

## Decorative Novelties.

AN odd, and indeed a childish fancy, it would seem, is the placing glass balls—to which are attached silken strings—in the boudoir and drawing-room or *salle de reception*. These balls which are intended to imitate soap-bubbles—and are so light that they float up or nearly up to the ceiling—are, however, to some extent a source of amusement when a variation of the temperature of the apartment causes them to descend, for, on floating near, they are found to contain little fiends—*diabols*—of paper, cork, or feather, and little dancing figures dressed like Turks and like Russians. A French fancy has improved upon the London idea, which filled the floating glass “air-ball” with little stars of metal and paper flowers.

A very pretty fancy is the imitation, in ware, colored to look like fire-defaced iron, of the antique models for vases, etc. The hue is not unlike bronze, as to the main surface, on which run colors, such as appear on iron when it begins to cool after being exposed to the action of fire. The sides of these vases are formed so as to look as though indented by accident, and the whole affair is a very taking imitation of the antique.

One could not exhaust in many pages the enumeration of the different ways in which the present fancy uses animals, reptiles, and birds in biscuit ware, china ware—so called—porcelain, parian, majolica, and faience. Dolphins, frogs, monkeys, cats, dogs, mice, rats, snakes, insects of almost every description, but especially beetles, and dragon-flies, lions, tigers, elephants, leopards, the tortoise, the alligator, and the lizard, ducks, peacocks, swans, guinea-fowls, and pheasants; all these are used to serve in some way for what may be called *useful* ornamentation. By this is meant that each article has, apart from its beauty or oddity, a use. Each animal, bird, or reptile serves as a receptacle for cigarettes, perfumery, jewels, or cards; thenovelty being in the whimsicality of the shape, the ludicrousness of such or such an object being put to such or such a use, or, as when a peacock is made a jewel-case, a certain quaint fitness in its adaptation to the purpose. The utter absurdity of a swan harnessed with ribbon drawing a boat full of cigars; the preposterous notion of a lion's back as a place for depositing cigar ashes; the inimitable nonsensicality of four upright frogs escorting a staggering monkey, whose strength is supposed to desert him, especially as to the knees, under the enormous weight of the jewels in the case upon his back; the risibility of a solemn-faced toad under a palanquin, being fanned by a white mouse, and drawn by four Muscovy ducks—the palanquin being so constructed as to serve for a glove-box—all these define my meaning.

But for beauty, exquisite beauty of design and execution, and of the modern style, a pair of vases lately imported leave far behind anything of like kind that has been seen lately. The surface is gray, and resembles satin in gloss; the ware is exceedingly fine glass—there are many superb novelties in foreign glassware—and the design represents birds of the most brilliant hues perched upon autumn foliage, also of glowing color. But the peculiarity which makes these vases a triumph of art is that, owing to the rounded form of the vases themselves and the management of the color, both birds and boughs appear to be completely detached from any under surface, and to stand off from the body of the vase, thus giving an effect as to light and position of which description fails to convey an idea. It is really startling. You see the design, and then you see the groundwork, but neither appears to be incorporate with the other. *Touching* is believing.

Some years ago, brass fenders, reaching up so as to cover the whole grate or wood fire, and at-

tached to the sides of the mantel-piece—an excellent precaution, both against children falling into the flames and ladies' dresses catching the same—were introduced here, and, though expensive to a degree, were adopted.

Foreign caprice now demands that the high fender shall be gilt, and some of the very elegant ones are ornamented with a design, fabric on fabric, as, for example, a silver-wire fender on which is a silver-wire design representing a salamander. Another design has three small mirrors set into the body of the fender, apparently to reflect the apartments and furniture. Another, and by far the handsomest, has a design of a vine laden with flowers, and so placed that the fire in the grate seems to form the bright and fantastic blossoms and leaves that creep to the very top. But, of these fenders, the very plainest is still a handsome addition to the furniture of the apartment.

## Afternoon Teas.

IN London, five o'clock tea is an institution as universal, as the use of the beverage itself. It is made necessary, or, at least, has its excuse, in the late hour (8 P. M.), at which dinner is served, and its frequent substitution for lunch after a late breakfast, utilizes it in a way which people who are accustomed to a different mode of living, would hardly understand. Afternoon tea in England, consists simply of tea, and very thin bread and butter, or small biscuits. No table is set, but the tea is brought in upon a waiter with the cups and saucers, and the slight edible before mentioned. The lady of the house pours the tea, and hands a cup to any member of the family, or any caller who happens to be present, and the gentle stimulant is found very welcome to break the long gap before dinner.

