



A
MODERN
MINIATURIST.



MRS. MASSEY AND CHILD.



MRS. MASSEY'S DAUGHTER.

SUCCESS, which is difficult to win with most strenuous efforts, sometimes falls upon one unawares, and Mrs. Massey seemed predestined to win a name and fame, as her first commission in portrait-painting was thrust upon her without solicitation and almost unawares, while since then one order has followed another very quickly, until now she has a recognised monopoly in painting the portraits of children and little pet dogs.

That first commission came to her in an unusual manner. It happened that a painting of a costume model, which she had done in an Art school when she was only sixteen, was being taken by a friend to the framers, when a gentleman in the same railway carriage became interested in it, and asked if the artist would undertake a portrait. This was arranged there and then. Consequently the girl had never seen her sitter, and she was quite unknown to him when she arrived at a country railway station, and at first was completely ignored by the footman who was sent to meet the train and apparently expected some elderly person. Scarcely more than a child and horribly shy, she painted her portrait in great fear



MRS. CECIL B. HANKEY.

and trembling, and no one perhaps was more surprised and pleased than she at her first decided success. Afterwards she painted over thirty portraits for the same family; and up to the time of her marriage she spent the greater part of each year in going from one country house to another.

It is only within the last few years she has begun to paint miniatures, which are evidently to be the line of her artistic life. It is interesting to note the way in which commissions come about: for instance, one paper having reproduced her miniature of the son and heir of the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough, she had a number of inquiries from America, where she will probably make a tour next winter; and since she exhibited the case of miniatures at the Grafton Galleries and at the Exhibition of the Artists' Guild in the Albert Hall she has had no time for any other work.

The miniature now has become an almost indispensable part of the trousseau. Mrs.

Massey painted the young Lady Waterford just before her marriage, and since then quite a number of brides. Lady Lansdowne, too, was one of her sitters, also Mrs. Cecil Hankey; while she has also painted a portrait of herself and her six-year-old girl.

It was after experimenting several times on portraits of her little daughter that she first began to make a speciality of doing miniatures of children. They appeal to her doubtless on account of her own child, and they are always her pet sitters, in spite of the fact that they are so tiresome to paint. Often she has had

to travel a hundred miles to get a sitting from her baby models, and oftentimes she has painted them in their

nurseries or the garden or drawing-room, as chance occurred, without their knowing even that they were being carefully studied. The work begins and ends with a game; and if the children are old enough, Mrs. Massey often finds it the best method to give them a pencil



THE HON. F. JOICEY-CECIL.



THE MARCHIONESS OF WATERFORD.

and paper and tell them to draw her, for, though the results are generally appalling and no one could have any vanity left after such an experience constantly repeated, she finds that when the precocious artist is looking up at her with a bright and eager face she can manage to get some good notes.

Of course, with children there is no such thing as "sitting" in the ordinary sense of the word. They are moving about all the time, and to paint them is generally a question of observation and memory. A number of children have now been the subject of Mrs. Massey's clever brush, and nearly all of them are important little personages. The Duchess of Marlborough had her elder son painted, and Lady Evelyn Cavendish, whose son is the future Duke of Devonshire, had her two children painted to-

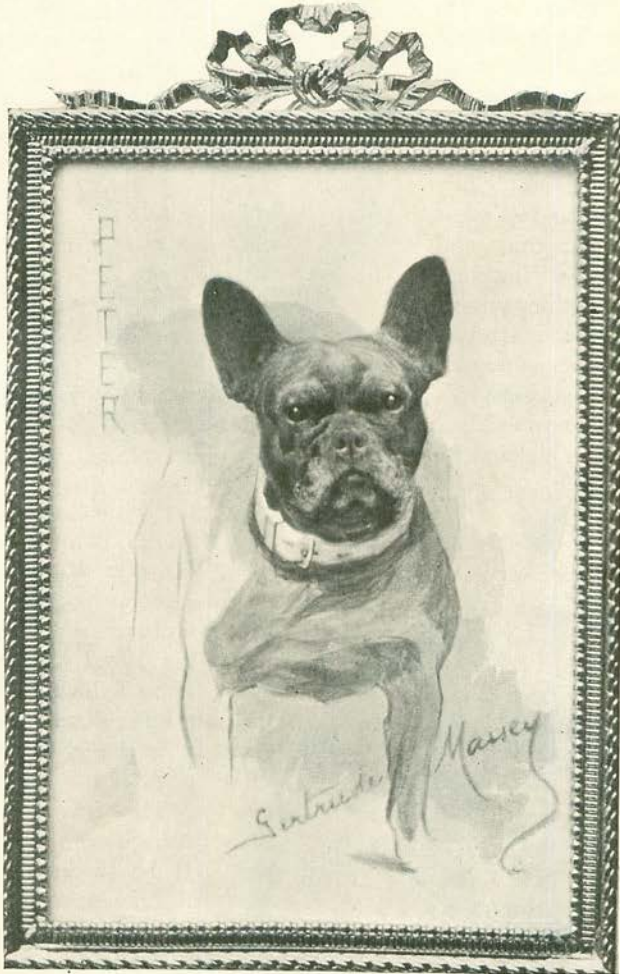
gether in one miniature; and Major Burns, Lady John Cecil, and Mrs. Arthur Cayley have all had their children painted last year; while the *chef d'œuvre*, from the painter's point of view, is a group of Mrs. Neumann's four children, the youngest of them only three months old—a circumstance in portrait-painting which is almost, if not quite, unique.

