

port of a sale of historical relics. The canny Scots, it would seem, are still careful of their "saxpences," and care little for association. A portion of Queen Elizabeth's gown, a bed-hanging of Prince Charles Edward's, and a few additional articles, only fetched four guineas. An antique chest that belonged to Mary Queen of Scots, was sold for three pounds ten. A mixed lot which fetched nine pounds comprised the following: The key of Lochleven Castle, that Mary threw into the loch when she made her escape in 1508; a bowl that was her property; a miniature of her; some letters of Sir William Wallace; a piece of the coffin of Robert Bruce, and some of the cloth of gold that was wrapped around his body. Very cheap, all this, was it not? But the lowest item of all was the skull of Lord Darnley, that sold for four shillings and sixpence. If he was worth little when living, death has certainly not enhanced his value. People say that these curious relics would have been sold to better advantage in London; but the fact is that we are nothing just now if not modern.

Is it true that one of our loveliest American widows is about to marry an actor, and that the heated dispute between the lucky man and a popular Marquis (which was the talk of the clubs for days) arose on account of a breach of confidence on the part of the happy man? I do not believe all the story. The actor's conceit is well known, and the lady, so far, keeps her own counsel. But the peer breathes "blood and thunder."

The death of Christopher Sykes removes from London society one of its best known figures. He was long the intimate friend, or rather the toady and at the same time the butt of royalty. As he was of almost colossal build, though rather loose jointed, no one who knew him by sight alone would have ever suspected him of being the "old woman" he was. There was something about his air, something in his voice and his pose, that when you sat and talked to him you would not have been in the least surprised had he pulled out of his pocket a piece of tatting and set to work on an antimacassar. From him was drawn Mr. Brancepeth in Lothair. "To dine with Mr. Brancepeth," wrote Disraeli in 1870, "was a social incident that was mentioned. Royalty had consecrated his banquets and a youth of note was scarcely a graduate of society who had not been his guest." The great object of Christopher Syke's life was to be on terms of intimacy with illustrious persons. Although he came from sturdy Cumberland stock he was the quintessence of a snob. He would submit to gibes and sneers from anyone whom he considered of sufficient importance. He had no innate love for sport, but when past middle age he risked his neck in the hunting field so that he might keep up with the Prince of Wales and his friends. And when the late Harry Tyrwhitt-Wilson, the Prince's equerry, held "high jinks" in his bijou house in Victoria Square, Christopher Sykes would try hard to look as if he enjoyed the society of the ingenus of the Gaiety and other such theatres, though he would far rather have been gossiping with an ancient duchess over her tea table.

Of very different calibre is his elder brother, Sir Tatton; very eccentric, but essentially a sportsman. My readers will recall the recent sensational trials in London when he insisted that the signatures, purporting to be his, to checks presented by his wife were forgeries. Lady Sykes, who made herself

very notorious in this country when visiting her brother's sister-in-law, Mrs. Ogden Mills, is a 'vert to the Catholic faith. Sir Tatton is a shining light among the ritualists of the Established Church of England. Their only child, a son, belongs to his mother's creed. Sir Tatton has lately built in the park of his Yorkshire seat a church almost big enough to be a cathedral, much to the disgust of his wife. As she has been heard to say to him, "Of what use is it wasting your money on such a pile? The moment you die (Lady Sykes is many years Sir Tatton's junior) I shall turn every Protestant servant out of the house and fill it with Catholics. As soon as their leases fall in, every Protestant farmer on the estate shall go." I hear that the son, now about twenty years old, does not inherit his father's sporting tastes and would prefer life of an oriental pasha to that of an English squire.

Fashions of the Day.

Everyone ought to go to the portrait show.

The first afternoon was really great fun; it was quite what the society reporter delights in describing as a "social function."

There were so many people one knew, out of frames as well as in them, that it was difficult to see everybody. I am afraid I paid rather more attention to the people out of frames. I want to go again and see the framed people all by themselves.

From the casual glance that I did give the pictures it was easy to see that art is a much more important factor in this country today than it was even so short a time as two years ago, when the previous portrait show was held.

The family portrait with us is growing to be as much of a necessary institution as it is with our English cousins, and a very good thing it is. An annual portrait show would help us artistically a vast deal, and I hope the coffers of the Orthopaedic hospital will be filled to such an extent that they will be ready to repeat the exhibition. Eventually, perhaps, some portraits of the grandparents, the great grandparents and the great great grandparents of society might be unearthed and placed on exhibition. I think in many cases most interesting comparisons might be made.

