WOMAN'S DOMAIN.

HOUSE PARTY ROBES.

Picturesque Costumes Designed for Autumn Functions.

NEW YORK, Aug. 22.—House parties are now in order, and longer sojournings out of town require suitable toggery; consequently house gowns in delicate wools are beginning to bloom out in beautiful autumn tints, trimmings being in the main fichus or fronts in soft mulls, or else dainty bib collars, in many fantastic shapes, of crisp muslin and batiste, edged with lace.

This brings about a happy and seasonable result, without looking as if things were rushed too much, and the fact that their garnitures are extremely becoming will doubtless make them very popular.

The fichu may be confined solely to house and evening gowns, but it will be here, in frilled white mull and in silk muslin, edged with fine laces; and the next thing one can reasonably expect will be a sudden diminishing in the size of sleeves, and strong evening textures will be exclusively splendid silks and satins. Skirts, also, will be plain, or else decorated with quaint muslin flounces, and the shaping of party bodices will lean toward the pointed corsage, with round neck, only moderately decollete, worn by Marie Antoinette and the ladies of her court.

FOR TALL AND STOUT WOMEN.

Among the revived fancies for early autumn costuming is evinced a strong liking for the long 1830 shoulder seam. One should be tall, however, to carry it off, as otherwise the effect will be grotesque, and for the same reason short figures are advised to eschew the "court" coats that are threatening us with the next influx of Paris modes. These coats, it is said, will be made in cut velvets, satins and brocades in gay hues, and, with a black or colored skirt, will be much affected for evening wear.

For short figures bodices will remain the round affairs they have been for some time, though drawn down trimmer in front and, if at all decollete, less so than formerly.

A becoming evening cut for the revealing of round, pretty throats, at present much in favor, is the little square here pictured in the double column design.

The costume which is most suited to a demoiselle, or else very juvenile matron, is in pale green, pink or pineapple silk, with sleeves and belt of Trianon pink velvet.

The plain skirt hangs loosely over a green taffeta petticoat, whose shimmering surface adds luster to the almost transparent pineapple silk, and the bodice is charmingly

ORGANDY OVER SILK.

draped with French lace, headed by bands in old pink galoon and green pailettes. This toilet has just been designed as a little dance and dinner frock for a house party wardrobe.

COSTUME FOR A YOUNG MATRON.

The second toilet in this picture is a modified expression of Marie Antoinettism, and is suited to both maid and matron.

The material is old yellow brocade, that adorable shade of yellow that makes a brunette fair, and the fichu is white silk mull, edged with a very rare and beautiful quality of French blonde lace. The costume is in two pieces, a plain and very voluminous skirt, which is made stiff only by the superb quality of the silk, the lining of white taffeta and outside being sewed up together.

The upper portion is a short, plain body with full looped sleeves and surplice front.

Artificial flowers may with taste decorate the front of the fichu-draped corsage and the V at the back, as they are again in vogue and combine daintily with the fichu; with the yellow brocade red or yellow roses or white gardeniers are in best keeping. If an ornament is worn it should be in the nature of an old jeweled brooch or locket, fastened to a black velvet band that fits the bare throat snugly.

A HARLEQUINE FROCK.

An evening toilet, not illustrated, demonstrated the fancy for combining odd colors and textures that has characterized the summer.

It also gave valuable hints for the using up of odd lengths of handsome stuff, as the twisting of several old evening gowns into one, and yet it was a late and very precious French importation. The skirt, which was flared broadly at the bottom and very narrow at the top, was of pale pink Pompadour brocade, with a delicate blue ribbon design garlanding loosely all over and looping about the stems of the boquets. The bodice was of lifted white mousseline de soie drawn trimly down at the waist and cut square at the neck, back and front; the top of the sleeves, which were balloon shaped and of blue satin, alone kept it on the shoulders.

For the rest, there were breast knots of red roses mixed with loops of black velvet, and a belt and long streamers of the same, the belt girdled low in front to give the waist a long effect.

This gown had a great deal of distinction, in spite of its harlequine tendencies.

Black ribbon velvet, it may be useful to

BLOUSE OF LIBERTY SATIN WITH HUNGARIAN EMBROIDERY.

know here, is much used on light evening and house gowns. It gives a strong balance to pale tones, and is almost universally becoming.

On the organdie and Swiss gowns, always charming for the evening, and that are now being made with high silk linings into home dinner frocks for autumn and winter, it is especially effective. The velvet is used as a belt and sash and in corsage knots, or else it runs over the bodice in braces from the belt, or is laid in long lines down the skirt, the ends perhaps fastened down with great "spider" bows. Where the neck is the little square already talked of, the velvet is extremely effective when outlining it completely.

