

conversations were so delightful. But all the same I was thankful for the silence. It was much better than some of the humdrum conversations many New Zealand hair-dressers try to carry on.

* * *

WHEN he finished clipping my neck, he started to trim the hair over my ears.

"Madam," he said with something akin to horror in his voice, "you have more hair growing over your right ear than you have over your left."

I began to feel alarmed. Quite obviously I was a freak. My hair grew further down my neck than anyone else's. My right ear sprouted more hair than my left. In my anguish I gripped the history of the English constitution tightly under the sheet. I felt glad that I hadn't told him about the hair on the front of my neck, and I vowed I never would.

Mr. B. grew more and more morose, and snapped angrily at my hair with the scissors, like a man very tired of cutting the edges of his lawn. My morale was sinking, and when he asked me if it was short enough, I repeated my request for more off with much less than my original firmness.

Mr. B. straightened his tall figure to its full length, and as though he were addressing the first female murderer he

had ever seen in his life, "Madam," he said, "Madam, this is the shortest I've ever cut any woman's hair. This is a Beauty Salon. If you want your hair any shorter, you must go to a MAN'S BARBER."

I could tell from the way he spoke that a "man's barber" was the lowest creature on earth. I felt I had committed the dreadful sin of asking for sixpence worth of fish-and-chips at a leading draper's shop. Cringing, I allowed him to brush powder down my closely clipped neck. And when he held the mirror up for me to see the back, I nodded dumbly. I didn't dare to tell him it was only half as short as I usually have it cut.

And as I climbed out of the chair, he added "Thank goodness I don't get too many of you. I'm ten minutes late for my next customer already."

Gladly I paid up twice the usual fees and fled.

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