

LATEST FADS

SOCIAL HIGHWAYMEN.

What shall we be collecting next? Here is a young woman, blessed by the gods with an ingenious spirit, whose latest fad is to bear away a silver spoon from every dinner she attends. Her collection now numbers over twenty, each of which, according to the owner, was taken with the consent of the hostess. In the face of this statement the only comment it is judicious to make is upon the infinite good nature of the hostesses. The spoon fancier herself is more than ordinarily fascinating, and this may have much to do with her success. But the fad is fearsome in its possibilities. It is well that no one's fancy has lightly turned to thoughts of Brussels carpets or tall Dutch clocks. Still, *tout arrive*. We may yet find ourselves politely requested to provide a house and lot or a diamond necklace for each of our faddish guests. For the genuine collector is not easily daunted; he combines the persistency of the kleptomaniac with the *savoir faire* of the housebreaker, and threads his way nimbly along the most dangerous paths.

We were puzzled the other day to observe, in a New York conservatory, a row of some ten or twelve ivy plants, and our eyes were considerably opened by the owner. "Each of these," she said, "is grown from a sprig picked on a different English estate. And on every estate," she added with a splendid air of triumph, "we were *positively* forbidden to pick *anything*!" Compared to the conscience of the collector, a grain of mustard seed is an object of quite respectable dimensions.

Mr. Brander Matthews once advised the committee on literature of The Players to lock up every valuable book in the club, since no book fancier is responsible for his actions. "I won't even answer for myself," he added, fondling a particularly rare work.

We think the field is ripe for a moral mission among collectors. We are almost moved to sermonize ourselves. Has the spoon fancier, we feel impelled to ask, always been true and just in all her dealings, and kept her hands from picking and stealing? What will the gatherer of ivy come to in the end? Three centuries ago it had been the gallows tree. And above all, of what are the collections of our brother bibliophiles made?

THE BANQUET RING.

There once existed a superstitious belief that ideas must form part of the equipment of even the most frivolous woman, when she accepted the obligations of a dinner invitation. Nowadays she has an easier method. She carries a "banquet ring," and when talk flags she passes it around for general inspection and admiration.

If the banquet ring gets any larger, a re-

ceptacle on wheels will have to be constructed to carry it. It is a collection of stones, as valuable as the purse will allow, worked into a design as unique as possible. Sometimes it contains a hundred stones, and covers two fingers from knuckle to knuckle. When necessary, it is held to the hand by rings slipped over two fingers.

The women who cannot afford to buy one of these collections, which sometimes cost ten thousand dollars, are having their small rings, earrings, and brooches broken up and reset in a "banquet ring." The originality of the design depends upon the genius of the jeweler or the wearer. Some show the familiar three feathers of the Prince of Wales' crest; others are replicas of the family crest—or of the device that adorns harness and silver plate in that capacity.

We should like to make a suggestion. The weight and value of the stones already announces the commercial value of the wearer; let the device proclaim the proud source of her wealth. The oil magnate's wife might have a miniature derrick of precious stones between the second and third joints of her fingers. The railroad king might give the railroad queen a locomotive of diamonds with a ruby head light and pearl steam. The prince of tobaccoists could advertise his wares in a large jeweled *perfecto* displayed on the fair hand of a member of his family. We have all of them in the class who design and own "banquet rings."

THE BAREFOOT FAD.

It is all very well for a woman to care for her complexion. To judge by the advertisements and the sale of cosmetic cure-alls, soaps, and pastes, she has been doing nothing else for several years. But when it reaches a point where she goes without her shoes and stockings in order that her cheeks may glow, there are some conservative souls who hesitate. The advanced guard, the reckless spirits, are already making startling predictions of what is coming.

At Father Kneipp's "cure" in Bavaria, everybody is obliged to go barefoot. Princesses have been seen at the concerts in the evening, dressed in the height of Parisian fashion, but without a scrap of covering on their feet. Having originally adopted it as a treatment for weak lungs, the fair experimenters soon discovered that the absence of shoes improved the appearance of their nether supports. Then an artist, an Englishman, wrote a novel whose name we forget—or wish we could—in which bare feet were glorified. That finished the matter in America. The faddists had their cue. Bare feet became the rule for certain hours of the day. The average sizes in shoes bounded two numbers in as many months. After contemplating

a pair of pink and rosy feet adjusted on a silk cushion for two or three hours a day, crushing them into tight shoes was not to be thought of. They had taken on an esthetic value.

