THE WINTER GIRL.

ATHLETIC YOUNG WOMEN OF SOCIETY IN NEW YORK CITY.

Precincts Into Which the Male Eye May Never Penetrate—The Fads That Are This Season Popular—Graceful Poses and Vigorous Action.

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THE Gotham girl of 1892 has athletic tendencies. The fad of the hour is hygiene. Like her brother and her best young man, who have their boxing bouts, slugging "tours de force" and cycling contests, the daughter of Eve nowadays goes in for club life and athletics. She has been receiving fresh inspiration from Harris, and Mme. Delsarte hints, don't you know, not only for gymnasium, but for boudoir practice.

For Mme. Delsarte has lately been lecturing and illustrating to the smart set, setting up the "Milo" and the "Medici," "Diana" and the nymphy of old as idols for present worship and emulation.

A mad chase after grace and muscle has set in, the hobby par excellence of the hour. So the Gotham maiden this season vies with the rival sex, spending hours in club gymnasiums. Physical culture is the rampant lion of today, and physique holds the first place in the swagger girl's affections. Wasp waists and the Lydia Languish school are simply "not in it" any more; the consumption of tea and the transmission of gossip have but a brief allotted space in the day's pastime.

The winter girl of 1892 goes to her club religiously every morning, gets into a fetching modification of the approved reform toilet and goes in for vigorous exercise. In a certain exclusive up town club, where male eye may never penetrate, beauty poses, evolutes and tests her strength with a dash and abandon born of sheer good spirits, bodily well being and security from masculine scrutiny.

Her firm limbs are encased in trim black hose; the patter of her dainty feet in neat, low tennis shoes makes music on the hard, polished floors; a divided skirt—in other words, dark blue flannel Turkish pantalettes tucked about her knees in easy folds—adapts itself to an apparently infinite variety of motions; her supple, sinuous body is in nowise confined, but in an easy flannel blouse, barred off with gold military braid, is as delightfully free as a summer wind. A blue silk tie adjusts with piquancy a rolling flannel collar, and a smart sash with knots and fringes ornaments and outlines this modern "Milo."

She bends and sways, leaps and runs, grows agile, supple and strong, and queens it, to music in a wide, high studded hall, strikingly appointed with all the very latest athletic appliances.

She goes through military marches, tiptoe marches and high stepping that rival the skirt kickers themselves. And here is the secret of her erect, elastic gait as she swings along the avenue.

Here she essays wands and Indian clubs, cultivates poise, learns to relax her muscles after the theories of Delsarte, and to contract them according to Swedish ideas. Her sinews are made to bend and give at will; each pose and movement has so much attention, during so many minutes daily, with precision.

She believes in developing her throat and chest to firm fullness and essays the pulley weights. Then she tests her muscular firmness on the parallel bars and her endurance on the chest weights; loosens her joints and flexes her spine in trapeze rings and special apparatus; distributes her strength and husbands her vital energy. She alternates light with heavy gymnastics and varies the corrective with the artistic and æsthetic work; gains grace of notion, reposefulness and healthy physical expression.

The clever girl is versatile. She fences daily, trips through skirt evolution, cycles, bowls, darts around the cinder track, delights in Badminton, goes in for a breezy mount every morning in the park and has her plunge at the club like her bachelor friends. She isn't going to be outdone by the other sex. Not a bit of it—not while the fad lasts anyway.

At a recent entertainment to which the beaux of Manhattan would have staked their last penny to gain admittance, thirty-five of the picked feminine athletes of a swell ladies' club disported in the club gymnasium for the delectation of feminine friends.

Two heavily tufted mattresses, possibly twelve feet square, were thrown down just under the line of the guests' gallery, and here the nimble goddesses of grace stretched themselves supine in delicious repose, after dainty maneuvers with French bar bells, knee and ankle exercise and a number of edifying feats on the horizontal bar.

Standing in five rows, six in a line, to a ravishing waltz time they went deftly through a series of bending and swaying motions, posing and turning in rhythmical movements, each symmetrical leg under perfect nerve control and superb tension. At a given note the most harmonious flexed movements alternated, and like Sir Edwin Arnold's eastern maidens they came bending down the hall toward the guests' gallery, arms waving, heads thrown back and with faces and eyes suffused with the glow of health, in bewildering lines of grace.

These young women appreciate the economy of nerve force; they learn to overcome society fright, though judging from this year's round of high teas, pink and white luncheons, opera parties, balls, receptions, boxes at horse shows, flower shows and cocking mains, the buds of 1892 acquire a correct degree of aplomb without any private schooling.

