

PAINTED IN THEIR BALL GOWNS

THE STYLE OF PORTRAIT NOW FASHIONABLE— SOME RECENT EXAMPLES.



MRS. R. L. SEWALL, BY WILLIAM THORNE.

There is only one notable portrait of the present season that has shown its subject in any other dress than an evening gown. That kind of costume appears to be the only one regarded now as appropriate in a portrait, and such pictures as that of Miss Mills with her hat on are rare indeed.

This is a mode of to-day. A score of years ago it was not considered indispensable to the success of a portrait to have the subject in evening dress. That view prevails at present, however.

One of the portraits of a woman at the spring Academy exhibition shows her in a low cut dress, although her age makes such a gown unsuitable to her. In order that she may not seem inappropriately gowned the bosom of the dress is filled in with net. More subdued dress would have been much more suitable.

Portraits are now painted in evening dress, however, and this old lady had to be in the style. One used only recall some of the Whistler pictures to realize how unnecessary such sartorial inspiration is.

In those rare cases in which the subjects are not posed in modish evening dress there is an attempt made to reproduce fantastic or old-fashioned costumes. Several of the best portraits of the winter have shown these subjects in the costume of 1830, modified, of course, out of its severest form but strongly characteristic of that period.

Not a single recent portrait of importance has shown its subject in street dress. What a relief would be a tailor-made portrait in contrast with all the dressed up ladies that hang on the gallery walls.

Miss Mills had the courage of her convictions when she had herself painted with a hat on. The vogue of evening dress is explained by other reasons than the increase it makes in women's beauty when it is becoming.

Evening dress does not stifle so much

and so rapidly as street dress," one artist explained to the SUN reporter. "An ordinary dress without a hat seems inappropriate. But women's hats come and go so rapidly in the fashions that one looks hopelessly out of date and conspicuously out of fashion after a few months.

"A tiara or a feather, on the other hand, may keep in the fashion always, for it does not necessarily have any style. In the same way an evening gown allows an artist much more latitude than he would ever be able to take with a street dress.

"He may treat it in such a way that it will look like a mediæval garment instead of the last cry of Parisian chic. He need not trouble himself exactly about the form of such a gown as he would in all probability be compelled to do in painting a woman in street dress.

"In an evening gown he has little to think of beyond the color. His tints may be treated in almost any way he wishes, and in this way he gets an effect of drapery which need not change in style."

The styles of various portrait painters have had their influence on the homes of New Yorkers who have employed them. The beauties of a previous generation were all painted by an artist who enjoyed here a vogue that continued much longer than that of most of his colleagues.

His style of painting was like the hero of Henry James who had so much taste. Most of it was bad taste, but he had a great deal of it. This painter had a great deal of style—apparently bad style it seems to people to-day—but it pleased by its novelty when he came to town.

He painted these ladies of a commercial era in exactly the style that Sir Peter Lely and Lawrence immortalized the Carolinian beauties and those of a later British period. It was often said by his rivals that he merely transferred these heads of Manhattan to his copies of the older canvases.

Their costumes were also subjected to



MRS. REGINALD VANDERBILT, BY RICHARD HALL.

some slight change, but there was the rolling curtain back of them, the pillared terrace and the occasional greyhound resting within a short distance. There were many of these portraits painted here a score of years ago, and they were hailed in their day as a revelation of a much truer and rarer art than portrait painting in Manhattan had ever been before.

A picture of a woman recently on view at a gallery showed this tendency. A woman in the middle years is shown in evening dress, and in her obviously false complexion, her carefully kept hair and the determined expression of her face there is no other impression than that of a grim struggle with the years. She is going to keep young—or at least she is not going to surrender to age without a fight.

"I would not submit myself to such dissection at the hands of a person with as little sympathy as a surgeon called in to look me over when I was ill," said a woman who stared contemplatively at the picture.

"For the artist to make his own work prove best, takes naturally the most obvious traits.

"I know the original of that picture, and I know that she probably does think a great deal about keeping herself as young looking as her years will permit. She does think, however, of a great many other things, and I cannot understand why the artist found his inspiration in only that phase of her."