In this country, the dinner hour being earlier, and lunch a regular meal in the middle of the day, at least in large cities, the reason for the afternoon tea does not exist; but it has become very fashionable, within the past few years, to give afternoon receptions, at which tea is served, instead of the grand evening entertainment, which was considered obligatory ten years ago.

An evening party involves an amount of cost in a large city, which had become a tax few were able to bear. An abundant and elegant supper must be provided, several pieces of music engaged, floral decorations obtained, and enough people invited to get rid of all social obligations for a whole year to come. The greater the crush, and the less chance of seeing the hostess or exchanging a word with a friend, the greater the success; and with infinite expenditure of money, labor, and pains, the result afforded the smallest amount of satisfaction.

The afternoon reception, or kettledrum, as it is sometimes called, which has largely taken the place of these elaborate entertainments, costs much less, and is greatly more enjoyable. Tea is always a feature of the refreshments, and though there may be chicken salad, oysters, sandwiches, and the like, still, they are not essential, and are rarely partaken of. The majority of guests confine themselves to a cup of tea, or an ice, which will not interfere with their appetite for dinner. Of course ladies preponderate greatly at the afternoon teas, and it is possible that the growing dislike of gentlemen to attend a mere crush, without any chance for social interchange or enjoyment, has been one of the causes why these day entertainments have so rapidly grown into favor. Perhaps, also, the fact that ladies can go alone without a carriage, and in simpler toilette, has also had an influence. At any rate, the kettledrum or afternoon tea is now an established institution, and one of the most agreeable forms of social entertainment.

## New Years Receptions.

So many ladies have adopted the method of receiving one day in every week, that it rather interferes with the time-honored observance of the first of January as a reception day. Still it ought to be remembered that in these informal day receptions, ladies mostly participate, gentlemen not having the time to take from their business for matters so unimportant. There is no reason, therefore, why they should interfere with the day set apart solely for the use of gentlemen, nor is it likely that anything but failure on their part to honor it with due formality, will cause its abandonment.

Regularly as the New Year comes round, announcements are made that the first of January has ceased to be regarded a social festival, yet, no sooner has the day actually arrived, than dwellings are swept and garnished, ladies put on their freshest toilettes, set tempting little tables, and receive more callers than ever before.

Still the form has greatly changed within the past twenty years. Tables are no longer elaborately set with substantial viands, but with light refreshments of a simple character. *Bouillon*, coffee, cake, sandwiches, pickled oysters, and glazed fruits, have taken the place of the boned turkeys, the hams, the pies, the chicken, and the tongue of former years. Many ladies, indeed, receive without offering refreshments at all, but this is rather a cheerless way, for, even though it has become quite common for gentlemen to refuse to partake of any, reserving their appetites very sensibly for a regular lunch, or dinner, at the house of some intimate friend, it is still desirable, or at least hospitable, to have something to offer, and serves as an occasional refection not unacceptable to the ladies who are receiving, as they rarely have time for a regular meal, if their circle of acquaintance is large.

The most agreeable way of receiving on New Years day, and one that is becoming very common, is for several ladies to meet together at the house of one, and receive in company. The hostess has her house put in order, more or less decorated with vines, plants, or flowers, and prepares or orders beforehand the delicacies which are to furnish the refreshment-table. A small table is set the previous evening, if necessary—that is, if there are not trained servants to attend to it early in the morning—and upon this are placed plates, spoons, dishes, napkins, and whatever will be required, except the eatables. Of course there are many things which cannot be done until the morning of New Years day; and it is, therefore, necessary for those who have to depend upon themselves, to rise early enough to make their sandwiches, cut and fill their baskets with cake, arrange the fruit, and perform any other necessary duties in addition to the regular breakfast routine, and the important one of dressing for the occasion. All this must be done, and the hostess must be ready to receive her guests by half past ten o'clock at the latest; though it often happens that callers do not begin to put in an appearance before eleven. If the lady visitors are bright, intelligent, and helpful, and especially if one or two of them are musical, the day may pass delightfully, both for the hostess and her guests.

In small establishments, it is a very good way to have a turkey cooked the day before, and this with mince and pumpkin or apple pies, cranberry sauce, celery, and mashed potato, makes a very good dinner, to which a caller may be invited who is sufficiently intimate, if he happens to come in at the right time, and which can be prepared without embarrassing the operations of the staff of domestics, which is usually busily employed in waiting upon the door, and performing other incidental work.

