

Cosy Corner Chats
With Our Girls.

(This department is edited by Cousin Ruth who will be glad to hear from our girl readers. Address all letters, suggestions, comments, questions to "Cousin Ruth," Ladies Pictorial Weekly, etc.)



THE shop for which you enquire, Country Squirrel, is an immense jewellery shop in New York. Tiffany's by name. What a little questioner you are. I am going to give your questions to the correspondence column. Look at the head of it for the way to address queries. Why don't you write to the other Muskoka cousin. I will be glad to forward you letters. I like the little verses very much. Will you sometime send me

some more. What a brilliant maid you are, Bertie, and what a fighting surname you have chosen "Light Brigade." When I saw it, I was all in a tremble, for fear some of the boy cousins had dared, but pretty soon I saw it was only a merry girl. So you are too big to sit on my lap. Well, I don't know about that. And you want some of the girls to write to you. Now, girls, here is Bertie Light Brigade, who says she is always in love with nice girls, which of you will take up her glove? She says "I can tell them all about the queer things I have seen, for there are not many parts of the world that I have not lived in." And then she calmly mentions Hong Kong and a few other places just round the corner! Some of you will have a rich treat in letters from Cousin Bertie. If she only tells you something she told me, I know you will roar with laughter. I do, every time I think of her. I think New York Cora, and Maria would enjoy her. It is great fun to be postman for the cousins, when they first start. Oh! By the way, that reminds me I have a letter waiting to be forwarded to French Maria, from Susie, if Maria will please send me her address. Don't delay, Maria, ma belle! Bertie sent her address, and any cousin who wants to write to her can have it, if they send word.

WELCOME to our Corner Nathalie. Some of your questions must go to the correspondence column. I have not room here. About the opera or play of Faust. If you felt as you say, I don't think it was best for you to go. I felt just the same. It was perfectly dreadful to know that poor Marguerite was going to forget herself so, and I am sure every good woman feels hurt and pitiful at the thought. My love to you, dear.

A VERY young cousin is Edna, who comes first this evening. "Twelve, past," isn't awfully ancient, is it girls, but she writes a nice little note, and part of it is kindly answered by the correspondence editor. Why Edna, you and the "Lake shore Lass," live quite near each other. You may know each other, and not know it! How comical! Write again, my dear little girl and I shall be pleased.

WELL, Molly, my country cousin, as you call yourself. I am glad you asked me about the dress. Grey would be very fashionable, or black and white, or black and grey. Suppose for the warm days a soft grey would be best. Girls, Molly has no mother, and she feels as if she would like to write to some of the cousins and make friends. She chooses Marion from Prince Edward Island. So if that nice girl cares to bestow one of her splendid letters on Molly, now is the time to write it. Hurry up Marion. Molly says "I would think a great deal of a letter from Marion." Well, Molly dear, there is one from Marion in the little gold hand, the very next to yours, how funny! but it is to Cousin Ruth, that cormorant who gobbles so many letters! and Marion was so dreadfully busy when she wrote it, that she made it on the skimpy side. Bad girl! Well, anyway, Molly, this letter I am writing is for you, and the sooner you write again, the sooner you'll get another. Do you want to know how to make your suit?

"OH! Marion, something came of it! I have a newspaper to send you about it, if I don't forget. Those girls got five hundred dollars, that day, all your doing, my dear! And so, you had not time to write me about that pleasant evening. Well, you see it is too late. Idalia had had her prize for a fortnight now, and I hope she liked it. Let my letter go, if you are too busy, and send me one for our motherless Molly.

HERE is Cousin Desire, who says her life is made up of desires and longings. Well, that is natural enough, dear. We are always wanting things, love, pleasure, pretties, aren't we? and if shortcomings made us look up and on, as you truly say, to completeness, it is all right! About the engagement ring, it makes no difference. Boaz and I were engaged two years, and I had no ring all the time. I did have a fine gold chain and a tiny locket, which I wore under my dress, but I don't think we were any faster engaged after I got the ring than before. Some ladies won't wear one. Some men never think of getting one. It is however usually provided by the gentleman, as a sort of "marked sold" precaution, just as soon as possible after one says "Yes" to him. Sometimes a young man

does not so provide it, either because he cannot afford it or because he wants the lady to have a chance of choosing it herself. I don't think he should neglect it unless for some good reason, though. In regard to the question about the chess men, they are placed as follows: Castle, knight, bishop, etc. The knight between the bishop and the castle.

