

Why Not Lady Grooms?

ALL ABOUT SOCIETY LATEST IDEA.

A well-known riding master with whom the writer was speaking the other day told him that the fashion of lady grooms was started last year by an American lady who brought over with her a number of women grooms, and that it has quite caught on this season.

The idea is such a recent one that it has not yet become the custom for ladies to engage these attendants permanently, though it is not unlikely that this will follow; but the daughters of a riding-master, if they are smart, well-set girls, who can manage a horse, and are equal to an emergency, are often asked to accompany a lady on her rides, receiving very good remuneration for their services.

There are several reasons why women should be glad to dispense with the man-groom except on occasions of special ceremony. He in no way adds to the pleasure of the ride, and even upper class people sometimes feel it a nuisance to be continually under the eye of these solemn, sphinx-like individuals who are a perpetual reminder that they must almost be on their best behaviour. With a woman attendant it is different. If she is a skilled rider she can make herself as useful as a man.

Besides the want of someone to talk to—a truly feminine craving—a lady groom would be invaluable in the case of sudden illness. On hot days, when one has been exerting oneself too much, there is always the possibility of an attack of faintness, and if such should occur, who so helpless as a man at the critical moment?

A woman could also carry in her bag smelling-salts, eau-de-Cologne, needles, and thread, for use in case of a torn skirt, and many other trifles which a lady would not care to be troubled with.

If the idea develops, it will provide a new opening for women, especially for a class which finds far too few avenues for employment at present.

There are many girls brought up in the country who are thoroughly accomplished horsewomen, the daughters of farmers and small landowners who, owing to the present agricultural stagnation, are obliged to earn their own living. Many of these become governesses, but the pay is most unremunerative, and the employment uncertain, unless they are able to pass stiff examinations and show a goodly array of certificates.

The ordinary companion is, if anything, in a worse position, and her country training, her ability, to ride and drive, is seldom of any advantage to her. If, however, this could be turned to account in the way suggested she would be able to earn a great deal more money, and, what is of quite as much

importance, she would feel that it was not everyone who could take her place.

It goes without saying that the lady-groom would not be called upon to attend to the horses in any way. She would, if necessary, teach her employer to ride, aid her to mount and dismount, accompany her to render assistance in case of the horse turning restive, or of an accident occurring.

When She is an Old Maid.

That imaginary line which is supposed to mark the division between girlhood and the "old maid" is being set farther and farther back, until there have arisen grave doubts if it will not disappear entirely. Once 25 was the limit to girlhood. After that she was either a matron or an old maid. Now it is 30. And it means little or nothing.

Once it was supposed to mean that, being passed, it became a bar to matrimony. No novelist chose a heroine over 25. Of course he intended to marry his heroine to his hero, and marriage after 25 on the woman's part was something to be avoided as something which did not find a counterpart in real life.

It will be observed that among the fiction heroines of the present day will be found a number who have gone to the thirty-year limit. It was recognised long ago that a woman did not lose her attractions because she had gone over this imaginary line, but the setting back of the line waited long after the recognition.

Balzac has laid down the theory that a woman at thirty is at her most fascinating age. She probably will not have so long a train of admirers. She may have fewer partners at a ball. Once in a while a young man may make her feel like a grandmother by coming to her for advice in his own love affairs.

The setting back of the imaginary line has followed the practice of late marriage. If a young man married at the age of 21 and a young woman at the age of 18, then the young woman of 25 would have been waiting seven years, and probably it would be justifiable to consider that she would not accept a husband.

But when marriage is the last thing of which a girl of 18 and a young man of 21 are thinking, and when 30 on the part of the man and 25 for the woman is closer to the average age at which matrimony is undertaken, then necessarily the age limit goes back. It should be set back still further, to 35, if it should be considered as existing at all.

The young and inexperienced girl is not the attraction of the hour; it is claimed by experts in these matters. She

waits until she reaches a more mature and more experienced age, and meanwhile the centre of the stage is held by her older sister. In fact, the older sister is sometimes credited with a feeling of pity for the young girl who comes into the world in muslin and blue ribbons with so much to learn.

One of these older sisters expresses this pity as follows:

"One thing I am thankful for, and that is that I am no longer a bread and butter miss.

"There is no period of her existence, I think, wherein woman appears to less advantage. It is almost impossible for a girl of 18 not to be conscious, and she has so little knowledge of the world that she is unable to hide her awkwardness.

"It is amusing, even pathetic, to see the efforts of the poor thing to appear natural and at her ease and to say her little say without betraying that she has prepared it beforehand."

The "Smart Set's" Latest Craze.

THE "EYE-GLASS" GIRL.

The single eye-glass is no longer the sign of the Englishman of fashion, for the belles of New York and Chicago Society have claimed it for their own. It is the latest craze of the American smart girl, and it has "caught on." At all the representative New York jewellers' monacles are now on sale, varying in price from £20 to about eight shillings (two

dollars). The glasses are selling well, and the purchasers are women—principally young women of fashion, whose fads and fancies are as eccentric as they are short-lived.

Generally speaking, the monacle is not stuck in her eye, but is held there by a dainty little handle, doing away with the unsightly contraction of muscles. Many styles have a delicate little handle of filigree gold-studded with jewels, and sometimes tiny jewels set in the rim which frames the glass.

The round glass which you stick in the eye and hold there by contracting the muscles is the monacle favoured by some women. But it takes a daring woman to use it, not only because it excites considerable attention, but because it is a detriment rather than an aid to beauty. The New York Society belle may look interesting when she gazes at you through her monacle, but she doesn't look any the lovelier because she has this odd little glass fixed in her eye. Hence the preference for the monacle with the handle. She wishes to be original, but not for a minute does she wish to look less charming.

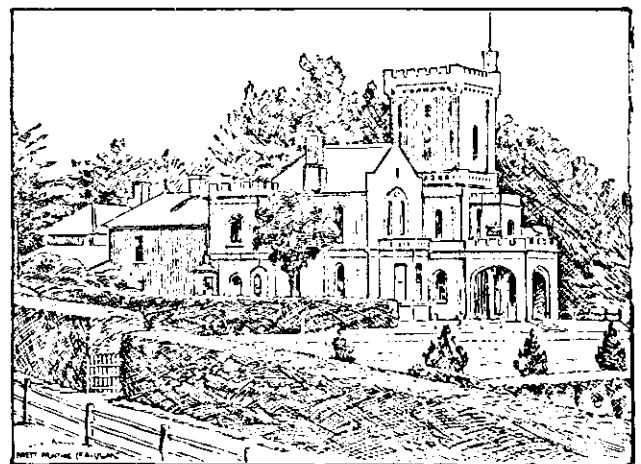
The English eye-glass has always dangled from an inconspicuous fine black silk cord. But the monacles now in favour with the American girl must be worn with a monacle chain.

There is really no end to the variety of these chains. Some of black teak-wood are extremely long, so long that they are tied in a loose knot at the corset size. Then there are much more delicate and costly chains of small jewels framed in rims of gold, and also of crystals and jewels.

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