BLACK, WHITE AND YELLOW.

One charming little Swiss gown lately seen had this velvet decoration put on in a unique fashion. The material was dotted, white dots on a pale yellow ground, and the model was a low "baby" body and a gored skirt, with one tiny ruffle, which was edged each side with narrow white lace and gathered through the middle over a cord. The velvet ribbon used was no wider than the tiny baby ribbon, and hung in loose lengthwise strips over the body, back and front, with a blouse effect. The short balloon sleeves were covered in the same way, and from under the belt, which was also black velvet in a wider width, the narrow strips ran down the skirt into a short apron-like V that covered only the front

SILK TEA GOWN.

and hips. At the back this narrowed up to a bare two inches; but seen at a little distance with the light skirt, it looked exactly as if a tailed body were being worn.

House gowns for afternoon wear are being much made in striped and figured challies and in plain and dotted barege. Trimmings of these lean also much toward black velvet, though colored silk and satin is also used for revers and big collars, which are frequently made further dressy with a deep edging of lace.

A stylish and becoming toilet for afternoon tea, and here illustrated, is of white barege, pointed with black. The model is on the tea gown order, which continues to be much in favor, and the big collar and sash are of mauve silk; wide French lace edges the former and the bottoms of the bishop sleeves becomingly.

The blouse pictured, and which is suited to either morning or afternoon wear, will be found most becoming to a very slight and very juvenile maiden. It has the little square neck so charming for fresh, round throats, and is of Liberty satin in tapestry blue, with black and waite Hungarian embroidery.

NINA FITCH.

ENGAGEMENT ETIQUET.

The Various Duties Exacted of a Betrothed Couple.

There is no condition of social life at once so delightful and trying to the average young woman as the period of engagement to the man of her choice. She is an object of consuming interest to her family, a lion in a small way among her friends, the guest of honor at many entertainments, and to the envious spinster her days seem a round of tender little attentions and cosy tete-a-tetes, congratulatory smiles, costly gifts and charming clothes.

But to the conscientious girl herself, who wishes to start out fair and square in her married life, leaving no enemies or ill-feeling behind her, there is a course of detailed and exacting etiquet to follow that would puzzle a court diplomat. In England a young woman's parents relieve her of many of the most trying duties, decide upon the length of the engagement, order its published and private announcement, receive a large share of the good wishes, and conduct all the particulars of the wedding.

In America, however, where a daughter assumes far more authority in all affairs of her own, these matters are left chiefly to her care, and except in the southern states, or for special reasons, it is no longer considered in good taste to keep an engagement secret. Not less than six weeks should elapse between the announcement and wedding day, and however sure, or the contrary, a girl may feel of her lover's reception by her parents, she must insist on her lover offering his claims and cause to their consideration the day after she has signified her approval of his suit. He should make a formal call on both her mother and father, and in case of their absence or residence in another part of the country, she and her affianced ought to write them at once.

FAMILY ETIQUET.

When the proposed alliance is then made public to the two families most keenly interested, she has a right to expect almost immediate civilities from her new relatives to be. Unless her fiance's parents are very old, invalided or in too deep mourning, she can expect calls at once, to be followed by hospitalities, that she must needs immediately return.

In case of age or illness in her lover's family she calls first on those who are incapacitated and her next duty is personally to write to all her friends and connections, if only a note, making known her matrimonial intentions. To every letter, note and telegram of good wishes she should make prompt answers, and now in her book of social tactics Mrs. Grundy has written it that a chaperon is a necessary adjunct to every affianced couple.

An engaged girl may receive her future husband alone in her mother's drawing room, though it is requisite at some time during this daily visit after a considerate cough outside the portiers or preliminary rattling of a door knob, for the maternal dignity to hover a moment on the threshold. Out of consideration to her lover's feeling she does not receive her young men friends save on her mother's days at home, she accepts no invitations, except to gatherings of her own sex, where he is not included and devotes every attention to his family with peculiar courtesies to his parents.

It is considered most important that together they attend church at least once every Sunday, they may drive, walk and bicycle alone, but must take an obliging younger member of the family along to the theater, opera and concerts. It is permitted them to go to a dinner party with only her maid's company, yet to a ball an older woman relative is the proper companion and any demonstrations of affection in public are utterly discountenanced.

WHEN IN SOCIETY.

Discussion has raged high at times on the question of just what part an engaged pair have a right to take in the frivolities of society and of late it has been satisfactorily decided that when attending a dancing party the happy couple should take a few turns together in a round dance, share in one or more square dances, with partners of their own choosing, and then take their leave. As to the exchange of gifts between these young people a new and very sensible decision has been reached respecting their proper bestowal and value.