"PRAY give my love to all the cousins, tell them to think of their French cousin, now and then." Of course, girls, that's Maria she's always loving people, she can't help it, and she hangs out little coaxing signs to make us stop and love her back. I don't know, Maria, just what you ask about the competitions, but I am sure the rules are put for each competition, as plain as can be, you just look them up and see. I hope Gilberte will write. I am getting quite a little *clique* down your way. My love to the dear mother. You know you have got all I can give you, already—you little coaxing creature. Good-bye, dear girls.

Cousin Ruth

Home Culture.

VIOLIN PLAYING

This is surely a century of fads. Among the most noticeable of these fads, the violin playing fad for girls has impressed me most during the past winter. Ten or twelve years ago I remember one or two Canadian girls who had enjoyed the advantages of an English education, returned to their native land accomplished fiddlers and created quite a sensation at various entertainments. One fair maiden, who has since married into a distinguished English family, I recall distinctly, gracefully wielding her tuneful bow, in many a Toronto drawing-room. Fiddling was there accepted and admired as an exceptional wit. Now it is adopted and approved, as a natural accomplishment. The study of the violin, however, by women is not so much of an innovation as is generally supposed. As far back as the early part of the eighteenth century a good many lady violinists existed. Principal among these were: Maddelena Sirmen, a very popular pupil of Tartini; Regina Schlick, a particular friend of Mozart; Louise Gautherot, who made a successful appearance in London in the year 1790; Mrs Sarah Ottey who frequently performed in the metropolis in the years 1722; also the Misses Collins who with their father Isaac, the English Paganini as he was called, and their brothers Viotti and George, made several successful tours at the end of the first half of the present century and were well known as the Collins family.

The suitability of the instrument for women is an open question. The most common objection to its use is that it is ungraceful, which depends a good deal upon the woman and her method of treatment. Until recently, the violin has been practically introduced to all but professional performers. It dates its origin to the middle of the sixteenth century when it took its permanent shape and dimensions at the hands of Gasparo di Salo of Bresica. From that time it has not been improved. We may safely assert now that it never will be and cannot be changed for the better. Says a writer in the May Cosmopolitan. "It stands nearer to perfection than any other musical instrument. While many have been modified and modernized and many abandoned and forgotten, the violin alone has held its own from generation to generation unaltered and unalterable, and why for such a length of time it was regarded as only fit for men, passes comprehension."

THE FIRST STEP.

Materfamilias having made up her mind that her eldest daughter who has shown some taste for music, is not absolutely devoid of ear must follow the fashion, begins to inquire among her friends and acquaintances for a teacher. Now this mistress of the house as well as her lord and master are most likely in blissful ignorance of even the rudiments of fiddling, let me therefore advise them to be careful in their selection of their instructor. How are they to know who is a good or a bad teacher? Exactly, let them therefore seek out some one who is a competent judge and get that individual to recommend a master or a mistress. It is not necessarily the most expensive lessons which are the most profitable. At the same time it is not always advisable to choose the cheapest teacher.

This knotty point settled and the professional secured, the next step is to buy a violin. Most parents labor under the delusion that anything will do for a beginner. This is the greatest mistake it is possible to make. A new violin is one of the most difficult instruments to play on, it is full of peculiarities of speech which the unfortunate beginner will soon find out to her cost. Moreover the novice will soon be discouraged by the recurrence of the "wolf" which is a name given to a note or a series of notes present in every violin, which may be either of incorrect intonation or which come out with a rattle or a squeash. New violins in the hands of beginners are full of these lupine eccentricities. The best plan for one commencing the study of the violin is rather to buy an instrument which has already been played upon, or else to buy a new violin and to affect a temporary exchange with a friend who is more experienced, for an instrument that has been used and whose weakness is known.

SELECTION OF THE FIDDLE.

The best guides in the choice of an instrument are to discard at once and forever, the fine toned violin labeled Stradwarines, and the neatly varnished black case, and to select a fiddle with a wide grain on the top or belly—that is, the side where the finger-board and bridge are. A clear bright varnish will look well, but is no criterion. See also that the finger-board is not too wide for your hand, and that the instrument is not too heavy or too thin, or, on the other hand, too thick to be grasped firmly with comfort by the chin. The great secret about a fiddle is not its crystal varnish or