"That's what they always do, though, these painters. If you're a rich man, they don't think they have anything characteristic until they have shown by your face that you're a miser, or that the innocuous portrait that immortalizes my good points, not my worst characteristics."

There is always much that is delightful

for a woman in having her portrait painted. There is the unusual pleasure of dressing in an evening gown at 10 o'clock in the morning and getting into the motor to go to the sitting. Then there are the pleasant hours in the studio, with a friend dropping in occasionally to see how the picture is getting on.

Then there is the final view of it at the artist's studio when all one's friends come in and compare the original with the counterfeit presentation as she stands close to the figure. Then there is the view of the artist's pictures at one of the galleries and the visits there while the picture is shown.

If there is any gall in the honey it is likely to show itself here, for critics may write very cruel things about the painter and his works. This brings to the lay mind the first suggestion that everything may not be as perfect as it seemed.

"Why," ponders the layman, "why have I paid out my several thousands to be painted by a person that I am assured by authorities is not worth patronizing at any time? And it is possible that this portrait which I admired so much is not beautiful after all?"

The layman is often confused when he collides with questions of art, and probably he hears some satisfactory explanation from the painter. That is only one feature of the happy process of being painted which may be in the least unsatisfactory and all the delights counteract that.

The portrait painter has more to do than ever nowadays. This is as true of the woman portrait painter as it is of her colleagues of the other sex.

More Americans can afford to have their portraits painted than ever before and more have been under influences that lead them to appreciate the possession of a portrait. The pictures shown here are of women, because they predominate among the originals in this country.

There are no statistics on that point, but there is everything save figures to prove that the women's portraits are much more numerous than those of men. This may not be due to woman's weakness for having her likeness transferred to canvas so much as to the desire of the men to see their womanhood there.

The average man who can afford such things thinks first of having his wife's picture painted, and then maybe his daughter's. The son's he will care less about and he is practically certain to be quite indifferent as to his own. It is to the women folk that the foreign painters are chiefly indebted for their success, and it is not easy to recall this or that famous man's portrait by one of them. The names



COUNTESS DE ROUGEMONT (EDITH CLAPP OF NEW YORK) FROM PAINTING BY W. THORNE.



MRS. JOHN MCCULLOUGH (PHOTO BY RICHARD HALL).



MISS BEATRICE MILLS, BY RICHARD HALL.



MRS. JOHN JACOB ASTOR, FROM A PAINTING BY PRINCE TROUBETZKOY.

of half a dozen women, however, who have been painted by New York or foreign artists are easily recalled. When men are painted in this country there is usually present the motive supposed to underlie so many actions of American business.

A man may want to present his picture to the bank—on the request of the stockholders—to hang it in the committee room of the insurance company, or make it in some way a monument to his virtues in business. Else he submits when his wife and the rest of the family insist that his portrait must be painted since everybody else in the family has already been depicted on the canvas.

The habit of living in two or three places is another influence that has made the portrait painter's services more in demand than ever. New Yorkers of the kind that indulge in portraits usually have at least a house in the country and one in town. There should be a portrait in every house, so the portrait painter, always the accompaniment of wealth and elegance, finds his opportunities daily larger.

The extent to which the portrait painters are employed may be gathered from the list of exhibitions which are held almost

continuously during the winter season. To find room for the exhibitors of their pictures several new galleries were opened last winter.

No picture dealer nowadays with a room twelve feet square back of his shop hesitates to call it a gallery and hold exhibitions there. So great is the demand for room that even these places are nearly always supplied during the season with the usual exhibition of pictures. In nine cases out of ten all the pictures are portraits.

The prevalence of the portrait in New York was further attested a few years ago by the exhibition for charity of portraits of well known women painted wherever possible by well known artists. It did not take much trouble to fill the largest gallery here with as many pictures as the committee wanted. That comfortable result was accompanied by a number of pictures of having to decline a number of pictures the committee did not want.