The engagement ring may be as splendid or simple an affair as the man's taste and pocket can afford, while in exchange may be given a thin disk of ivory on which is painted a fair face, shut into a red leather, heart-shaped case. This case is just large enough to fit neatly into an inside waistcoat pocket and closes with a lock, of which only the owner knows the spring. During the weeks of engagement an abundance of flowers, fruit, books, bon bons and odds and ends of bric-a-brac are tokens proper to lay on the shrine of love, but not until the week before the wedding ought jewels to be given, for beyond her engagement ring none of them can be used by the recipient and in case of any rupture of the agreement the return of such gifts is an awkward duty.

A PRETTY GERMAN CUSTOM.

One of the interesting functions of the up-to-date betrothal is, however, the shopping expedition, where the two mothers and fathers-in-law to be, with their respective son and daughter, go out on an appointed morning and bring home a broom, a carving knife and fork, a salt cellar, a bible, a brass door knocker, a candle stick and a pair of bellows. This is a revival of an old German custom of presenting a young pair with what were considered the seven emblems of those virtues that go to make up a perfect household. The shopping party is concluded by a luncheon to the united families, and nowadays, instead of spreading forth the wedding gifts for inspection the day of the ceremony, the bride's mother, two days beforehand, issues cards for an informal evening reception, where the presents are exhibited in the drawing room. As every one of these are received, thanks should be immediately rendered in the bride's handwriting and at once, and recently has been issued the edict that good form commands the bride to address all her own wedding invitations and personally superintend their posting, sealing the envelope flaps with white wax, showing the impress of her initials alone, wreathed with tiny orange blossoms. This seal is a little souvenir that falls to the share of her mother, just as her white silk wedding stockings are given to her youngest sister and from her private purse she is expected to send a fee to the cook who bakes her wedding cake.

BRAWNY BEAUTY.

Knotty Muscles Distinguish the Athletic Girl of the Period.

The dreadful fate that lately overtook a handsome eastern figurante engaged to lead a corps of stately ballet girls in a comic opera, now in process of rehearsal, has spread astonishment and consternation among women bicyclers who have heard the story.

In the early spring the young person in question procured a bicycle, joined a club and soon learned to use her wheel with delightful proficiency. She made records for the mere fun of breaking them, boasted of always pedalling up the steepest hills, grew as slender and vigorous as a young Diana, but the first morning of rehearsal was relegated from her position as the leader of the dancers, to a back row in a crowd of village maidens, who come on only in the last act.

The bicycle had played her a trick, for, where otherwise faultless outlines had made her figure admired and renowned, even under the regulation swathings of close silk fleshings, now appeared a series of curious looking humps and lumps, bulging ridges and knots, with billowy risings and sinkings, culculated to outrage any one's sense of statuesque symmetry. It was easy enough to guess the cause of this unusual development.

SHOULD EXERCISE CAUTION.

On looking into a book on anatomy, the afflicted girl found every hydra-headed monster of a muscle dignified by a resounding Latin name. The sole cure a physician could suggest was more temperate use of the wheel and time, while the only consolation the ex-dancer finds in her trouble is the thought that ninety-nine out of 100 sister bicyclists must be similarly supplied with sinewy ornamentation.

As a matter of fact, her suspicions have been confirmed by inquiry, and confessions among the enthusiastic women bicyclists of her acquaintance, to the number of fifty

DEVELOPMENT OF ATHLETIC ARMS AND LEGS.

individuals or more, whose experience, very likely, extends to the entire feminine element on wheels, with an aggregation of increased muscular girth and strength, quite contradicting the ancient insinuation as to who is the weaker sex.

However, to the wheel is not wholly due this growing evolution of the feminine form divine from the old standards of Greek beauty into hard amazonian brawniness. Given a wheel, a few golf sticks and a tennis racquet, the modern woman makes all haste with her physical transformation merely by the simple process of bringing her muscles, naturally no stouter than good pack thread and buried deep in soft, tender flesh up to the surface and rounded to the girth of her thumb.

WORKING THE CHANGE.

It is done by the easiest means, that of mounting a slender and possibly weak young girl on a bicycle. The first few times around the ring she almost drops from the machine with exhaustion, but in a week she needs no longer instructions or commiseration.