Dress is more a matter of taste upon this occasion than upon almost any other that occurs during the year. Few ladies, however, wear evening dress, and a low neck is in decidedly bad taste. The toilette may be artistic, picturesque, and becoming as can be invented, but it is considered much better for it to present marks of originality and individuality in the wearer, than to be merely costly or elaborate, or pretentious, as a full evening dress in the day time would appear.

### Winter Readings.

"OH, Mrs. Sayer, I know you'll be glad to hear that Susie, Lilly Doer, and I, as well as the three Riches intend to have regular readings together this winter once a week, and improve ourselves. Susie and I have now come in for the very purpose of talking with you about it, and deciding on the best selection to make. We intend to meet at each other's houses, and hope to begin on Christmas Eve, and keep every Tuesday evening all the winter months sacred to the purpose of improving our minds. We thought of commencing with Shakespeare—what do you think of that?"

"If none of you have read Shakespeare often, that is well; but my advice, Annie Lawson, would be to read with every play some criticism or lecture on it or some of the characters in it, and compare the writer's ideas with the impressions you received while reading. There are Mrs. Jameson's characters. And a most delightful book is *Lectures on the Historical and Four Great Shakespearian Plays*, by Henry Reed. No doubt you could procure both of these from any good library. *The Western*, a new monthly from St. Louis, has had a series of articles on Shakespeare. Mr. Price takes it, and would loan it I think. Then, if weary of this, you could take for a change *The Diary of Madame D'Arblay*, which would give you an insight into the court life of George III. Or, if you prefer more modern times, take the *Life of Lord Macaulay*. *My Mother's Manuscript*, by Lamartine, is an insight into the home and childhood of that celebrated Frenchman, and would repay the perusal."

BUSY BEE.

### What Women are Doing.

Mrs. Sarah A. Elliott has invented a folding reel and flanker for winding zephyr wools, and other threads in skeins, which is said to greatly facilitate the work of fancy knitters.

Selma Borg, the well-known Finnish lecturer, gave a course of five lectures during the month of November before the Young Women's Christian Association, on the Finnish race, history, poetry, music, and mythology, with directions to tourists. They were considered of great interest and value.

Mrs. Gill's "Six Months in Ascension" is said to be an unscientific account of a successful scientific expedition. Mrs. Gill accompanied her husband on his expedition to Ascension last year, undertaken to observe and record the opposition of Mars.

A young Italian lady, Miss Maria Velleda Furné, of a distinguished Bolognese family, studied medicine under Professor Maliverui of Turin; she obtained her diploma from the Turin University last July, as doctor of medicine, surgery, and obstetrics.

Miss Wedgwood, a descendant of the famous pottery ware manufacturer, has offered to provide a home for training the young pauper girls of Stoke-on-Trent as domestic servants.

Another Woman Professor.—Miss Grace C. Bibb has been appointed a member of the faculty of the State University at Columbus, Missouri, at a salary of \$2,000.

The successful competitor for the entrance scholarship of the London School of Medicine for Women, 30 Henrietta street, Brunswick square, of value £30, is Miss Annie M'Call. The subjects were English, Latin, arithmetic, geometry and physics.

Miss Rhoda Broughton is said to be engaged on a new novel, whose central purpose is to hold the "Pre-Raphaelites," "Æsthetics," and the world of "higher culture" generally up to ridicule.

Three Japanese ladies, dressed in their national costume, are in Paris. They are the daughters of three Japanese officials of distinction, and are accompanied by a numerous suite.

The three daughters of Longfellow, the poet, are Alice, unmarried and a writer, Edith, now Mrs. Dana, and Anna, who is also literary and single, though still so young that she may change her mind, and decide to adopt matrimony rather than literature as a profession.

Rev. Phebe A. Hanaford has instituted a course of evening entertainments in her church at Jersey City. A biographical lecture given by herself alternates with readings, vocal and instrumental music, tableaux, etc. Ten cents admission is charged, which pays for the ice-cream enjoyed during the social hour which follows each evening's exercises.

Mrs. Mary Mapes Dodge, the editor of "St. Nicholas," on her return from a trip to California, received a serenade at Cincinnati from several hundred little folks, who sang several of her baby songs. Each of the children carried a red and white banner, formed by sticking together the covers of "St. Nicholas."

