

she learned to be a manicurist. The old gentleman that taught her said that hands should be used as though everything handled was as delicate as an eggshell, and ladies hands should look like butterflies! Also due the shapeliness of leg, she modelled stockings.

My mother had many amusing stories to tell of her Selfridge days. The owner of the store was of course still alive in those days, and known to my mum, 'old Selfridge' she called him. She seemed to have interesting but strange friends.

There was Babe German who had, living with her, a long suffering gentleman. When she was cross with him she would turn him out, calling him a "Dirty German Jew Bastard" but he loved her, I was told, and always came back. I think it may have been the same lady who used to arrive home tipsy at night. One morning she was alarmed to find all her jewellery missing, she phoned the police who conducted a thorough search and discovered all the stuff pinned to the lining of her curtains where she had hidden it the previous evening.

Then there were the 'precious' men - for that was the word used in those days. One particular man who, when asked about the death of a friend who, it seems, jumped out of a window, said, "well yes Pammy darling, you see he had a bit too much to drink, and he thought that he was a fairy and just flo-ated away". This same gentleman, who was rather large, once bought a beautiful antique desk, and my mother would tell me with much fluttering of the hands, how he related that it was "far too small for me of course, far too small - my knees you see..... Pammy darling, far too small, but exquisite, yes, quite exquisite". There was another friend, a woman - a vastly overweight woman - who had the job of driving new cars to their destination up north someplace. She took my mum along for company. When she was tired from long driving, she would get out of the car, execute a ballet dance to loosen up, get back in the car and drive off again.

There was also Quex, he was apparently quite important in the newspaper world, my mother regarded him as part of the intelligencia of the day. It seems that those were the days when it was fashionable to believe that there was no God. To prove this one way or another they made a pact that whoever died first would come back by some means, and tell. Well he died first, and never did tell, so my mother was always in grave doubt about God. I was brought up to believe that when you died, you were simply snuffed out like a candle - poof! Finished, gone.

I think it must have been in the early Selfridge days that my mother became engaged. It seems he was German, and upon the day that my mother found out he was not kind, and had a bad temper, - if I remember correctly this latter discovery was made through the throwing of a sewing box, - she broke off her engagement. She never gave the ring back though, as by that time, her sister had taken a fancy to it, it must have been the consumptive sister, because she was buried with it on. So much for that engagement ring!

These next few bits I find difficult to tell, because they are not my story to tell and it seems to be prying in a sort of way, but my family insist that now those happenings are long gone, and so none of the telling matters any more. I rather guess that it was a time after the above engagement that my mother married someone called Palmer. She only told me these sad events once and that was long ago, so I hope I have it right. It seems that on the very marriage night Palmer was discovered with a chambermaid. Ultimately he was also discovered to have been married and had a wife still living, so my poor mother was not married at all. For what reason I can not imagine, but for many many years, she had post arrive addressed to Mrs Palmer, and this was always an embarrassment to her.

It is not difficult to believe that the above incident affected my mother mentally, and I gather she was unwell for sometime after that. This may have been responsible for the fact that there were those that regarded my mum as a 'difficult woman'. She was not, certainly during my