If she is an enthusiastic rider, as most women are, within a few months her knees will be increased a half inch in circumference, both just above and below the joints, and the tendons that run along the back of the leg, from knee to ankle, begin to swell and harden. They hurt a bit at first, from the unusual exercise, but after the soreness is over they enlarge and tighten with amazing rapidity, till bye and bye the flesh disappears, giving place to a great network of sinews, hard as leather, wrapped tight about the bone and throwing out around the knees and ankles an arrangement of loops, gnarled lumps and hard knobs that utterly destroy what the artists call "line." Now, the bigger and harder those sinews grow the more ease and pleasure does the rider find in using her wheel, and if she is a woman with a genuine love of outdoor exercise to balance her development she will naturally turn to golf sticks and swing a racquet. The system is unsurpassed for the purpose of acquiring health and endurance, but is the death blow to beauty.

The golfer in a decollete evening gown displays shoulders rugged with brawn where dimples used to play hide and seek, a pair of wrists the average glove refuses to button over, a forearm thin and hard and a upper-arm a blacksmith might envy. Even the hands, from gripping and swinging those heavy iron-tipped clubs, grow a half-inch broader than nature first shaped them, horny of palm, too, showing fingers that unconsciously catch and shake with a clasp of steel; this is the very hand and arm that perhaps a year since was as pink, rounded and taper as a baby's, boasting the easy fit of a five and three-quarter glove. It is no exaggeration of facts to say that in the past four years our American women, with the aid more especially of the wheel, golf clubs and a bit of gymnasium work, have entirely reorganized their standards of physical development.

THE PSYCHE TYPE A BACK NUMBER.

The girl today who boasts a round, slim waist, sloping shoulders, neat small wrists and ankles with arms and nether limbs, moulded on the flowing curves of a Greek psyche, is no longer approved by her sisters nor content with her appearance. She loses little time reducing herself to plain bone and muscle, and for the last year the records of measurements in the women's gymnasiums show it is as easy and as universal to add three inches to a girl's waist measure in one season of work as it used to be possible to reduce the girth by the aid of the bed post and stout silk corset laces.

But just in proportion as our women have gained in bone and brawn and good health, too, it must be admitted the loss in grace has been very great. Rosier cheeks and brighter eyes steady exercise bring, but it is growing more and more difficult every day, say the artists, to find proper models, and for ballet masters to draw suitable recruits to their service. Unless the standards of feminine beauty are readjusted to meet the ideas of the modern woman the feminine element bids fair to disappear wholly from the painter's canvas and vanish in an ornamental capacity from the stage, for it is with her strong right arm the damsel of the future evidently means to rule.

Glad She Lives in America.

"I'm glad I live in America," said a pretty young woman, talking to a Philadelphia Inquirer reporter, "because I am never afraid to travel by myself. Last year I was in London and went around with a friend who is married, and we were spoken to in an insulting manner every time we went out. Paris was still worse. People speak of the French politeness but it is only a veneer. The men would get in front of us on every street corner and smirk and ogle and chatter like monkeys. I'm glad I didn't understand anything they said. There are no men like the American men, and I never was so fully able to appreciate it as I am, now I have seen those of other nations in their own lands. Besides, the girls are treated better here than anywhere else on earth, and I don't want to cross the ocean any more."

Fashion Notes.

Redingote costumes will prevail during the autumn and winter.

Alpaca and mohair fabrics are being made into very smart toilets both for house and street wear.

Some of the newest capes are finished with a sailor collar ending in pointed revers down the front.

Tweeds in varied qualities and new stylish color schemes will occupy a prominent place among autumn dress goods.

Evening silks for next season have exquisitely tinted Dresden patterns on cream, mauve, blue, ecru and other light colored grounds.

Jewelry is very much worn in Paris at the moment. Dog collars of rhinestone are, with fancy pins, again the whim of the moment.

Medium and lightweight crepons, plain and with colored stripes and dots, will remain in fashionable favor, but they will not reach the universal popularity they enjoyed this summer.

Many of the pale hued taffeta silks for the autumn have the backgrounds covered with pompadour designs in chine effects. These make lovely "Colonial" dresses for debutantes, lace-trimmed, and buttoned up the back.

A novelty in Parrisian millinery is the use of pressed maiden-hair fern. It is very natural looking, for it is the actual leaf and is so well pressed that it lasts for some time. Wings on sailor hats are now arranged standing up, surrounded by finely plaited chiffon.

It is rumored that Parisians are likely to make considerable change in the size of sleeves by the time that heavy wraps become necessary. For the autumn season, however, sleeves will retain their very full appearance, most of the fulness showing about the elbows, and more or less flat in effect on the top of the arm.

There will be a great vogue the coming fall and winter seasons for repped silks, corded silk and wool, and all wool materials. The silks have ordinary, medium and extra heavy reps, these appearing in black and also a wide range of colors. These will be used for entire gowns, and also in combination with other rich fabrics.

