GIRLS OF GOTHAM

Athletic Young Women in New York Society

WHO TRAIN THEIR MUSCLES

Precious Into Which the Male Eye May Not Peep—The Fads That Are Popular This Season.

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 boating boats, slugging "bears 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 Miss. Delsarte hints, don't you know, not only for gymnasium, but for boudoir practice.

For Miss. Delsarte has lately been lecturing and illustrating to the smart set, setting up the "Mile" and the "Medici," "Diana" and the nymphy of old as ideals 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 newest 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 attitudes; her supple, alabaster body is in session 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 coquettishness a rolling flannel collar, and a natty cap with knots and fringes ornaments and outlines this modern "Mile."

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

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

Here she swings 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 form fullness and sways the pulley weights. Then she tests her muscular firmness on the parallel bars and her endurance on the chest weights; lengthens her frame and flexes her spine to tingent rings and special apparatus; distributes her strength and husbands her vital energy. She alternates light with heavy gymnastics and varies the monotony with the artistic and esthetic with; quiet grace of action, repose of mind and healthy physical expansion.

The dancing girl is versatile. She dances daily, trips through dainty evolutions, quaint bowls, darts around the room, delights in Bohemian, goes in for a breezy morning 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.

As a social entertainment to which the beaux of Manhattan would have added their best gallantry to gain admittance, imagine if the gilded fashionable children of a small ladies' club disported in the club gymnasium for the delectation of feminine friends.

Two handsome tailored gymnasts, pretty maidens fair, square, were thrown from just under the lens of the guests' gallery, and have the stable gentlemen of grave contained themselves engaged in fashion sports, after daily exercises with French bar bells, bows and arrows and a number of edifying feats on the horizontal bar.

Standing in five rows, six in a line, to a standard width than they would daily through a series of bending and swaying motions, posing and kneeling to classical measurements, with symmetrical leg lifts, graceful curves and curves

bounds. At a given note the small kimonoed figures successively alternated, and like the Mikado Annabel's curious maidens they came bounding 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, horse at home shows, flower shows and rocking mains, the belle 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 belle 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 neatest 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 any thing."

"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.

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