Speaking of old portraits, I was very much interested in the various ways the women portrayed by Romney, Sir Joshua Reynolds and Gainsborough wore their hair. I also noticed that most of these women had small eyes set rather closely together, and the noses were inclined to hook. These two characteristics were so prevalent indeed, that one began to wonder how to account for the general family resemblance of all these women. I really think that it must have been that the small eyes and hooked noses were the correct type of beauty in those days, and the hair was arranged to accentuate them in every face.

I think if I were going to have a portrait painted—and I really think I must—what to be painted in would puzzle me a good deal. Modern clothes that are in vogue for the moment are so tremendous queer when their moment is over; and yet to be painted in a costume like that in Gerome's portrait of Mrs. Truax does not quite appeal to me either. Unquestionably, however, this picture is the gem of the collection; but, as a family portrait, it does not seem quite the thing.

Anderson's portrait of Mrs. Arthur Kemp is exceedingly happy in its pose and execution, and is, altogether, as chic as the original. The absolutely plain, straight lines in Mrs. Kemp's black satin gown will hold their own for a long time to come.

I liked De Gandara's portrait of Mrs. Burke Roche, too. The greenish-gray

tone that is given the portrait is certainly weird, and, as one woman said, it does make Mrs. Roche look as though she had died and had been dug up again. But I do not object to it; I think it is rather fascinating. The pose is most artistic. Mrs. Roche is dressed in white satin which the queer tone of the portrait turns to a greenish grey. It, like Mrs. Kemp's, is severely plain and sleeveless.

Really, I think the most important point to be considered in dressing for a portrait is sleeves. I do not know anything that can make or mar a woman's appearance as much as sleeves, and sleeves that are out of fashion nearly always border on the grotesque, however smart they may have been when in the fashion. As portraits are supposed to endure forever, and "sleeves will come and sleeves will go" in the interim, I shall follow Mrs. Kemp's and Mrs. Burke Roche's lead and not wear any when I sit for my portrait.

Mrs. Clarence Mackay's portrait by Chartran is one of the largest at the exhibition. There is too much background to it: too much dress, too many flowers—too much of a muchness altogether to please me.

As a correct type of a portrait to add to one's collection of family reflections on canvas I think I should select the Duchesse de Morny's. It really looks like the family portrait, and not a valentine, like some of them do.

I was surprised to see how plainly the women out of frames were gowned that afternoon. It seemed to me to be a splendid opportunity for the patronesses of the show—and their name is legion—to lend brilliancy to the occasion by appearing in their best bibs and tuckers. For some reason they did not. I have never seen that set of women together before when they have been so simply and plainly dressed.

It has often occurred to me this winter that the smart set were frowning upon the old-fashioned idea of "dressing up" for certain occasions. At most of the teas and things the plainest dressed women were the highest on the social ladder, and one could pick out the "dressy person" invariably as belonging to the "climbers." As I said last week, this is true, too, of the clothes worn at the assembly again. The best dressed women wore very plain gowns and very elaborate jewels.

There is one fashion that is gaining ultra smart set that I used to; that is the chain of diamonds in

the morning over cloth gowns; but lots of the women are doing it.

I do feel sorry for the woman with superfluous hips just now. It is not stylish to possess hips, and if you have them your skirt will not help you to conceal the unhappy fact. Skirts have grown so tight and skimpy they have reached the limit, and a reaction toward expansion will have to come or woman will become immovable. My latest cloth skirt is just home and it is built on the lines of "standing room only," and, if sit I must, I have to be most careful in the disposal of my local propellers of motion, for fear it will "bag at the knees."

Apropos of the reign of simplicity, the all-over black spangled gown has been condemned by Dame Fashion, as I was sure it would be from the very first. A gown of glittering black spangles is very smart when it is distinctive and one of a kind; but, when one goes to the Waldorf or any public place where well-dressed crowds congregate and see the coming in in shoes, one is not surprised that their death warrant has been issued.

A smart black gown, however, is an absolute necessity in every woman's wardrobe.

The jet bead has risen, phoenix like, from the ashes of the spangle. The smartest black gown I have seen this season is entirely built of a mesh work of fine black jet beads. It is poisonous in its effect, and its undertone is of black net laid in wide, flat side plaits. It is the only one of its kind, so I am told, and, if it cost some fabulous sum, one is pretty sure not to see shoes like it right away.—Lady Modish.

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Going to swear off drinking and smoking this year?

I suppose so, I generally do.



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