After an hour's devotion to Ling and Delsarte by the beauties, whose names are rigorously withheld from publication, the day's exercise is considered incomplete without a half hour's bout with fencing master, boxing gloves, sprinting on a heavy rubber track, bowling in the ground floor alleys or a turn at the rowlocks in fixed shells and a little Badminton; finally a plunge and swim in luxurious baths, electric lighted, steam heated, and throughout tiled in blue and cream—walls, ceiling, floors and tank. These bells of 1892 then trip out to high noon luncheon or a round of at homes.

When mamma or grandmammas roll through the park in landaulet from 4 to 6, the athletic girl goes in for a mount at the riding club or on the West End and Riverside drives with the howling swells who head for Claremont, high in present favor. Many of the ultra girls are experts with the bicycle, and a rare sight is the cycling room of a certain West End athletic association still farther up town.

The floor shines like polished rosewood; the walls have a dado of heavy padding, and the winter girl in the nattiest of costumes and jauntiest of caps wheels and turns and gets into fine form for next summer's outing. After she has whirled through innumerable circles with a zest born of youth, she has her needle bath and comes out feeling "fit" and handsomer than ever.

Her athletic bent extends to field sports carried out in winter quarters, and she goes in most enthusiastically for tennis tournaments. A certain up town armory is marked off into courts and presents a scene of attraction which vies with lawn and field on days when spirited maidens play their finals in the winter's contest for championship.

In Brooklyn the very latest agony is anthropometry. The significance of that word can only be appreciated through practical demonstration. Here the winter girl adopts a similar costume to her club neighbors across the river, and when arrayed in approved athletic trappings she takes up a series of measurements in the gymnasium.

Just as the practiced trainer sizes up his man, gets his weight and build, the power of biceps, breadth and depth of chest and his swell of calf, the society athlete takes her bosom friend in hand, goes over her anatomy like an artist with his model—finds out her points where this one comes up to regulation health and beauty standards and where that one wants developing. Each girl in turn goes through a rigorous hand measure, and the amount and nature of her athletic work is regulated according to the result of this hand measurement.

The dainty beauties are under the immediate inspection of lady physicians, and a strong rival to the afternoon's matinee is the afternoon "talk" on grace and physical perfection, where beauty is taught the secret of promoting and preserving each separate charm.

Just how long the prevailing fad will last is somewhat difficult to prophesy.

MRS. F. G. WILLIAMS.

By the Way.

"The prevalent notion that veils are universally becoming is a mistake," said a positive woman in a horse car the other day.

"Why don't you say the prevailing notion?" asked the frivolous woman.

"Because I don't wish to add to the misery of life. But about veils—they are supposed to enhance good complexions, conceal bad ones and soften harsh outlines, all of which they may do; but look at the wearer of a veil in profile. However gauzy the veil may be, there is always a visible perpendicular line in front of the face.

"Now, a classic profile will hold its own beside a straight line, but an irregular one suffers by comparison. A pug nose is more pronouncedly pug, and a retreating chin or forehead retreats farther from a line than from airy nothing"——

"But the worst thing about veils," interrupted the earnest woman, "is that they are so bad for the eyes."

"Of course," said the decided woman, "they're ruinous. But what did you say it for and spoil my lecture? There are lots of people who haven't the least regard for common sense—never having been introduced to it—who can be appealed to through their vanity."

The earnest woman was shocked, but she knew that the decided woman was a pessimist, so she said nothing more.

The frivolous woman laughed.

M. H. F. L.

THE NATIONAL BOARD OF HEALTH

WASHINGTON, D. C.

In Bulletin—Supplement No. 6, page 33, places

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WHAT IS SOCIETY?

WHO IS SOCIETY, AND WHERE DOES IT LIVE?

The Butcher's Wife and Mrs. V.—"Get Out of My Light!"—The Discontent of Society—Worth's Two Gowns—The Diamonds of Society.

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SOCIETY! What is society? Who composes society? And to what end or good does society exist

I suppose every one of us, at least every one who has to any great extent mingled in this same element of society, has at some time asked him or herself these questions, perhaps just by way of speculation and philosophy, or perhaps in some moment of weariness and disgust of life and its complications.

One's instinctive idea of society is that it can only exist in large communities and can be found in its perfection only in the few great centers of civilization—in Paris or London or Vienna or St. Petersburg or New York. But in point of fact society exists everywhere that even a few people are gathered together—that is to say, enough people to make public opinion possible. One person cannot form society, nor can two, for there would with two be no possibility of talking about somebody else, and that is the very marrow of society conversation. Three persons at least must live near together, engage in the same pursuits, covet the same things and emulate each other in their mode of life to produce the essential germ of society, for that germ is rivalry. Where no rivalry is possible society cannot exist.