And now comes another skirt binding which its patentee claims is the very best yet. This new binding is called "serpentine velveteen," and consists of a very narrow coil of wire run through the lower edge of the binding, this to slightly distend the lower edge of the gown in graceful curves without the addition of any other stiffening whatever, or at least this is what the inventor claims.

Marie Antoinette fichus will rival the small circle capes and pelerines worn as toy wraps with autumn costumes. Some of the fichus are made of plain black or green velvet, others of chameleon velvet lined with a bright color, and again are seen those of corded silk trimmed at all the edges with knife pleated frills of the silk. The fichu has a rounded cape effect in the back, with very long ends that are crossed in front.

The 1830 redingotes are very much up-to-date garments, made of taffeta silk, either plain or changeable, with a long fluted skirt, as long or nearly so as the dress skirt. They are made mostly in colors, the most fashionable color at present being red, verdigris, a brownish green and violet blue. They are unlined and finished with broad collars and revers, tailor stitched, or else lined with a contrasting color. Alpaca is used in redingotes for morning wear or for travel.

Feminine Notes.

Marburg university has admitted two women, one an Austrian and one a Scotchwoman, to its courses.

Miss Helen Hay, a daughter of Colonel John Hay, the famous author of "Little Breeches," has a humorous poem in the August St. Nicholas, which she calls "The Merry Mongoose." It is her first contribution to the magazine and gives evidence of her father's wit.

Mrs. Katharine Lente Stevenson, corresponding secretary of the National Women's Christian Temperance union, has made a trip of 3,500 miles in the southern states, attending forty-seven meetings, giving thirty addresses and organizing six Women's Christian Temperance unions. All this in thirty-eight days.

Musical authorities are prophesying another "Swedish Nightingale" in Froken Klara Wallentin, who came to this country three or four years ago from Halmstad, Sweden. She has been studying diligently ever since, and her admirers are declaring that she is worthy to wear the cloak of Jenny Lind or Christine Nilsson.

An English woman, Mrs. Plumtree, has for some time past been engaged in compiling a dictionary for the blind in Braille type, which she has just completed. It has occupied her nearly two and a half years, working at it four, five and even six hours a day. It fills 3,200 pages, contains about 26,000 words and will make fifteen or sixteen large volumes.

Mary Anderson, "Our Mary,"—she will always be that to Americans—has written a volume of reminiscences of her dramatic career, and not the least startling declaration that she makes in the opening chapter is "the day upon which I voluntarily turned my back upon the life of the stage was the happiest that I had until then seen."

The Home for the Blind at Maspeth has been opened under most favorable circumstances. This institution for blind women is the result of the energy of Catharine C. McDonald of Brooklyn, who was educated at the Perkins Institute for the Blind at South Boston. A monthly magazine called Our Home Record has been started, edited by Augusta Lewis.

Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, that graceful and gracious "new" woman, is famous wherever the club woman exists for the way in which she presides at meetings. She is presiding at present over the Town and Country club at Newport, and is doing it with the same skill and grace she displays when she is chairman of the meetings of the Boston Woman's club.

The Big Dragoon.

A Revolutionary Adventure.

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When the British army under Sir Henry Clinton held possession of New York during the war of the revolution, the adjacent region was overrun by the red coat soldiery.

The bold riders of the British army plundered the inhabitants without mercy, and more than once got the worst of it for their depredations.

For thirty miles along the Hudson lay a narrow strip of territory which was called the neutral ground. As it was situated between the two armies, it naturally became the great foraging district for lawless bands, and its people were all the time in a state of terror.

The patriots of that region dreaded the very sight of a red coat, for they knew that they were to be plundered and subjected to a good deal of annoyance during the occupancy of New York city by the valiant Sir Henry.

Among the British troopers of the period was one very tall in stature, and a giant among his fellow comrades. He was noted for his courage, and oftentimes would set out on a little raid of his own, in which incursions he was generally successful.

Big Gideon, as this son of Anak was called, looked imposing in a dragoon's uniform, and he took care to have it very clean and neat whenever he rode out.

A rumor that Big Gideon was to make a raid was always sufficient to cause the inhabitants of the neutral ground to lock their coops and put their pies and pastry in the cellar, for he was apt to dismount before a door and call for his dinner.

It was always "dinner" with the big dragoon.

ALAN'S VISITOR.

One afternoon in early autumn a boy of 16, standing in the shade of a tree which grew near a farmhouse, saw a single horseman turn a bend in the country road not far off.

The sunlight fell upon the scarlet uniform of a king's man, and the following moment the youth had withdrawn into the house and hurriedly locked the cellar and the pantry.

Intuition told him who the trooper was as he was entirely alone, though it was likely that others were not far off, perhaps among the hills near the river.