Already there are those who are arguing that the feet are as beautiful as the hands, and as worthy of displaying their beauty. At home functions, at any rate, they should appear—clad in rings, perhaps, with a silken sandal ribbon crossing a blue veined instep. Mme. Récamier used to wear sandals on her pretty bare feet. It may be all right to imitate her example—if the imitator has equally pretty feet, peeping, like those of Sir John Suckling's sweetheart, from under soft lace frills, like little white mice. But contemplate the new woman with bloomers and bare feet!

THE EARLY DANCE.

A new fashion which is gaining ground rapidly in New York is the early dance, which begins at half past nine and comes to an end shortly after midnight. It is, perhaps, stretching a point to call this a fad, for it possesses what few fads can boast—an element of common sense. Business men (and what men worthy of the name are not business men in this busy land?) have vetoed late dances, and positively refused to trip the light fantastic until three A. M., and then breakfast at eight. So it has come to pass that young society women have long been compelled to rely upon the very callowest and most insignificant youths of the community to dance their Germans and take them in to supper. The early dance is bringing to the front the older men who insist upon ending the day at midnight, and the whippersnapper is relegated to the background. These small affairs are too "everlastingly early" for him.

A fad is always welcome if it has reason to commend it, and it is to be hoped that the very evident merit of the early dance will make it a permanent institution. Can there be anything more absurd than the cotillion which begins at one o'clock and brings you to an exhausted finish at four? Why not, while we are wasting our sleeping time, make a complete job of it and dance till breakfast or thereabouts, as they do at the Yale "Prom"? For college men there is some excuse. They are young, and wisdom will come with years—perhaps. It certainly has not come to the society matrons whose dances commence at or after midnight.

Apropos of all this we overheard a very characteristic remark not long since in a theater.

"Shall I see you tonight at the Browns' dance?"

"Yes, I may drop in about half after one."

The speaker ought to have been soundly spanked and packed off to bed for expressing such an intention. He was too flagrantly young and callow to be horsewhipped.

SOME NEEDLEWORK FADS.

It is always more or less the fad for women with a penchant for embroidery to make various

fetching trifles for their *cavalieri servanti*; and it is only in the particular direction which the fad takes that its novelty lies. Formerly the trifles were almost invariably useless and unwelcome. It is seldom that men really appreciate flounced blue pincushions and scented handkerchief cases, and it will be remembered that the late Bishop Brooks was wont on Christmas Day to escape from his church by a side door to avoid the rows of waiting women who bore free will offerings of home made carpet slippers.

The ingenuity of the maiden who embroiders is at present centered upon "golf waistcoats." Exactly why any man should desire a garment of amateur manufacture when he can obtain one of far superior quality from his tailor, it is hard to imagine. Certainly there cannot be any great amount of sentiment attached thereto. The golf waistcoat is constructed somewhat after the manner of the "samplers" of a hundred years ago—that is, by embroidering an elaborate pattern in wool upon canvas; and the effect is hideous beyond the dreams of a late dinner. However, the question of beauty is immaterial.

One fortunate and popular golfer received, in a single month, seven of these waistcoats, only two of which approximately suited his figure. He has been wearing the two as an illustration of the survival of the *fittest*, and reports that they are absolutely cold proof.

A New York man of Bohemian and esthetic tendencies lately exhibited another example of ingenious embroidery, on which a skilful plier of the needle had lavished extraordinary care. It was designed as a portière, the material being the coarsest variety of yellow denim, and the pattern an enlargement of a drawing for a poster by Aubrey Beardsley. A tall damosel was wandering across a meadow backed by a grove and a cardinal sky, while the upper panel bore the inscription:

O ye who pass this door,
One thing is certain—
You never saw before
A poster curtain!

The embroidery was done in rope silk in solid blocks, and the curtain was hung in the doorway by strings of glass beads. This is the most thoroughly *fin de siècle* contrivance, we imagine, which has yet emanated from an embroidery frame.