Take for instance a keen business man, a soldier, a philosopher, a laborer and a domestic woman of limited mental capacities; they would not constitute society if they lived alone on a desolate island, for there could be no rivalry; not one of them would feel the least ambition to excel the other, for not one would understand or aspire to eminence in the pursuits of any one of the rest. But take a little country town, nay, take the smallest village, and you at once get society, for you have rivalry, emulation, envy and covetousness; also you have a certain amount of friendly feeling, of desire for the good of others and of a sympathetic interest in their success or misfortune. For all three elements enter into society, and if you say the last three contradict and neutralize the first four, I respond that they are but three to four, and that as a general thing the majority governs, not only in our republic, but in the kingdoms and empires of the earth, so far at least as society is to be considered.

Besides, it is not necessary to try to make the laws of society consistent or harmonious or commonsensical, for they are not so by nature, never have been and never will be.

In the little village, the wife of the minister, the doctor and the lawyer represent the Four Hundred, which have been declared to comprise all the society folk of New York; to these three professional ladies may be joined the wife of the shopkeeper and perhaps the mill-owner, or the few larger landowners among the farmers. To this inner circle do all the women of the place aspire, and the question as to who does or does not revolve within it as a sort of secondary planet is the source of unending discussion, assertion, denial and simulation.

"Miss Brown is going to have some folks to tea," says the butcher's wife to the blacksmith's wife. "I suppose you're a-going?"

"Oh, I don't know," replies Mrs. Cyclops, who would give her ears to go and hasn't been invited. "I expect Miss Brown's too mad to ask me, for I haven't been to call at the parsonage for a month of Sundays. Be you going?"

"Dunno yet. I some expect to go down to the city that day." And the two ladies separate, each to make merry in her domestic circle over the vain pretenses and aspirations of the other.

Perhaps you loftily say that you know nothing about country villages or the habits and feelings of the wives of butchers and blacksmiths; but is not this little sketch one that you can duplicate in your own circle of society whatever that may be?

Mrs. V. or Mrs. A. is to give an entertainment. Of course she asks the 400 who are on her regular visiting list, but there are 400 or 500 more, not exactly on the visiting list, but who still have a certain acquaintance with Mrs. V. or Mrs. A.; have met her at some summer hotel, have crossed the ocean in her company or have been presented to her notice by some friend. She bows to them in the park, and if they stand square in her path at some third person's reception she graciously replies to their anxious and deferential little proffer of remark or salutation; but does all this make them so far acquainted that they may hope for an invitation to this grand entertainment? Does it at any rate entitle them to speak to their friends as if there was a possibility of their going if they see fit to do so? And when they meet another person very similarly situated with regard to the leaders of the Four Hundred, does not their little conversation bear a striking resemblance to that of the butcher's wife and the blacksmith's wife discussing the tea to be given by the parson's wife?

Diogenes placed the height of human happiness in content with what one had. He possessed a tub and he made himself perfectly contented in his tub, and therefore perfectly happy. At least when Alexander, just then master of the world, stood outside the tub and asked its inmate to say what he could do for him, Diogenes simply replied:

"Get out of my light!"

A society person would say that Diogenes stood in his own light by thus snubbing the emperor; but perhaps, in fact it seems as if certainly, he was honest in his conviction that even the most powerful man on earth could give him nothing better than contentment with his humble lot. At any rate he had the courage of his convictions, and took Xantippe to wife as a proof that he meant what he said.

But if he was right, and content is happiness, society cannot be happy, for content is an unknown quantity in its composition. Nobody in society is or can be content, for if he were content he would not be in society, the very essence of whose existence is emulation; "the better is the enemy of good" say the French, and the maxim is as sadly wise as most of their apothegms. Mrs. A. has some diamonds, very fine diamonds and a good many of them. Is she satisfied and contented in their possession? No, for Mrs. B. has more and finer ones, and Mrs. B. has a gnawing consciousness that Mlle. Tiptoe has yet finer ones, and Mlle. wishes she could lay hands upon the Duchess of So-and-so's hereditary jewels, and the duchess never contemplates her own jewels without remembering those she saw upon the empress of Russia, or in the Green Vaults of Vienna, or the Paris exposition.

So nobody is content with jewels, and jewels are one of the badges and trademarks and certificates of a position in society.