The large black horse that carried the dragoon came cantering down the road, and in a few seconds the soldier had drawn rein in front of the old-fashioned farmhouse.

"Halloo, there!" he shouted in a gruff voice, as he threw one leg over the saddle and looked toward the house. "Big Gideon wants his dinner."

It happened that the boy who had seen him was the only occupant of the house that afternoon. His mother had taken the only horse and ridden to his aunt's, a few miles down the river, and the father was in the American army.

Alan Shepley was alone, the only one to oppose the dreaded dragoon of the king's regulars.

As the soldier ceased speaking, the door upon the porch opened and the boy came out.

"Here, my little rat," cried Gideon, at sight of him, "don't you know I'm hungry? So tell your mother to set out one of her famous plum pies. I've heard of them, you see. And I'll come in and try it."

"Mother is not at home, sir," answered the lad, whose face showed that he was cool and determined. "Besides, I don't think there's a plum pie in the house."

"I'll see about that. A farm house without a plum pie this time of the year is a rarity."

FORCE VERSUS COURAGE.

The dragoon sprang to the ground and led his horse to the post in front of the farm house, his sabre rattling at his heels and his eyes agleam with eagerness. Alan Shepley met him on the porch and looked up with amazement at the man who towered above him like a giant.

There was a three-legged stool on the porch, and upon this the big red coat sat, while he waved his hand toward the open door of the main house.

"Now, fetch it out, lad," said he. "I'll eat it in my lap. Don't be slow about it either. I've heard about those wonderous pies your mother bakes, and as I've never sampled one, you'll excuse me if I show a little eagerness."

"But I've told you, sir, that we have no plum pies in the house. There's the cellar and yonder the pantry, and if you wish—"

"I can search the house?" broke in big Gideon.

"That is just what you may do. The cellar is the handiest, you see, as the door is right on the porch here. The pantry is in the room yonder."

For a moment the giant red coat did not know what to say to the boy's frankness, but he evidently thought he was being trifled with, for he suddenly rose and laid his hand threateningly on the hilt of the saber.

"Mind you, siree," said he, "if you make game of Big Gideon he'll cut you down without mercy. So look out, lad!"

Alan did not quaver at this, but replied with the same firmness he had already displayed.

"Come, I know where your father is. He's with Washington, the rebel, whom the king will have the pleasure of hanging one of these days."

Alan Shepley's cheeks flushed.

"When he hangs Washington, your king will be much older than he is now," he exclaimed. "You red coats cannot crush out liberty in North America."

"What's that?" cried Big Gideon. "This is treason, boy, and I'm a king's man."

"King's man or not, sir, I am going to tell you what I think, sir."

For a moment it looked as if Alan Shepley would pay dearly for his display of patriotism, but the big dragoon suddenly thought of his wants.

"This pie, the pie!" he exclaimed. "We'll compromise on that if it is well done, ha, ha."

He crossed his legs and waited, but the boy did not move.

"Oh, you gave me leave to search the house, did you?" he said. "I'll take you at your word. The pantry first. Come along."

He sent an eager, suspicious glance down the road, for the predatory bands of "Skinner's," patriot marauders, were apt to come in sight, but seeing nothing, he left the stool and entered the house.

Alan stepped forward and opened the pantry.

"There is the little store house," he remarked looking at the dragoon.

HUNTING THE PIE.

It did not take long for the big fellow to thrust his head into the pantry, he could do little more, owing to his great bulk, and Alan watched him as he searched it, running his huge hands along the shelves to the irreparable damage of some precious glassware, which was shivered on the floor.

"Now, the cellar!" cried Big Gideon, turning from the pantry. "I don't like preserves, else I would have stripped your pantry. This way, lad."

He tramped back to the porch, looking once more up and down the country road, and halting near the cellar door he bade the boy unlock it.

This door was secured by an old-fashioned padlock, into which fitted a key of formidable size, and the door itself was made of the strongest of oak planks.

Alan stooped over the lock and opened it, then, rising, with the key in his hands, he looked at the soldier as he raised the door with the greatest ease.

The cellar looked dark enough, and Big Gideon called for a candle, which the boy brought, handing it to him. In another moment the king's regular began to descend, and in a little while Alan heard him rumaging in the cellar.

Well did Alan Shepley know that no plum pie would reward the redcoat's search, and for a few seconds he stood and listened to his movements, now and then catching glimpses of the flickering light, which the gloved hand carried.

At last he heard the plunderer in the furthermost corner of the cellar and then he sprang to the door. Catching it firmly he slammed it down, and the moment it struck he was upon it and the padlock snapped in its old place.

THE KING'S MAN TRAPPED.

