

It is stated that Kubelik, the celebrated violinist, is about to start a music-printing enterprise in Prague.

If you are looking for an acceptable gift for a friend, try the Christmas Number of the "Sporting and Dramatic Review." The price is only 1s. 6d., and you get your money four-fold in the profusion of entrancing photographs depicting scenes of picturesque interest all over New Zealand, Australia and the Islands.

An English writer comments on the popularity of the name Mary, and says: "I don't suppose since the beginning of Christendom there were ever so many Marys as to-day." Probably the popular Queen and Princess who bear the name have something to do with the fashion. In New Zealand more "odd" names seem to be favoured, and on reading lists of school prizes, and so on, names are seen that have either been coined by the parents to suit occasions, or must have been dug out of remote classics or from folk-stories of foreign countries. "Melva" is a name coined, because the father's first name was Melville, and it was feminised to suit a baby girl. Another parent called the child "Stace" to embody the initials of five persons who all expected to have the little one named after them individually. Yet another quaint happening was when there were two affectionate grandmothers and one was Grace and the other Jane. The first daughter to arrive was called Grace Jane, and when number two appeared she was named Jane Grace; so presumably both the old ladies were happy in having had first consideration.

"One cannot live in London without observing the extraordinary prevalence of childish superstitions about numbers, days of the week, and so forth," said Dean Inge, preaching at St. Paul's Cathedral, London. "God is not the kind of person," he added, "to send some dire calamity for dining one of 13, or for walking under a ladder, or for getting married in May." A newspaperman who went in search of the superstitious found them in abundance. Women appear to be rather more superstitious than men, and an experienced family man gave the following two as the favourite feminine beliefs: Boots must never on any account be placed upon a table; a woman must always pour out the tea if a man (even her husband) is present. "Don't ask me the reasons," he begged. "They are among the things which every woman, but no man, knows." A girl, who is one of a big family, when first questioned, said that "sensible girls have no superstitions." Afterwards, however, she confessed that no woman dare pass a pin on the ground without picking it up, lest bad luck come upon her. She must be very careful to pick it up head first. The fashionable fetish among men is undoubtedly the one about not lighting three cigarettes from one match. A majority of males are superstitious in regard to this, though no two agree as to the origin of the belief. Some say it started at the time of the match shortage, others that it began during the Boer War—when to keep a match burning long enough to light three cigarettes gave a sniper a chance—and others that the Canadians brought it over during the Great War, the superstition being rife among lumbermen.

MODERN CROQUET.

A SCIENTIFIC GAME.

(By "Excelite.")

A generation back croquet was considered a game for curates, grandmas and flappers. To-day the game has improved out of all knowledge, and with the exception of golf is perhaps the most scientific and least "flukey" of all outdoor games, always provided its votaries really know the game and are capable of bringing into the game the brains and generalship it requires. Without the aid of these, truthness of eye, accuracy of touch and judgment of strength will not come into their own. Combine all these quali-

ties and the game becomes engrossing to either play or look at.

We have been fortunate in New Zealand in having two of the foremost exponents of the modern game residing here, at least for a time. I refer to Mr. Keith Izard and Dr. Whitaker, both ex-champions of England and among the foremost players. The latter, owing to his professional duties, has not devoted a great deal of time to the game since taking up his residence in Palmerston North, but has, even without practice, retained sufficient form to secure the honour of New Zealand champion. He has also done a lot towards putting croquet on a proper footing, the recently-formed N.Z. Croquet Council, with which most of the local associations are now affiliated, owing its birth to his initiative. In addition to this, Dr. Whitaker has, purely as a labour of love and without any prospective profit to himself, written a book under the style of "Standard Croquet," which should go a long way towards improving the game in Australasia. With the aid of the diagrams and explanations so lucidly set forth in this book, any beginner, with the faculty of understanding, as well as the mediocre, or the fairly expert players, should be able to greatly improve their game.

The more good players we have, the more players will take up croquet and the more the general standard of play will be raised.

In Auckland itself very few men have taken up the game, which is to be regretted. In other parts, especially in Canterbury, it has numerous votaries among the men, and perhaps as a consequence more of the younger generation and the opposite sex are attracted and find the game an interesting variation from tennis.

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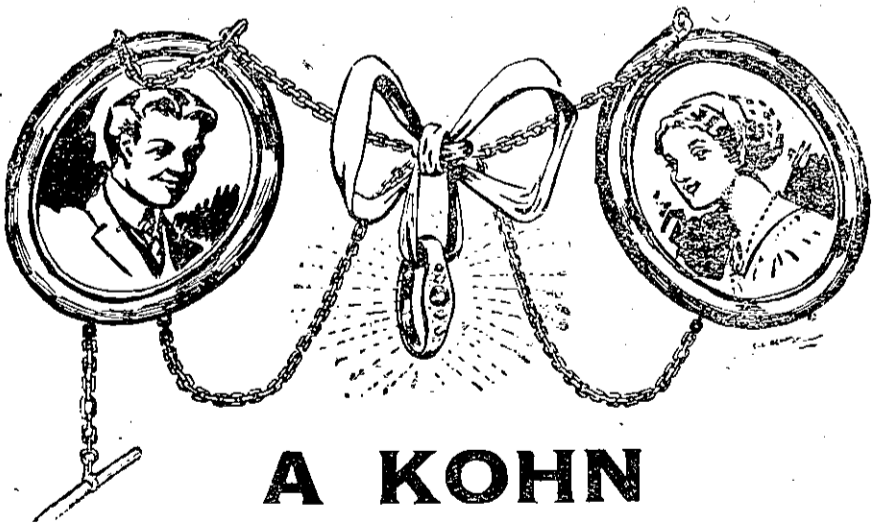
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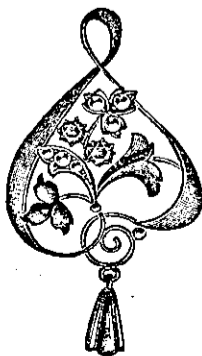
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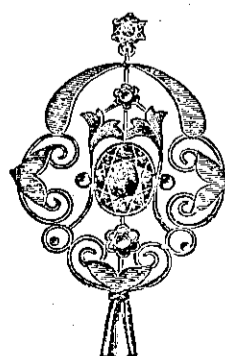
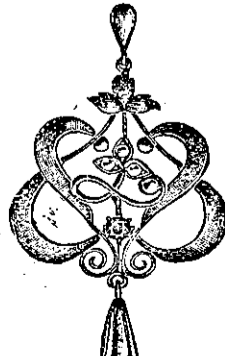
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