The daintiest and most fascinating works

are the delicate little miniatures which she does as charms. They are generally children's heads nestling in a tiny jewelled setting; but they were used a great deal as lovers' parting gifts at the beginning of the war.

There is no photograph which can really reproduce a miniature and show it to the best advantage. It is impossible to give

an idea of the delicate and shell-like tints of clouds and floating drapery in which Mrs. Massey excels, and which seem so especially appropriate to children at the angel age. The portrait of little Lord Blandford is a wonderful specimen of elaborate and yet light work, which is an absolute and happy contrast to the heavy tones of colouring which are so usual in modern miniatures. The little son of Lady John Cecil, who is done in locket size, is also a very delicate figure; and most ex-



THE PRINCE OF WALES'S BULL-DOG, "PETER."

quisite of all perhaps are the two little children of Lady Evelyn Cavendish, which have really quite a Cosway effect.

Other troublesome but favourite sitters of Mrs. Massey are pet dogs. The idea of having a pet dog painted in miniature is rather nice, as, alas! our canine pets are not long-lived, so that a memento is valuable, while as a rule they photograph badly.

Dogs are supposed to be free from most human foibles: but Mrs. Massey has found out a curious trait—that they always know when they are being painted, and become as intensely self-conscious as any human being; while the manifestation of this self-consciousness takes various forms, according to the breed and sex. Madame Vagliano's celebrated chocolate-coloured poodle, Mascotte, sat for its portrait as if it fully understood the necessity for looking its best; its dignity was wonderful. But on the other hand, when one looks often and seriously at a dog, it imagines that it has done something wrong, and will fall into the deepest melancholy or put on an apologetic expression.

Peter is the well-known black French bull-dog which belongs to



THE MARCHIONESS OF LANSDOWNE.



MRS. DUNLOP BEST.

the Prince of Wales, who accompanies him wherever he may go. He is a distinguished member of London Society, and an immense favourite with many more besides his Royal master, who expressed himself highly delighted with the portrait done by Mrs. Massey; and now she is to paint the favourite dogs of the Princess of Wales.

The fashion of the miniature revived within the last few years. It began in Paris, the home of the arts, and thence spread quickly to America, where Miss Amalia Kussner was first to take it up, and made for herself a name and a fame which soon became known over here; and now there is scarcely any pretty woman who has not at least one miniature of herself, while many have more. Now more than one R.A. has done miniature work, and lesser artists have taken it up with enthusiasm. There are also several notable amateurs—for instance, Miss Winifred



MRS. NEUMANN'S CHILDREN.



LADY EVELYN CAVENDISH'S CHILDREN.

Hope Thomson and Lady Phillips. Lady Maitland has especially associated herself with the art, and her collection of modern miniatures at the Albert Hall this winter was the most comprehensive one which has ever been in London. Her own work is also very charming, and includes clever portraits of her husband and her son.

The field, in fact, was becoming rather overcrowded, and Mrs. Massey was wise in striking out a line of her own. To begin with, she made a speciality of painting children's portraits, a difficult branch of the art which had not been attempted before; and so great was her success with these that she was tempted to embark on an even more difficult undertaking and to become known as the painter



MASTER WILLIAM CAYLEY.



THE MARQUIS OF BLANDFORD.

par excellence of fashionable dogs. It was this latter enterprise which made her so well known; and since a friend introduced her to the notice of the Prince of Wales, and he in his turn recommended her to the Princess, orders are sure to follow in very quick succession. The old saying of a philosopher, that "Women were created for the preservation of little dogs," has never appeared to hold so much of truth as now, when so many well-known women, from the Princess of Wales downwards, have kennels; and the Duchess of Newcastle, Mrs. Baillie, of Dochfour, Mrs. Hall Walker, the Misses Gordon, and Miss Berens are becoming quite celebrated on account of their successful breeds.

E. W.