Big Gideon was a prisoner in the cellar.

For half a minute Alan Shepley seemed overcome with what he had done, but he knew that the dragoon could not get out without assistance, no matter how big and strong he was.

Presently he heard something strike the under side of the cellar door.

"Here, you young rebel, let me out!" cried a half-smothered voice.

Alan did not speak.

"I'll see that it gets pretty warm for you. I'm one of the king's regulars and you dare not hold me prisoner like this."

"Dare not, sir?" answered the boy, as he went toward the door and leaned over it. "Don't you know that you have no right to plunder a defenseless farm house. We are rebels, but we have rights, and I intend to show you, Big Gideon, that a king's regular can't have his own way all the time."

With this the boy turned and went toward the dragoon's horse at the post. The animal, seeing that it was not his master, was shy at first, but Alan being agile and quick vaulted upon his back and was off.

The boy knew where was to be found a little camp of the "Skinners," who would like nothing better than to take care of Big Gideon, and he plied the spur like a jockey.

IN THE HANDS OF THE PATRIOTS.

Twenty minutes later there was a cloud of dust on the country road, and out of it near the Shepley farm house came a dozen grotesque looking fellows, who were headed by the boy.

All these drew rein in front of the house, and Alan pointed with triumph to the cellar.

"He's there yet," he exclaimed. "See, the

HE LED HIS HORSE TO THE POST IN FRONT OF THE HOUSE.

lock is not broken and the door has not been forced."

The American riders sprang to the ground and surrounded the cellar door, while Alan called to the man he had left inside.

"Of course, I'm here yet," growled Big Gideon. "How can one break through a stone wall or force a door of oak? I'm no Samson, lad, but I am strong enough to show you what it is to shut up the king's regulars in this manner."

Alan opened the cellar and the flushed face of the prisoner came in sight.

But midway on the steps he halted, as he looked up into the amused faces of the free lances of the neutral ground.

"What's this?" he cried, turning white-faced upon Alan Shepley. "What have you done, little rebel?"

"I've only gone and fetched some of my friends to see you. You will have to talk with them, Master Gideon."

The big fellow fumed and growled over the situation, but he had to submit. He knew that in a short time he would be a prisoner of war in the American camp, and in a twinkling he was disarmed and mounted on his own horse, but as a captive.

"Just wait till I come back," he exclaimed, turning and shaking his fists at Alan Shepley, who stood on the porch with a smile of keen triumph on his ruddy face. "One of these days you will learn what it is to entrap one of the king's regulars."

The boy's smile broadened.

"Goodby, Master Gideon," he said. "The next time you come we'll try and have plum pie."

The big dragoon muttered something about the future vengeance, then the Skinner captain gave the command to march, and away they went with their unexpected prisoner.

The king's regular never was able to carry out his threat, for before he was exchanged the fortunes of war turned in favor of the colonists, and the neutral ground was safe from the plundering hands of the enemy.

Alan Shepley became the hero of the district, for his exploit, which clung to him as long as he lived, and he never grew tired of telling to his grandchildren how he caught Big Gideon of King George's army, and turned him over to the Americans.

And Big Gideon I suppose never forgot how he failed to get a plum pie feast at the patriot farm house.

GEORGE BANCROFT.

The Debt of Gratitude American Boys Owe the Great Historian.

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Seventy years ago the Round Hill school at Northampton, Mass., was perhaps the most famous school in New England. The founder, George Bancroft, had modelled it upon a celebrated school in Switzerland in the hope that it would prove a starting point for a broader system of elementary training than had yet existed in America, and everything was done to develop the physical and moral, as well as the mental, traits of the pupils.

The school was beautifully situated, commanding a superb view, and had besides the school rooms, a gymnasium and play rooms that were kept warm in cold weather and furnished with tools for carpentering. Here the boys could make bows and arrows, squirrel traps, kites, sleds and whatever their

GEORGE BANCROFT.

fancy dictated. There were large play grounds on the slopes of the hill and here was the village of "Cronyville," every house, hut or shanty in which had been built and was owned by the boys themselves. There were many varieties of architecture in "Cronyville," but each dwelling had at least a large chimney, and a small store room. After hours each shanty was its owner's castle where entertainments were held, and the guests feasted with roasted corn, nuts or apples which the entire company had helped to prepare on the hearth of the wide chimney. Some times the feast was enlivened by recitations, poems and addresses by the crack pupils, among whom was at one time the future historian, John Motley, and very often the festivities would end in one of those earnest talks that boys fall into sometimes when tired out with play. Bancroft's assistant and partner in the school was Dr. Cogswell, who superintended the course of study which was carried out by the best teachers procurable in America, England and France.

