

"Wha's hat?—oh, it's Bett yer talkin' about!"

"Ay!"

"Ah, weel, I wadna blame her for her hat, whatever I might hae to say about her umberella. Forbye that, hats is no' whit they used to be; ye canna tak' a pride in them, as they say: Fegs aye! I mind the yin I got when my mither deid—a rale dooble decker wi' noddin' plumes on the tap storey."

"I mind it fine; but there's nae hats like thae noo-a-days; they're just like a wheen puddock-stills."

"They're no' hats at a'; I wid ca' them skull-keps; there's nae ventilation for yer heid."

"Ay, an' if ye hivna got a weel-shapit heid they don't set ye at a'."

"It's no' a weel-shapit heid that bothers some folk noo-a-days; it's their legs. Did ye ever see the like o' yon sister o' Bett's? *Twnty-five past seven frae the knees doon!* Folk like her should hae mair sense than wear short skirts; that's whit I say."

"Ay, I ken, but Bett's folk maun aye be in the fashion."

"Fashion! Man-huntin' I ca' it—naethin' but sheer bare-faced man-huntin'; an' whit a man can see in a wumman wi' her knees chappin' thegither frae mornin' to nicht bates me."

"Yon's a rale nice fur coat she's got a' the same."

"Fur! Rabbit ye mean! I ken fur when I see it."

"I thocht it was fur."

"Fur or no' fur, I can tell ye yin thing; it's no' paid. The tally man's never frae their door. It was

Mrs. Bruce telt me. She bides up the same stair. She says to me, says she: 'There's nae peace in yon close o' oors; ye canna gang doon in the mornin' wi' yer ashes without tum'lin owre tally men! . . . Thank God there's naething on my back but whit's paid for.'"

"That's the best wey—to pey as ye gang; a' the same, them that dress up are the yins that can bag the men."

"Mebbe ay! Love's blin, they say, if ye can ca' it love; but they're welcome to them—a lot o' clerks—pease-brose an' pianos, and then the Sma' Debt Coort."

"That's true! It's a' dune on the instalment system noo—a pound doon an' awa' ye go."

"An' whit is it ye get for yer money—dirt! Wardrop doors that'll no' shut, chairs stuffed wi' shavin's an' auld jaickets—I ken; oor Bob works up a pen' whaur they're made; he says he widna let a dug lie on them."

"Ah, weel, things maun aye be some wey."

"Ay, but it's the white hannel'd umberella that's botherin' me. Hoo she could spile hersel' like yon I dinna ken; for, mind ye, it was a braw rig-oot she had; it must hae cost a bonnie penny. But some folk hae nae taste—a white hannel'd umberella an' her man no whit ye would say staun-cauld yet! Hoo she could think o't bates me!"

"Mebbe she didna think at a'!"

"Well, if ye canna think at a funeral time there's somethin' faur wrang wi' ye. Mind ye, I'm no' again a wee bit o' colour, but a funeral's a funeral, an' a' things should be in keepin'—I think I see the yin that wid get me to buy a white hannel'd umberella to gang to a funeral wi'. 'Here, young man!' I wad say to him,

'it's no' a gerden perty I'm gaun to; it's a funeral; black or naethin' at a'!"

"It disna mak' much difference noo that it's a' bye."

"Naw, but it kin' o' sticks in yer thrapple."

"Ay, that's quite true; it wasna very becomin'."

"Hech me! is this Motherwell a'ready?"

"Ay, it's Motherwell richt enough."

"Ah, weel, Bob'll be waitin' to get the news—mind yer fit; it's a kin' o' a big step."

"Have ye got everything?"

"Ay!"

"Are ye shair noo?"

"Weel, I had just my bag—Lod's sake! I've forgot my umberella—here mister, wad ye haund it doon to me?—ay, that black yin!"