

## LADIES AT AUCTIONS.

The love of a bargain seems to be a ruling passion in the minds of a very large number of people, and it seems among this class to be an article of faith that great bargains can be obtained by attending sales by auction. When the passion rages very high the purchases made are rather ludicrous, and are apt to become fit means of pointing a moral on the folly of its indulgence. We have heard of one notable housewife whose weakness took the form of purchasing at auctions large lots of boots and shoes. Out of the accumulations thus formed the whole family were shod, occasionally, of course, to the detriment of the feet, whose coverings had been chosen in this promiscuous manner. It is but a short time since the newspapers recorded the death of an eccentric old woman, who expended an income of three hundred dollars a year solely in things which she bought at sales, and for which she had no particular need. Her house was packed full of useless things; but the excuse for her peculiar tastes was that her mind was decidedly affected.

Without any such excuse, however, many people especially women, appear to possess a mania for attending auctions almost as strong as that which belonged to the poor old lady above mentioned. The object supposed to be attained is the gaining a good article at a comparatively cheap rate. To effect this desirable result several things are necessary. The intending purchaser must have made up her mind what she is going to buy, and how much she intends to give for it. The first is a condition more necessary to be enforced than is, perhaps, at first evident. Women who are smitten with the auction mania frequently go to a place where a sale is to be conducted simply to see what they can pick up for a little money. In this way the temptation of cheapness leads them to spend money on things that are useless. Then, when the purchaser has not made up her mind as to the value of the article she wishes to acquire, it is quite possible she may give for it a great deal more than a similar thing would have cost at a respectable dealer's.

We do not dwell on the time which is lost in attending the sales. People who do much in that way seem to put little or no value on time. We would only suggest that for the mistress of a house, as a rule a more profitable kind of occupation for her hours might without difficulty be found.

Perhaps the temptation of inspecting the belongings of one's neighbors without the dread of being accused of impertinent interference with other people's affairs is too trying to be easily resisted. We know something, and we can imagine more, of the gossip and remark which can be carried on during a sale of effects.

But it appears to us that the crowd to be encountered at a sale, the chaffering, the bidding, the competition, the publicity of the whole affair, more than counterbalance any advantages to be derived either from opportunities of indulging in gossip, or of expending money with fancy judicious economy.

We cannot ourselves understand the pleasure which attending sales seems to afford to many women; we see only the disadvantages of the practice – the crowding, the noise, the waste of time, the brow-beating to which they subject themselves.

We do not say that women ought never to attend sales, circumstances may arise which may necessitate their doing so; but, as a rule, we consider that the less women have to do with the publicity of an auction the better.

*The above article was printed in GODEY'S LADY'S BOOK AND MAGAZINE, 1867*

*Ironically, the book was purchased at auction...by a lady.*