its symmetrical curves, but its suitability to yourself and adaptability to your requirements. The fiddle having been bought the next business is to purchase some strings for it. Thin strings are best for beginners, as they answer more readily to the pressure of the bow than thick ones. Some people will tell you they use nothing but Padua strings, or Italian strings, or German strings, or Anglo-Roman strings. The best advice on the subject is that which tells you to buy what strings you can afford. Never use such strings. True they last well, but as they are rarely used except as E or first strings, the airidity of tone is quite out of proportion to the gut strings. Use strings made of silk if you like, but if you do, the A, D and G must be made of the same materials. In buying gut strings be careful to match their proportions well as to size. The D will be the thickest and the others should graduate in thinness. The C or wire-covered string should be a little thicker or about the same size as the A. Thick G strings are not good, as they are apt to be muffled in the upper register of their scale, and to be also somewhat slow of speech. A tin box should be obtained with a tray, in which to keep gut strings, the bottom being kept for wire-covered strings, which should always be kept apart. It is well to keep the gut strings in a piece of oiled paper or silk. Whether you have a string box or not this should always be done.

You will, of course, require a bow. This should be of light weight and evenly balanced. Beware of gorgeously bone-fitted and tin-mounted bows. Having selected one screw it up to a tight tension and hold it on a level with the eye, in such a manner as to have the length of the stick straight before you. If the line of the stick is not absolutely correct, or if the head is twisted to one side or the other, reject it at once without hesitation. In stringing the violin, if the D and A strings be in three lengths, as they usually are, cut them off so that no ends project from the scroll. Do not cut the E string. This is the most liable to break of all the strings and does most frequently break. If an E string that has been cut into one length breaks in the middle or near the tail piece, the other half is wasted. Therefore it would appear in all reason to be best to put the whole string on, so that it is ready to hand in case of a breakage. The fiddle should always be put away strung up to pitch. If this is not done, and the strings loosened there can be no possibility of their retaining their tension and remaining in tune.

THE RIGHT METHOD.

The style taught in England sufficiently to warrant the title of the English or Carrodus school of playing, instructs the pupil to hold the instrument in such a manner that the scroll is in a direct line as far as possible with the centre of the body. By this means the hand has to go through a greater amount of muscular exertion at the outset, but the extra effort is ultimately attended with the best results. The bow arm gains better control of the instrument and a good round tone is produced without any unnecessary effort. The right elbow cannot possibly be held up in the air, an advantage which should induce every lady performer to hold her fiddle in this excellent manner. The style of sustaining the instrument in front of the player is familiar to all. The real means by which the violin is held are not as generally supposed, the thumb and first finger of the left hand. These merely act as a support to the instrument, while it is substantially held by the chin pressing as it were upon the collar bone. As a method of practice no better advice can be offered than that given by Guisepe Tartini to his pupil Maddalena Sirmen, "to exercise herself in a swell upon an open string, beginning pianissimo and increasing by slow degrees to fortissimo as practice for the bow." In order to acquire light pulsation and play of wrist whence velocity in bowing arises, practice every day one of the Allegros in Corelli's solos (the twelve onatas for violin with figured bass for the harpsichord.

E. MOLSON SPRAGGE.

An Ideal Husband.

87 An ideal husband is supposed to be as near perfection as can be found. Therefore, he must be good-looking in form and features, neat about his person, social, his head well balanced with common sense, be a true honest gentleman, and last but not least, be in love with his wife. Then if he is not an ideal of goodness it would be hard to find one, I think.

88 My idea of what a husband should be. Taller than I, with honest courage showing in look and manner. Morally pure, with no taint of alcohol or tobacco in his system, that his blood may flow cleanly in the veins of our children. Confiding his business results to me often that I may bear the yoke of care equally with him and know how to plan a just limit of expenditures. Cheerfully sympathetic, appreciative of my efforts to please, loving me truly but honor more. Kindhearted, wisely liberal, an accomodating neighbor and business man, in fact, a sincere Christian gentleman. Such a man could I love and serve.

89 My Ideal Husband. A brave noble man firm in purpose, true to his wife, making her his wife in word and deed. A firm temper but not self-willed. Not one to meet troubles half way, but when trouble comes to look and be cheerful and helping his wife to bear them. Just in all his dealings. Be persevering in whatever he undertook to do, one who thinks of his home before other pleasure. A true Christian manly man is my ideal of a good husband.

A PIONEER NEWSPAPER WOMAN. Lady journalists have now become so numerous that they may be interested to hear of the death of a fellow-worker, who was the pioneer of the feminine writers on newspapers in Belgium. Literary work evidently agreed with Mme. Caroline Hopp, for she lived to be eighty-one years of age. She founded *The Journal de Bruges*, the French journal in Flanders, and wrote poetry in her leisure moments.