Then, again, there is the sofa cushion, without some seventeen dozen of which no home is now complete. Here there is no limit to the wealth of designs, and the more outrageous and bizarre they are, the better pleased their proud possessor seems to be. The boudoir of one débutante contains a divan which aptly illustrates this craze for what is *outré*. It groans beneath an assortment of twenty cushions, no two alike, and no two, as the owner joyously observed, that can be said to go well together. The mute but earnest protests of green cushions embroidered with blue roses, of terra cotta dwelling in inharmonious contrast next to magenta, and of unhappy

families of pinks, purples, violets, and maroons, afford her unfeigned happiness. What it is to have the artistic eye!

In the same room the window curtains are of pale green India silk with a crest in gold worked upon them. This at least is not productive of astigmatism.

So, gentle wielders of the needle and the frame, you need no longer be hampered by conventionality. You can do anything you wish, and you have only to observe two rules: never embroider what will please the eye, and never adopt any idea that has been used before. Also it is well, though not imperative, to keep this in mind: all people have not been educated to appreciate the decadent in art, and you would be wise to tell your visitor that this cushion or that curtain is your own work before asking his or her opinion thereof. This keeps the unsuspecting critic off the dangerous reef of candor!

THE YEAR OF THE CAT.

The man of today who belongs to woman-kind, whose ways are in the path of fashion, finds himself something in the state of *Lone Sahib*, when for his unbelief he suffered the "sending" of *Dana Da*.

Mr. Kipling draws a feeling picture of a man waking up in the morning to find a squirming kitten on his breast, or opening a drawer to pluck one from among his dress shirts, or lifting a mewling little beast from his tobacco jar. There was a time in American history when the superfluous cats were drowned, leaving one out of the litter for the maiden aunt, whose cachet was a feline pet. But times change. There are no superfluous kittens when their market prices range from ten to fifty dollars apiece. The maiden aunt, too, has changed; she has become a "bachelor girl." Instead of meekly taking the left overs of the family, kittens or otherwise, she puts her hand into her pocket and buys her own cat, if she considers it a decorative adjunct to her establishment. Like a good many more of her possessions, it is usually the object of envy instead of contempt. The cat of today bears no more resemblance to the tabby of the old maid of a generation ago than its modern mistress to her maiden aunt. The gray tone has left both of them.

The cat which was formally introduced to fashionable society by the very popular cat show last winter, is a Persian, almost as large as a fox terrier, with long, fluffy white hair, and the stateliness of a cardinal. It is not a creature to pet and coddle, but to respect and admire.

THE MERITS OF THE MINIATURE.

The popularity of the miniature shows no sign of abating. You have your (alleged) portrait painted on one of the oval porcelains, frame it in narrow gilt metal with a bow knot on top, and keep it in your cabinet, except during the annual portrait exhibition. It is the only true way of handing your image

down to posterity, and has the advantage of making of every woman a beauty in a Gainsborough hat or an empire gown. Of course it will look like you—a flattering picture always does. The portrait is so tiny that the bad lines and features are so diminished that they are lost sight of, while the good ones are made so much finer and more delicate by the reduction that your children and your children's children can everlastingly expatiate upon your past beauty, and prove it.

Photographs show far too literally the expression you assumed when that lens was pointed at you, and you were told to "look pleasant, please" (at a dollar a dozen), or, "will you kindly endeavor to assume an expression of contentment, and think of some pleasing incident?" (at twelve dollars a dozen). The product of the too truthful camera tells you, years after, what that gown really looked like which you thought was so stylish. On the other hand, the miniature painter—if he knows his business—knows how to idealize, and to picture the most ordinary sitter as a thing of beauty and a joy forever. Then, too, miniatures are better because they cost more than any other portrait, as it always takes three figures on the check to pay for one.

It is of course very charming to have your children's miniatures painted, for they are always beautiful to begin with; but in after years it dulls the child's pleasurable contemplation of its past self to have some kindly disposed friend of the family inquire, "Were you really ever so pretty as that?"

FACIAL GUIDEPOSTS.

Occasionally a fad is but the revival of a fashion dear to the hearts of our great grandmothers. The old fashioned courtplaster patch idiosyncrasy has been resurrected, and is now reigning in high favor in certain circles. We may prepare for an epidemic of it, when we see eleven out of twelve girls at a tea decorated as to their faces with tiny black squares alluringly affixed to cheek, chin, or lips. Attention is called to beautiful eyes by a small black patch carefully placed near them, much as a guidepost on a man's estate indicates, "This way to the waterfall."

