

THE APRIL TEA-TABLE.

ANCESTORS AND HERALDRY.

Mrs. Grundy forgives much if the aspirants for her favor are able to trace their descent from a long line of ancestors. These are days when the defunct members of one's family have taken on a degree of importance little dreamed of a few years ago. Old daguerreotypes are brought to light from among grandmother's possessions, and these prim little pictures are given places of honor on the walls. To make a collection of family pictures, either miniatures or daguerreotypes, is quite the thing nowadays, and when secured they occupy a cabinet especially prepared for them. A cabinet recently seen contained more than a hundred of these prim likenesses, each mutely testifying that the original was indeed "having a picture taken." There was a picture of the mother in her wedding-gown, a garment wonderfully made, with bishop sleeves, low-cut bodice and the neck defined by handsome lace. A bride of half a century ago sat stiffly in a velvet chair colored a most gorgeous blue—the chair, not the bride. The gentlemen of the collection wore high stocks, figured waistcoats and ruffled shirts.

With this sudden appreciation of ancestors it is small wonder that heraldry also receives an amount of attention heretofore unknown. Family history is looked into, genealogical charts are made out, and if a coat-of-arms is unearthed in the searching, so much the better. It is a costly proceeding for my lady to have a search made for the possible armorial insignia of her family, but there are heraldic bureaux in some of the large jewelry shops for the use of their patrons at less cost. Then there are professional genealogists who make a business of hunting up arms. Cynics shake their heads and declare that Americans are republicans in name only, and that the love of royalty or anything akin to it is still in their hearts. The craze for heraldry would seem to give color to this reproach, but such abstract considerations are not likely to abate the pride of one who can lay just claim to a coat of arms. When she has discovered her armorial bearings, a seal engraver will make for her from it an artistic crest to be embossed on her stationery, silver, etc. The rules governing the use of crests are most rigid. An unmarried woman must use the crest of her father's house, but when she becomes Mrs. Smith she renounces her father's crest, whether Mr. Smith has one or not. The coat-of-arms follows the male line, and may thus be used by a son's wife when his sister is forced to give it up as a result of her marriage. To the lover of pretty belongings the family crest is a source of much satisfaction, combining as it does the romance of the past with the enrichment of the present.

MANNERS VS. MANNER.

One of the most charming possessions of the well-bred woman is her elegant manner. She who has acquired the letter of refined social intercourse but has not yet caught its spirit, fails lamentably. She may long since have learned to take her soup from the side of the spoon, but she is still lacking in the *savoir faire* that makes really well bred people delightful. Mrs. Nouveau Riche may have manners in plenty, but may also be without "manner" in the elegant acceptance of the word. She may be beautifully and artistically clad, but if she fusses with her ribbons or gloves and repeatedly adjusts portions of her attire, she shows that she is not at home in her fine raiment. The elegant woman has mental as well as physical poise and is equal to emergencies. She is mistress of any situation, keeping her temper though the heavens seem about to fall in kitchen or clubroom. She has also learned the power of speech. Nature may have been sparing in external favors, but if she has a cultivated voice and talks well, her attractiveness passes beyond mere looks.

The woman who desires to be attractive knows that a voice loud and shrill spoils the most beautiful of her sex. And not alone her voice, but also her manner of speech, has weight in determining her dainty elegance. The nervous woman who rattles on, regardless of what she says or how she says it, has not learned how much her manner of speech condemns her. Not all women have the low, sweet voice about which the poets sing, but a voice however harsh may be improved. A masculine, heavy voice from the pretty lips of a woman shocks

the ears of her listeners. To be graciously polite, to be polished and to have ease of manner in speech and action is to be the well-bred, elegant woman of to-day. To acquire this is not easy, but to forget one's-self and to observe wherein lies the charm of Mrs. Savoir Faire is going far toward learning the secret.

GOOD FORM IN LETTER WRITING.

A letter is a small matter, but nothing can more distinctly testify that the writer is a woman who knows what is good form in both social and business relations. The technique of a woman's letters either commends or condemns her. To sign a letter "Mrs. Sam. Brown," is to admit in black and white that the writer does not know that to all the world in her letters she is always "Ellen Brown." When necessary, she may afterwards add that her address is "Mrs. Samuel Brown." In writing a letter to any but an intimate friend, she who knows social usage addresses a stranger as

Mr. Samuel Brown,
Dear Sir:

If she is at all acquainted with Mr. Brown, she addresses him as

My dear Mr. Brown:

this form of endearment being but a conventional politeness. A letter that is commenced with the name alone is brusque and inelegant. She who seems to know what is epistolary good form in social life often fails sadly when inditing a business letter. If writing to an editor, she very likely addresses him as "Dear Editor" when she should say:

The Editor of ———,
Dear Sir:

A clergyman is to be addressed thus:

The Rev. John Brewster,
Dear Sir:

while a business form is,

Messrs. Brown Brothers,
Gentlemen:

In addressing tradespeople the third person should invariably be used, as:

Mrs. Brown, of 800 Fifth Avenue, complains that goods bought on Friday are not yet delivered, etc.

To end a letter gracefully shows a happy faculty. Writing to a friend of her own sex a lady will sign herself "Sincerely and affectionately yours," "Devotedly yours," "Yours lovingly" or, with a less degree of intimacy, "Cordially yours." In a note of thanks for some favor or kindness on the part of a formal acquaintance a graceful subscription is, "With best wishes for you, believe me cordially yours." The elegant letter is never crowded. These are days when paper is cheap and a two-cent stamp carries much of it. Large writing is the fashion and the up-to-date letter writer will not continue her missive to the last possible inch of space before she signs her name. The date and address are properly placed last and the numerals are not expressed in figures but written out in full. As it is a mark of courtesy to take time, if obliged to write hurriedly, the writer should not make a bad matter worse by any apology for its defects. To cross the writing in a letter is to invite the suspicion that sufficient paper is not at hand. It is most inelegant to adopt this device to economize space. Of all mistakes, do not make the especially offensive one of sending perfumed paper, though the number of cultured women who do thus sin against good taste is surprisingly large.

A NEW USE FOR THE LOVING CUP.

One of the latest flower holders for the center of the table is the loving cup, with its regulation three handles. It is a low, dumpy affair and can be had in clear white glass, cut glass and in green and gold. Still another novel addition to the china closet is a set of the new chocolate cups. These are higher than those formerly in use and are seen in green and gold, delicately