



FASHIONS IN FURS FOR 1890-91.

### Kleptomania.

Probably no uncivilized man believes in kleptomania. Even among civilized peoples many persons smile incredulously when they are told of the acts of kleptomaniacs. They know better: the kleptomaniac is a thief with a fine name; and the name has been invented for the purpose of screening the higher classes who indulge in low vices. But a case has been brought to light recently which ought to convince the most sceptical. A man was arrested a short time ago in the act of stealing a pocket handkerchief from a lady in a Vienna suburb. In his sane days he had been a prosperous banker; but a mania for cambric pocket handkerchiefs seized upon him and proved his ruin. It was his habit to accost ladies in the street and offer to buy their pocket handkerchiefs. If they refused he used to get

angry, and to offer higher and higher prices until a bargain was struck. Many ladies,—could they have been ladies?—traded upon his madness, until at last all his money was spent, and he became a bankrupt. But bankruptcy did not cure his mania, for, no longer having money to pay for pocket handkerchiefs, he took to stealing them, and was sent to prison. For five years nothing was heard of his depredations, and it was believed that his imprisonment had cured him. But a short time ago he was discovered at his old tricks. When arrested he had fifteen cambric handkerchiefs in his possession, all of which he confessed to having stolen within an hour. In his bedroom 434 cambric pocket handkerchiefs were found, and it is believed that many more were concealed in hiding-places which he refused to reveal. He had never been known to steal anything else; nor does he seem to have made any use of the cambric handkerchiefs. The tribunal before which he

appeared very properly sent him to a madhouse and not to prison. This case is absolutely convincing; and probably no one who reads it will in future doubt the fact of kleptomania. But that it should ever have been doubted is surprising and not very creditable. The world has been familiar with the delusions of the lunatic from its earliest ages; and many of those delusions have been infinitely more curious and difficult of belief than that a man should have too keen a desire to possess himself of other people's property. It is probable, in fact, that the commonest of all forms of madness is that induced by excessive greed; and the only reason why so few persons are charged with theft or kleptomania is that their greed is tempered and kept in check by cunning. Whenever a case happens where the motive for theft is exceedingly small or entirely wanting the person who possesses himself of what is not his own should be suspected of kleptomania.—Hospital.