So New York attracts famous portrait painters from all over the world and supports many eminent Americans. Two of the pictures shown are by William Thorne, long well known as a painter of beautiful American women. One of his subjects in

the group was Mrs. R. L. Sewall, daughter of Robert Hewitt of Ardsley on the Hudson. The other was the Countess de Rougemont, formerly Miss Edith Clapp of the city, well known as a society beauty in New York until her marriage to the Count de Rougemont and her removal to Paris two years ago. Mr. Thorne painted the portrait of Mrs. Sewall in Boston, while that of the Countess de Rougemont was finished while she was on her second visit to this country.

The pictures by Richard Hall, well known here and in Paris, where he painted the Duchess d'Uzes, the Duchess de Rougemont and other titled members of society, are of Mrs. Reginald Vanderbilt, Mrs. John McCullough and Miss Beatrice Mills. Mrs. Vanderbilt before she sailed for Europe had her photograph taken by Curtis Bell and there is a striking resemblance in pose and person between the two. Mrs. McCullough's portrait was first at the Paris Salon. The original hangs in the Newport home of Mrs. Vanderbilt. Miss Mills is the daughter of Mrs. Ogden Mills and twin sister to Miss Gladys Mills. Mrs. John McCullough was Anna C. Dodge and her mother is the present Mrs. Stephen S. Olin. She is a sister of Mrs. W. K. Vanderbilt, who was one of the women that figure among Mr. Hall's sitters.

Mrs. Astor's portrait was painted two years ago by Prince Troubetzkoy and is her favorite portrait. She has not, however, been so frequently as the one shown in the group.

FORECAST OF MANY WEDDINGS

AT LEAST THE GIRLS HAVE BEEN PRAYING TO ST. JOSEPH.

March was His Month and His Specialty is to Provide Husbands—Does He Really Answer Prayers?—Well, Just Read These Stories—As a Tutelary Divinity.

Judging from the attendance in the Catholic and Episcopal churches of New York last month there will be an unusually large number of weddings before St. Joseph's month comes around again. In the church calendar the month of March is set aside for special devotions to St. Joseph and during it unmarried women wishing to change their state offer prayers for a husband.

"Is it the best time to pray for a husband that ye do be wanting to know?" an elderly Irish woman answered the reporter as she was leaving a church on the lower West Side. "Faith, darling, if ye'll just go into church any day this month and get on your knees and pray to the good saint to send you a man, he'll be after doing it."

"Did I ever know him to answer a girl's prayer for a husband? Well, and wasn't it myself he was after answering and on the very first day that I asked."

"It is over forty years ago now and I was fresh to this country, landed less than two months. It was St. Joseph's month and I was that lonely that I thought my heart would burst with longing for home and the sight of a familiar face."

"I was in service down here in old Greenwich village and I went to early mass. If ever I prayed in my life it was that morning, begging the good saint to send me a husband who would help me make a home as I could bring the mother and the children over here."

"When I was leaving the church there he was waiting for me at the door. No, I'd never seen him before, but I knew him at once and he knew me. We walked out the door side by side, and when we reached the street we both stopped."

"Afterward he told me he stopped because he was afraid if he turned one way I might turn the other. Neither of us had the courage to speak until we reached the

basement door of the house where I was working, but before that day came around again we were married and living in a little home of our own.

"That was forty years ago, and to-day I was in church begging the saint to send my grandson a good wife. Why shouldn't he be after sending the boys good luck as well as the girls? The trouble with the boys is that they're ashamed to let folks see them in church in March. They want a wife as bad as the girls want husbands, but there's no making them say so."

"There was Maggie O'Hara, me own first cousin. She was the prettiest girl in Cork, but that full of the devil that not a boy in town but feared her tongue. And not a boy in town would she look at twice except to screech and poke fun at with the boys of a banished."

"As time passed and even the plainest of the girls were married off, Maggie began to think and see the error of her ways. Not only did she go to church during St. Joseph's month, but she took an image of the good saint, and sitting it on the shelf under her own bit of looking glass she kept fresh flowers before it for a whole year."