The Empress of Japan takes great interest in the silk spinning and other industries of the country, and it has been stated in the native papers, that the tea shrubs growing in the garden of the imperial palace at Akasaka were picked in the presence of her Majesty the Empress Dowager, by one hundred girls, all of whom were for the occasion dressed alike in holiday clothes, and were further regaled with cakes and tea at the conclusion of their labors.

The National Indian Association, according to the *London Queen*, was founded by the late Mary Carpenter, and has already done much to promote social progress in that country, and disseminate correct knowledge, and ideas concerning its needs and institutions. Her Royal Highness, the Grand Duchess of Hesse has recently accepted the office of President.

Mrs. Clement has revised her handbook of "Painters, Sculptors, Architects, and Engravers," adding new notes and an appendix, in which she puts together many facts gleaned in a recent visit abroad about the prices of famous pictures and the history of celebrated works of art.

Mrs. Erminie A. Smith, a member of the New York Academy of Science, but a resident of Jersey City, gave recently before Sorosis, an interesting account of a visit to Oberstein, Switzerland, and the method of cutting and polishing agates, illustrated with beautiful and curious specimens. Mrs. Smith is now engaged in giving a series of geological lectures in Jersey City, and in making original investigations with the spectroscope.

A Mahratta lady of Mysore, Roma Bai, has lately visited Calcutta, and has created a great sensation by her wonderful knowledge of Sanscrit, and her power of poetical composition. She is about 22 years of age, and very pleasing and graceful. The pundits of Calcutta have been astonished at the

readiness with which she could compose original *slokas* in different meters. On one occasion, about two hundred pundits assembled to meet Roma Bai. After she had shown her facility in composition, she was asked to recite extempore some very difficult prose passages and verses, which she did with the greatest ease, and with excellent intonation. It is said that Mahratta Brahmin women learn Sanscrit as a usual part of their education. This lady can speak it colloquially as easily as a Bengali speaks Bengali, besides being able to repeat 18,000 *slokas* by heart.

Unpaid Work.—There is a vast amount of work in the world, which needs to be done, for which no pecuniary compensation is ever, or can ever be received, and it is to the credit of those who do this work, that it is often better done than that which is paid for in money.

Among unpaid enterprises involving a vast amount of labor, and constant attention, is the Flower Mission, the founder of which was a young girl (Miss Russell), and now we have another undertaking to record, which was initiated, and has been successfully carried out by another young lady of this city, Miss Macdonald.

During a stay of some months in Naples, Miss Macdonald became very much interested in the work of the Waldensian schools, which are under the charge of the Episcopal Aids, Waldensian, and other Protestant societies. The influence exerted during the past twelve years by these schools is very remarkable, and they have received continual aid and encouragement from devoted women, as well as timely contributions from traveling Englishmen and Americans.

They have recently, however, been in great financial embarrassment, and to help them substantially, Miss Macdonald conceived the original project of a bazaar composed of wares of rare and choice kinds, from all countries, such as are not usually brought to this market by dealers. Her selection, assisted by wise counsel, comprised fine real Italian bronzes, copied by Amodio, the best reproducer of classic forms from original busts, and statues,—genuine Roman antiques,—and pottery from every part of the world, of artistic design, and execution. Among this were Turkish water-jugs, of the kind mentioned by Dr. Prime, in his recent work on Pottery,—never before seen in this country,—Spanish and Moorish porcelain,—old Normandy faience,—specimens from Dunmore, Scotland,—Italian majolica of Castellani's and Guistiniani's manufacture,—and lovely vases from Torquay,—hand-painted, but not fired, in exquisitely natural and purely unconventional designs. Not a piece was admitted of any description that had not a claim to genuineness, and rarity.

The time for the sale was exceedingly well chosen,—the first part of December,—and its success, in the hands of a number of the most cultivated women of New York society, was a foregone conclusion.

Previous to the sale several "talks" were given to the ladies composing the *corps* of assistants at the residence of one of their number, by the Reverend Mr. Fletcher, who has lived in Naples many years, and Rev. Dr. Prime, on the nature, character, and significance of the articles they had to sell; and one of the ladies remarked, at the close of these instructive conversations, that if no other benefit was to be derived from it, she should feel under a personal obligation to Miss Macdonald, for having stimulated her to the acquisition of knowledge which would be a source of real pleasure and comfort to her as long as she lived.

It is needless to say, however, that the bazaar was an enormous success, from a pecuniary point of view, and that the schools have received, or will receive, solid evidence of Miss Macdonald's efforts in their behalf.