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TATTOOED ROYALTY. Queer Stories of a Queer Craze

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When royalty hangs onto a craze, you may be assured that the rest of the exclusive world of wealth and power soon follow in the same path, and annex the peculiarities of the pleasures of which have given amusement to their heroes born in the purple.

What wonder, then, that tattooing is just now the popular pastime of the leisured world? For one of the best-known men in high European circles, the Grand Duke Alexis of Russia, is most elaborately tattooed. And Prince and Princess Waldemar of Denmark, Queen Olga of Greece, King Oscar of Sweden, the Duke of York, the Grand Duke Constantine, Lady Randolph Churchill, with many others of royal and distinguished rank, have submitted themselves to the tickling, but painless and albeit pleasant, sensation afforded by the improved tattooing needle.



The present fancy for being tattooed, mainly exists among men who have travelled much; while ladies have also taken a strong liking to this form of personal decoration, which, from a woman's point of view, is about as expensive as a dress, but not so costly as good jewellery. In place of spending her spare time posing in front of the camera, or reclining her head in the dentist's chair, or placing herself resignedly in the hands of her coiffeur for something better to do, or for the purpose of passing her time in the "off" season, the lady about town now consents to be pricked by the tattoo artist's operating needle, and to have her forearm or shoulder adorned with perhaps such a mark as this - a serpent holding its tail in its mouth - a symbol representing eternity.

In order to form an idea of the kind of work that is wanted by those who give their patronage to this specific class of fine art, a close examination of these illustrations will assist you. The skill of the tattoo artist, to be realized properly and fairly, must be seen in beautiful colours on a white skin - work which is amazing. The sketches he employs are made in various coloured inks. His great skill is in the faithful reproduction of any symbol or picture desired by the sitter. These designs vary in size from a small fly, or bee, to that of an immense Chinese dragon, occupying the whole space offered by the back or chest, or a huge snake many inches in thickness coiling round the body from the knees to the shoulders.

Tattooing has its humorous side, as well as its serious. A lover whose heart was once melted away in a soft, sweet, passionate love, got the artist to imprint in indelible inks, over the region of his heart, a single heart of charming and delicate outline, coloured, as it should be, in all the blushing tints, with the name of his loved one stamped thereon. Three years afterwards he followed the artist to London, and, seeking him out, with face pallid, the light of his eye almost gone out, and looking utterly miserable and care-worn, he requested that the tattooer to imprint under that same symbol, in bold, big letters, the word "deceived".