"But once let a girl get a bad name and it is harder to change than it is to kill a dozen cats. That was the way with Maggie; her temper and her tongue had set the boys against her, and though they'd see her home from church or dance with her at a fair never once would they step inside her mother's door to drink a cup of tea."

"When the year rolled 'round and St. Joseph's day came again Maggie lost faith and her temper, too."

"Get out with ye," she cried, flinging her apron at the image of the saint on the shelf. "Ye're just like every other man, your room is more profit than your company."

"Now, the pig was in the room picking up the breakfast scraps, and what should happen but the image should drop off the shelf plump down on the pig's back."

"Ough," went the pig, springing through the door and breaking out the gate. "Such a torrent of shouts and oaths followed that Maggie stuck her head out the door. There sprawling in the mud was Michael O'Hara, just back from America in his new politician's uniform."

"When he was on his feet again and

started to chase the pig Maggie stopped him. But instead of 'Hara running off as the other boys would have done he walks into the house and takes a chair as big as you please.

"What you come for?" says Maggie. "For you to clean the mud off me new uniform," says he.

"Out with ye," Maggie orders him. "If ye was after learning such manners in America, ye'd better be getting back in the States. Well, good luck to ye, darling, may St. Joseph, the husband of Mary, bless ye and give ye the man ye have set your heart on."

"And he didn't. He just sat there and talked her into a good humor until she cleaned the mud off his uniform. The next week the priest married them and he brought her back to America with him."

"Well, young miss, be coming in to take a sip of tea? Well, good luck to ye, darling, may St. Joseph, the husband of Mary, bless ye and give ye the man ye have set your heart on."

"At the French church an old mulatto woman had stopped in the vestibule to fold her rosary carefully in a fine linen handkerchief."

"Go off wid you, honey, try'n to make game of er nigger. I done buried two husbands, I don't want no mo'. I been in dat church prayin' fer my young miss," she said in answer to a question. "Does I b'lieve St. Joseph will answer my prayer? Ef he don't it'll be de just time."

"Dis is de third generation I've got husband's fer an' I reckon de good Saint ain't er goin' back on dis chile, seein' as how she's as pretty as she is."

"Did I ever git er husband fer er ugly one? Well, young miss, ole mabster's daughter had t'ree children, all gals. Miss Antoinette an' Miss Marian was as pretty as pinks, but Miss Nona! Her head was as red as a cole of fire, an' do what I would de freckles would come on dat chile's face."

"When dey was growin' up dey sarnt 'em up here soners to bo'din' school an' when dey come back an' I went ter meet 'em I jey 'lowed ter myself Miss Nona was de ugliest white gal I ever see."

"I was dat sorry fer miss I could er cried. You know how de mens in New Orleans is, dey never take a mite er notice of er girl of her face ain't pretty."

"I see miss er watchin' de young folks dat come ter de house, an' dar was plenty I kin tell you. I seen miss er watchin' 'em an' I sell you. Well, good luck to ye, darling, may St. Joseph, the husband of Mary, bless ye and give ye the man ye have set your heart on."

"Dem two oldest gals had mo' beaux dan any other young ladies in town, an' once in a while one of 'em would drop behind to talk wid Miss Nona to keep her from feelin' too lonesome. But dar wa'n't no use tryin' to fool folks; everybody seen what Miss Nona was cut out for an' dey treated her 'ordain'."

"When St. Joseph's day come 'round of cou'se dar was a mighty primpin', church goin' was de fashion dat year an' every girl in town was agoin'."

"'Tis goin', too, mammy,' says Miss Nona, comin' fer me ter tie er ribbon sash."

"Dat's right, honey, I tote 'er. 'Don't you never see hope. Some mens is mighty foolish critters an' there ain't no tellin' who's gwine ter take their eyes."

"But my eyes like ter popped clean out my head when I seed Miss Nettie and Miss Marian come walkin' home together and Miss Nona wid a beau. Yesser, an de finest catch in New Orleans. When I axed de two oldest gals how cum dey lay dey little sister out dem out, Miss Nettie upped an' said: 'Oh, he always belonged to Nona. He never looks at Mannie or me when Nona is around.'"