And so it is with clothes. Mrs. X., with a deep purse, subsidizes Worth or one of his rivals to compose a toilet for her which shall exceed in richness, beauty and originality anything that ever yet clothed a daughter of Eve. The artist falls into a fine frenzy and evolves something which even Mrs. X. admits to be beyond her wildest hopes, until, as she plumes herself like a peacock and glides down the grand reception room, she suddenly encounters Mrs. Z., another Worth dressed dame, whose robes are an improvement upon her own, so that the latter may confidentially whisper to her dear 500 friends that "Poor Mrs. X." has tried to copy her dress by the aid of some domestic dressmaker, but has not quite succeeded—"not *quite*, my dear, for Worth is not so easily imitated." And poor Mrs. X., who suspects the slander, but has no opportunity of rebutting it, goes home gnashing her teeth and tearing her hair, and is ready to trample her poor gown under foot and to rend M. Worth limb from limb.

Or perhaps she is of a keener and more belligerent make, and instead of retreating, sails gallantly up to the enemy, exclaiming:

"Oh, my dear! What a sweet gown, and I'll forgive you for stealing my little hints to Worth—he made mine, you know, and I suppose liked the idea so well that he couldn't resist warming it over in yours!"

How truly happy both those women feel as they smile in each other's faces and glare in each other's eyes!

Consider the matter of precedence, especially here in our New World's republican society! In the kingdoms and empires of older communities the whole thing is settled for man, woman and child by the mere fact of birth. A little, frivolous, childish duchess of nineteen must take precedence of a venerable and dignified countess, even though it may be her own grandmother, and so on down to the delicate distinctions between the wives of barristers and the wives of attorneys.

But, thank heaven, we are not yet so highly civilized as all this, and the host at a dinner party or a ball supper generally gives his arm to the oldest lady, or to the distinguished stranger of the occasion, or to her in whose honor the entertainment is given, and this is so far the better plan; that there is a reason based upon common sense and the inherent fitness of things for such a choice. But for all this, our elective course opens wide the door to jealousies and heartburnings less likely to assail the born thralls of conventional precedence, and one of the little animosities of the society man or woman is to keep a sharp lookout that nobody is treated with more consideration or respect in this matter than him or herself.

Suppose this little exposition of the ruling passions of society could be read by some intelligent citizen of Jupiter come down to earth on a tour of exploration, much as Stanley went to Africa, to see how *les autres* lived. He would probably exclaim:

"Why, what a dreadful condition of things society must be! I suppose everybody who can keeps out of it!"

And we should reply: "By no means, my dear Jupitrian! On the contrary, nearly everybody of average means, education and ambition aspires to belong to society and to have the reputation of so belonging. To be out of society is to be out of the world, and in that case we might as well be dead."

"Being dead, my dear Earthling, would bring you into a great deal of society, and of a very fixed character. We Jupitrians understand more about these things than you do."

"Ah! Hypnotism is one of the fads of your society also, is it? Well, it has amused us somewhat, but it is getting a little passe, now."

"Perhaps, you'll be still more amused at it by and by," says Jupiter, and inflating his electric flying machine is off like a shot.

Yes, we all or most of us cling to society no matter how obscure a position we may hold in it, and many of us strain every nerve and keep up all sorts of pretenses to hold our footing there. The young fellow who lodges in a garret and eats at a cheap restaurant that he may keep his name on the books of a fashionable club and go to fashionable receptions in suitable clothes; the mother of a family of girls who are all to be dressed and taught some accomplishments whereby to hold their own in the arena of society's struggles; the unmarried woman of good family but very slender means who in secret practices a thousand unknown and cruel economies that she may appear in the drawing rooms of her wealthy relatives in a proper gown and well preserved laces. All these, and how many more, are struggling to hold their footing in society, and why? Do they derive pleasure from its snubs and slights and covert sneers and taunts? Is it joy to these souls to know, or at least to imagine, that every one they meet is better off and more at ease than themselves?

But the others—those who are really prosperous and assured, who have their own position and are quite able to maintain it—do they find the life of society a life of real joy and satisfaction? Apart from the rivalries—and it is in this more prosperous class that the rivalries have their full swing—apart from these, are the fatigues, the worries, the obligation to keep up when the whole heart is sick and the whole body aches, the impossibility of doing what one wants to, because society demands just then what one does *not* want—there is no slavery more stern, no rule more unyielding, no tyrant more inexorable than the rule and the temper of society.

Try it if you don't believe me. The next time your reception day comes around and you don't feel like seeing people, tell the servants to deny you. Do it two or three times and you will find your friends going somewhere else that day, and you will have gained the reputation of being air-y or freak-y or odd, and in fact you will have slipped down a step or two on the slippery social scale.