When it happens that the mouth is worthy of notice, the sign is shifted to its immediate vicinity, and the way of the admirer thereby made smooth. It has not yet been determined whether parallel rows of patches on the upper and lower lips signify perfect teeth, or a courtplaster owl on the brow a sapient brain.

This courtplaster owl is not so much of a fiction as it might appear. On the contrary, it is far from improbable. Crescents, triangles, stars, and even a miniature coach and four are actually obtainable in New York. The possible range of design suggested is alarming. Will crests, coats of arms, landscapes, and pictures of the ancient birthplace of a girl's earliest ancestor become the decorations artfully plastered about her face? It is an alarming thought.

ETCHINGS

PERVERSITY.

My father frowns, my mother sighs,
My grandam, with begoggled eyes,
Recites me maxims, wondrous wise,
On prudence and gentility.
They all of Lydia love to prate
As my one matrimonial fate;
Her virgin charms they celebrate
With ceaseless volubility.

Of how she shines in equal ways
At French or German—sings and plays,
Embroiders, paints—for days and days
Eulogiums do I hear anew.
And then her parents' wealth galore,
Their steeds and coaches by the score,
Their Newport villa—nay, still more,
Their palace on Fifth Avenue.

But ah, in vain my kindred plead !
The girl I love, the girl I need,
The girl I'll dare to wed, indeed,
Unmoved by all caste's mummeries,
Is but a sempstress, young and shy,
Whose glittering needle—what know I—
Its dexterous art may sometimes ply
On Lydia's cobweb flummeries.

With Phyllis in her Harlem flat
(Shabby, and five floors high at that)
I'd rather spend an hour of chat
And watch her smile's coy trickeries,
Than dance till dawn, in Lydia's thrall,
At some Delmoniconian ball,
Though light along the floor should fall
Her footstep as Terpsichore's !
Edgar Fawcett.

ON A PICTURE.

AMONG the faces of these girls—
Which seem to break forth from their curls
As flowers from buds—is one that glows
All crimson like a blushing rose,
And one that lifts itself on high—
A lily looking to the sky—
Another with a pansy's grace
Half hides amid the leafy lace;
And all are sweet, and all are fair
Like beauty in a boutonnière—
A dream of loveliness ! Give me
This garden in epitome.

Frederic F. Sherman.

A SURPRISE.

SHE wears a jacqueminot tonight
Pinned with artistic care
Upon her corsage, creamy white ;
It blooms and blushes there ;
But the poor rose, though proud to trim
My darling's dainty gown,
Is martyr to the fashion's whim ;
She wears it upside down.

And I am like her rose tonight,
Happy to be so near,
To touch her corsage, creamy white,
To whisper in her ear ;
And like the flower, for when my plea
She heard without a frown,
And clasped me to her heart, you see,
It turned me upside down !

Frank Roe Batchelder.

THE CRY OF A CONSERVATIVE.

My sweet Jeannette is passing fair,
And also passing fond of dress ;
Yet do I love her none the less
For showing woman's weakness there.
That satin edged with laces rare,
That snowy tulle, all fluffiness,
I too adore them, I confess,
And everything Jeannette does wear.
No, there's one costume which I feel
I would give millions to forget ;
That awful vision haunts me yet,
And almost turns my heart to steel.

It fairly made my senses reel
When unexpectedly I met
My dearest love, my own Jeannette,
In knickerbockers on a wheel !

Cornelia E. Green.

A CONQUEROR.

A CASTLE there is, all grim and gray,
Surrounded by high stone walls,
And many a knight
Waged bitter fight
To enter its lordly halls.

But fast and firm were the massive gates
'Gainst all who would through them win,
While the old stone pile
Seemed with scorn to smile
At each failure to enter in.

Then came a day when a maiden sweet
Crept up and did patiently wait ;
No bar could withstand
The touch of her hand,
And wide flew the frowning gate.

No more the walls echo with sounds of the fray,
No more comes the clash of strife ;
There's the voice of song—
For that castle strong
Was my heart, and the maid is my wife.

Pauline R. Stayner.

AT TWILIGHT.

OH, Dorothy's dimples, they come and they go,
As the cutter slips silently over the snow ;
And Dorothy laughs, " 'Tis no end of a lark
To go driving at twilight away through the
park."