"Is dat so, says I. Den I went straight down in dat kitchen an' mixed me up a bottle of sweet'nin' water an' buried it in de back yard ter make sure he couldn't git loose."

"Why, don't you know dat love charm, honey? You make a bottle of sweet'nin' water and dig er hole in de ground, an' when you put in de first handful of dirt to kiver it up you say, 'When this bottle is empty they will be married.' Den you fill up de hole an' stomp it down hard an' tight."

"De day after Miss Nona was married, an' she was de fust of de t'ree married too. I dug up dat bottle an' miss an' every body in dat house kin tell you dar wa'n't a drop of water in it."

"A member of an Episcopal family, herself a devoted church woman, smiled indulgently, when asked about going to church on St. Joseph's day. "There is no doubt that more girls go now

than twenty or even ten years ago," she admitted. "Girls will be girls, you know, and all of us have our pet superstitions."

"For my own part I keep a little statue of St. Joseph on my dresser from a sense of appropriateness. He is looked upon as the patron saint of the home, you know."

"My husband, just to tease me, tells a remarkable story of my unhappiness on one occasion when the statuette was misplaced and for several days could not be found. He makes a joke of it, but he cannot contradict the facts that during the time we had more trouble in our home than ever before or since."

"Of course it may have been a coincidence but when a thing happens once or twice under the same conditions one becomes a little nervous. I have never offered a prayer to St. Joseph, but I am free to admit that I feel more contented when his little figure is on my dresser."

Catholic and Episcopal girls are not the only ones who make a point of going to church on St. Joseph's day. Three years ago I was in Atlantic City with a sick child and saw with my own eyes three girls, Presbyterians, one from Philadelphia, one a Southerner and the other from New York, all in the Catholic Church praying before the figure of St. Joseph. A few hours later when we met on the Boardwalk and I remarked on it they very candidly admitted having gone to pray for husbands."

"Two of them have since married, both in their own church. The third, the Southern girl, is still unmarried. When I spoke to her of her lack of success she laughed and told me that she had not prayed exactly as the other two had done."

"Mary and Elizabeth simply prayed for a husband," she explained, "while I asked St. Joseph if he couldn't give me a man who would make me a happier and a more useful woman not to let me marry at all."

"When I asked if she didn't intend to try again she shook her head."

"I don't think it wise to tempt Providence too often," she answered. "I might weary the good saint and he might be tempted to send me a broken stick just to get rid of me."

"Now, that girl is an orthodox Presbyterian, and I know several Baptist and Methodist women who make a point of going to church, either Catholic or Episcopal, during March and offering prayers to St. Joseph."

SKILL OF BLIND TELEGRAPHER.

One of the Speediest Operators in the West.

Blind since birth, Gilbert McDonald, probably the most wonderful telegrapher in the world, lives at Manville, a little village east of here, on the Louisville and Nashville Railroad, and earns a living for his widowed mother and three sisters. He is perhaps the only blind telegraph operator in the world, says the Carmi correspondent of the Louisville Courier-Journal, and can practise at the key with as much dexterity as one not minus his eyes. McDonald is 25 years old, and has been a telegrapher about ten years. Not until recently, though, has he been recognized by the railroad and given permanent employment. He is now assistant operator at Maunie and also has charge of the Western Union Telegraph Company's office.

Left without a father at the age of 12, the blind lad was forced to assist his mother in making a living. He was greatly handicapped by the loss of his eyesight and many neighbors sought to contribute to him through charitable motives. But the lad would have none of it, and worked at whatever he could find to do. He sold papers on the streets, blacked shoes and ran errands. He finally drifted to the depot, and a strong attachment grew between John W. Foster, agent at the little station, and the blind lad. For hours the boy would sit and listen at the busy clinkety click of the wire, and has been seen to work for ever he could find to do. He sold papers on the streets, blacked shoes and ran errands. He finally drifted to the depot, and a strong attachment grew between John W. Foster, agent at the little station, and the blind lad. For hours the boy would sit and listen at the busy clinkety click of the wire, and has been seen to work for ever he could find to do. 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