Or dress in your comfortable last year's gown instead of the hideous new one which your soul loathes, you will presently hear that you are getting poor and dowdyish. One cannot multiply examples, and in fact most persons, whether their society is that of Paris or of the tiniest village of central Pennsylvania, can adapt and modify what has been said to their own experience, and agree with me that the most perplexing questions in the world are:

Why does society exist? Why do we seek it? and Is it a necessary evil or an evil necessity?

MRS. FRANK LESLIE.

Important, if True.

And now the girls are bending their intellects to displaying their individuality on their stockings. The moneyed girl has the dollar sign wrought upon her hose. The musical girl indulges in sharps and flats; the artist shows the brush and palette; the flirt chooses bright red hearts. Geographical location, too, is not neglected. It is said that the Cincinnati girl proudly displays tiny silken pigs upon her stockings; the Chicago girl has a motto, "We've captured the bun," or "The World's fair is ours," while the Boston girl, true to her heart's affection, displays a row of tiny brown beans around her ankle.

WOMAN'S WORLD IN PARAGRAPHS.

Some of the Work Done by a Woman's Model Club.

The model club among women in this country is to my mind the Pro Re Nata Society of Washington. Ladies of the highest culture, many of them leading ladies socially, belong to it. Although this is the case, yet desirable women who earn their living day by day are welcomed, and some of these are among its noblest members. The club was framed, as its constitution affirms, "to perfect its members in extempore speaking by the formal discussion of live questions of the day, and to work together for the highest civilization of humanity." Best of all, article 8 of the the constitution declares that no topic, social, political or religious shall be excluded from discussion at the meetings. Here the Pro Re Nata stands alone. I know of no other woman's club in America or the world that is willing to discuss any question whatsoever. If only more women had this much courage and liberality, what a happy world this would be! The reason the Pro Re Natas are thus brave and liberal must be, I think, that they are all, without exception so far as I know, ladies of uncommon education and intelligence and with unusually vigorous intellects. I have always observed that the more people know the more tolerant of all shades of opinion they are. The Pro Re Nata ladies discuss the large social, political and economic topics of the time. Lately they spoke on the Chilian question. The interest of the occasion was increased by the fact that Mrs. Hibbert, who opened the speaking, had been formerly director of a government normal college in the Argentine Republic, and therefore knew South Americans well. Among topics discussed in the past year have been finance, business education for women and the need of physical culture for American women.

Brown university at the opening of the present college year started with an appendage for women students, called the university course for women. It is simply what the Harvard annex used to be—merely a permission to girls to get the instruction given in the regular course of the university and take the regular college examinations. If they pass these, certificates will be awarded to them, but not diplomas, and no class room instruction is given to them at present. Thus even venerable and conservative Brown is beginning to capitulate to the women. The concession gained is not much in one way, for girls can go already on equal terms to magnificent Michigan university, Cornell, and many of the universities of the western states, and certainly will prefer doing so to accepting this crumb from Brown university. In another way, however, the little concession from Brown means much. It is the breaking of the ice of conservatism which still fast locks the otherwise kind and large hearts of so many eastern men. So we welcome it and thank the trustees of Brown. For girls living in its near neighborhood the examinations will be a convenience.

Miss Lulu Flower, of New Orleans, is a commercial traveler. She follows the road in the interests of a large dry goods house, carrying her samples with her She is eminently successful in her work, and is much liked by those with whom she has dealings. In regions where the railroad has not penetrated, Miss Flower loads her sample box into a buggy and drives to country towns taking orders.

When you write a letter to anybody asking information about a subject of interest and benefit to yourself only, inclose a stamp—always inclose a stamp.

ELIZA ARCHARD CONNER.

George Alfred Townsend has gone to Spain to get material for a biography of Columbus. Mr. Townsend's literary survey ranges from "Gath" to Askelon, and his work has merit, but the world really does not need another life of Columbus. Washington Irving's is good enough, and if it is a little weak from the standpoint of scientific history, that is forgiven from the large element of romance in it, which really is the best part of all lives of Columbus. People are not breaking their necks to read the latest bulletin about the nationality of the great discoveror, which has caused so much learned investigation of recent years. The egg episode, the story of the queen's jewels, the incident of the chains and other popular traditions of Columbus' career are what people like to read about, despite the fact that historians regard them as fabulous. These are all in Irving's pages, and the world don't want any latter-day iconoclasm about the Grande Colon, as the Spanish call him.

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