The school became so popular that the best families in all parts of the country sent their boys there, but financially it was not a success, and after seven years' trial Bancroft was forced to abandon it, though his partner struggled on a few years longer.

A PRECOCIOUS GENIUS.

As a boy Bancroft had studied at the Exeter academy; finishing his course there he entered Harvard at 13, was graduated in his 17th year and a year later was sent abroad by Harvard to fit himself for a tutorship in the university. During his four years' absence he studied modern and oriental languages and literatures, Greek philosophy and antiquities and some natural history. But he made history the special object of study, and bent all his energies to acquiring as wide a knowledge as possible of the sources and materials that made up the records of modern history.

During his vacations he visited the different countries of Europe, traveling in regular student fashion. He would rise at dawn, breakfast by candle-light, and then fill the morning with visits to picture galleries, cathedrals and all the wonders of foreign towns; after a light luncheon he would start again on his sightseeing, or visit some person of note, meeting during his travels almost every distinguished man in Europe. At night, if not too tired, he would study politics, languages and history, and when he returned to America he had made such good use of his time that he was equipped for almost any position in its intellectual life.

His obligations to Harvard led him to accept a tutorship there, which, however, proved so distasteful to him that he only held it one year. It was after this experience that he founded a naval school.

To Bancroft the rise and establishment of the United States as a great nation presented itself as one of the most brilliant passages of the world's history, and no labor seemed tiresome which should fittingly chronicle that event.

FOUNDING A NAVAL SCHOOL.

Besides his literary requirements, Bancroft possessed eminent qualities for practical life. He was successively governor of Massachusetts, secretary of the navy, and for a time acting secretary of war. He served his country as minister to Great Britain during an important period, and in every action of his political life showed a talent for practical affairs. It was while he was secretary of the navy that he founded the United States Naval academy at Annapolis. Previous to this there was no good system by which the boys who desired to enter the navy could receive instruction in any other branch than that of practical seamanship.

In the old navy the middies were taught while afloat by the chaplains, who gave them lessons in odd hours in writing, arithmetic and navigation. If the pupils were idle they were reported to the captain, whose discipline was far from gentle. A boy eager to learn could pick up a great deal by asking questions and noticing what was going on about him, and sometimes the officers would volunteer their help in a difficult subject. Later on, each ship had one regular school master, who made the voyage with the ship, twenty middies being appointed to each man-of-war. This system was superseded by schools, which were established at the different navy yards, and which the boys attended in the intervals of sea duty. But, as in the case of the other methods, the instruction was desultory, and the pupils had not the advantage of education enjoyed by the cadets of the West Point Military academy, though it was evident the necessity for it was the same.

Bancroft brought to the office of secretary of the navy his old love for broad principles of education, and eight months after he took office the United States Naval academy was in full operation, with a corps of instructors of the first merit, with a complement of pupils that spoke well for the national interest in the cause. At first the course was for five years, the first and last of which only were spent at the academy and the rest at sea; but later on this was modified to its present form. Bancroft's generous policy placed the new institution upon a firm basis, and it became at once a vital force in the life of the United States navy.

LITERARY AND DIPLOMATIC CAREER.

Bancroft began his history while still at Round Hill, and published the first volume in 1834. Previous to beginning his history he had published a small volume of verse; a Latin reader and a book on Greek politics for the use of the Round Hill school, and various translations and miscellaneous writings in the different periodicals of the day. But none of these things had seemed serious work to him, and he brought to his history a mind fresh to literary labor and a fund of general information that was invaluable.

While he was minister to Great Britain he visited the state archives of England, France and Germany for additional historical material. From this time on he devoted himself as exclusively to the work as the various diplomatic positions that he successively filled would allow. He was made minister to Prussia, and afterward minister to Germany, when that country took its place as a united nation. Some of the most important treaties between the United States and foreign powers were effected during Bancroft's diplomatic career.

His official administration in his own country was also far-reaching. Besides the establishment of the naval academy, it was he who, acting as secretary of war, pro tem., gave the famous order for General Taylor to move forward to the western boundary of Texas, which had been annexed to the United States after seceding from Mexico and setting up as a republic. General Taylor's appearance on the borders was the signal to Mexico that the United States intended to defend the new territory, and eventually led to the war with Mexico, by which the United States received the territory of New Mexico and California.

Bancroft's diplomatic career extended over many years, he being 74 when, at his own request, the government recalled him from the court of Berlin when he was serving as minister.

He died in 1891 in his 92d year. The most famous of his own countrymen united in tributes to his memory, and the sovereigns of Europe sent wreaths to place upon his coffin. As historian, diplomatist and private citizen he had honored his country as few are privileged to do.

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