

THE WOMEN OF THE HOUSE OF ASTOR.

Personally and socially, the women of the house of Astor have shone more brightly than the men. Almost without exception, they have brought into the family beauty, brains, and the best blood of America.

Mrs William Astor, widowed by her husband's death in 1892, has for many years been the recognised leader of New York society. The sovereignty of that brilliant kingdom is a position that requires vastly more than wealth, and Mrs Astor's long tenure of it has proved her to be a woman of remarkable qualities and powers.

Whenever the social sceptre shall pass from the hand of her husband's mother, it could find no worthier inheritor than the younger Mrs John Jacob Astor. No daughter of a hundred ears could be a more gracious and queenly figure than this young American matron. Tall, slender and graceful; beautiful of face; with all the advantages of education and culture; fond of outdoor life, and able to handle a horse, a gun, a sail-boat, a tennis racket, or a golf club with practiced skill—she has every physical and mental endowment that a fairy god-mother could give to a favourite child. She is the mother of a twelve-year-old son who will succeed to his father's place in the Astor dynasty. Quiet and domestic in her personal tastes, she is already famous for the hospitality she dispenses in the homes between which she and her husband divide most of their time when

they are not travelling abroad—their magnificent French chateau on Fifth-avenue, which they now share with Mrs William Astor, their Newport villa, and their country place on the Hudson River, near Rhinebeck.

THE FOLLIES WHICH HAVE DIS-GUSTED MRS W. ASTOR.

When the attention of the average American is called to the doings of Newport society, the celebrated monkey dinner is promptly recalled to memory. What a sensation it caused, to be sure!

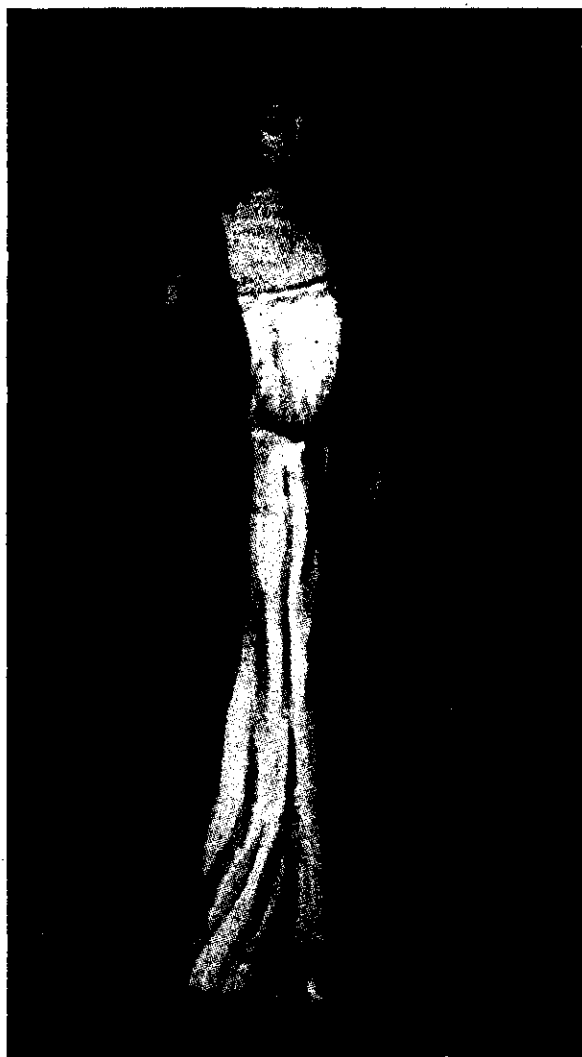
The Newporters were invited to Crossways, the splendid residence of Mrs Fish, for a Sunday luncheon. Imagine their amazement when, on entering the dining-room, they saw sitting at the head of the table, as an honoured guest, a grinning, jabbering chimpanzee. The creature was feted and petted and had a really lovely time. So did the other guests; the affair was voted a great success; a brilliant, splendid, daring idea. Mrs Fish was radiant.

Following the entertainment of "Consul," the chimpanzee, Henry Walters secured a tame ape, which acted as host on his yacht Nadara. Then the Lehrs got a white cockatoo, which they took with them to the Casino and other places of amusement. Mrs Fish had given society the cue.

THE LADY AND THE PIG.

Shortly after this occurred the "lady and the pig" incident. It was on the last day of the Newport Horse Show. The scene was colourfully brilliant.

Suddenly a woman uttered an exclamation and raised her lognette. Others did likewise. There was a murmur of amazement—and then of cooing, de-



MRS. JOHN JACOB ASTOR.

Who will succeed to the position of leader of New York society, if she deigns to accept the position. She is said to be even prouder and more haughty than Mrs. Williams, but is brilliantly gracious to those whom she does honour.

lighted admiration. Walking along the promenade was a woman in laces, carrying in her arms a squealing pig, washed white as milk and tied with blue ribbons. Then the pig became the pet of society.

A DOG PARTY.

Another matron was not to be outdone, however, for a few weeks later sent invitations for a dog party—for prize-winning barkers owned by the members of the set.

Wine was held to their noses and the right paw of each bow-wow was placed on the table. As they sipped the wine, a string was manipulated and the kennel of roses fell to pieces, revealing a stuffed cat, in which was a mechanical device which worked the tail with lifelike motion.

There was a bowl from dogs and women, and in an instant the canines were upon the cat. The women screamed and laughed excitedly; the dogs growled and tore the kitten to shreds. Servants rushed into the room and separated the tangled mass of dogflesh before they got at one another's throats. That dinner was a great social event.

FEMININE "FILLIPS."

It was followed by others, more or less fantastic. One night continue ad infinitum reciting such incidents.

These entertainments set a made pace; other hostesses tried to equal them. Entertainment was no longer the hospitable and good-natured, free and easy caring for guests; it was a dizzy, nerve-racking, brain-burning, heart-aching contest for

novelty, excitement, and features surpassing each other in spectacular display. Money was spent in enormous sums; the cost of single entertainments mounted to 15,000 dollars and 20,000 dollars.

Meanwhile the "older" set looked on with disfavour. While the "younger set" whirled in the summer-mad dance, they stood aloof. They bided their time. They recalled the old days—the Newport of 20 years ago—when birth was the *sine qua non*, when the bizarre was regarded as vulgar, and entertainments took a quiet tone.

Naturally the rise of the tide of fortune had swept away the old traditions of Newport; money-mad captains of industry from Wall-street went to the Rhode Island resort, where they just as madly spent money; there was the rise of the nouveau riche, the sellers of railroads and patent pills, the vendors of stocks and tobaccos—all of them opulent, fairly bristling with prosperity.

"RACE-SUICIDE" DINNER.

One matron scored a rip-roaring success by a "race suicide" luncheon given at the Ladies' Bridge Club, when huge wax dolls were placed between each couple, which, when pressed, said "Papa" and "Mamma." Another thrill was aroused when a matron invited to dinner all the separated husbands and wives of her set. Imagine their surprise when looking across the table, Mrs So-and-So saw her husband, or several husbands, of old. A weeping Cupid of Trianon in *l'es* wept in the centre of the table, and after the dinner a toast was drunk to those who were "lovers once, friends now."



MRS. WILLIAM ASTOR, OF NEW YORK.

To whom unquestionable but unofficial precedence has for years been given by New York Society. Mrs. Astor, the cables inform us, has resigned her position as leader, being unable to stand the follies of vulgar rich or gaucheries, and lack of culture, which make a certain set "impossible" from a society point of view.