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MABEL'S CHITCHAT
Dinner Guests' Idea of a Really Beautiful Woman.
LATEST KINK IN TEAPOTS.

What Fur and What Furs are the Two Most Timely Questions Apropos of the Rainbow Hued Furs of the Season—Looked Upon at First as a Joke

Dear Elsie—The other evening Dora and your humble servant were guests at a very highbrow dinner and, between you and me, we were used to the last gasp of extinction and some other frivolous creature broke up the conversational solidity by asking the table at large, "Have you ever seen a beautiful woman?"

"Why, women are the living embodiment of all the best in art!" Dick sneered audibly at this, thinking the wretch, of the feminine art one sees with painted and plastered faces on Broadway here in New York.

"There's no such thing as beauty," flashed the cynic, with the unlovely sneer with which he cloaks the kindest heart, in reply to the above sentimental definition.

A perfect battle of protest stopped the cynic, every one of us speaking at once except the highest browed lady, who smiled a decorous smile as though to disarm any male creature of the absurd impression that he might take a particle of the word "beauty" to himself.

"Beauty is comparative," continued the cynic, undaunted, "which proves that it is nonexistent. You see, if there were only one woman on earth she might either be exquisitely lovely or a perfect fright. It would be all the same. You couldn't label her because the standard isn't fixed. What you call beauty is a matter of personal taste and—well, and climate. In Egypt, for instance, the Arabs hail a fat woman as rapturously lovely. In Europe she is considered a freak. If she is fat enough she can earn her living in a sideshow, whereas in some countries it would enable her to qualify for queenly state."

"A woman's beauty is not an affair of color or line," indignantly interrupted the philosopher, while we gaspingly absorbed the cynic's speech. "When I am asked about a woman's beauty I feel inclined to quote the famous dictum, 'Wait and see!' The beauty's hair may be red or black, her eyes blue or gray—it's all the same. But if you should be privileged to be near her day after day and feel something spiritual in her smile, something restful and vivid in her presence; if your vitality is renewed by talking to her and a fine, strong courage to meet life comes to you through her influence, you may know that that woman is very, very lovely." So said we all.

Talking of dinner reminds me of tea, or, rather, teapots. Irish and still more Irish, isn't it? Well, the impression I am trying to convey is that in telling you about the dinner conversation reminded me of a teapot—a novel sleeping teapot—I saw at a friend's house while partaking with her of the cheering cup. This pot, which is made of artistic earthenware, has an earthenware sieve across half of the neck of the pot. Tea leaves are placed on the sieve and boiling water poured in the lower part. Then the teapot is turned on its side, which allows the boiling water to reach the leaves, but does not admit of the leaves straying into the teapot. When sufficiently drawn the teapot is "waked up" to an upright position and the tea poured.

You see, dear, making tea in this way one does not have to bother with any mussy "ball" or strainer. The teapot is quite inexpensive and deserves to be better known to the housewife.

You scorned the idea of rainbow hued furs when I wrote you about them not long ago, but if you could see a perfectly darling "eggplant" broadcloth frock of mine trimmed with moleskin dyed a beautiful harmonizing shade of mauve, with some ecru lace as a relieving tint, you would fall a victim to this absurd craze.

Paul Point, who started the pelt innovation, must have done it to have his little joke. Yet all the fashionable dressmakers have taken it up seriously. Point went pretty "fur," but they are going "further" as twere. The most violent of the dyed skins are in canary toned collar and cuff sets of white (?) fox on white evening wraps and the new long coats of emerald green moleskin. A purchase of the latter would simply mean the exchange of long green for long green. Forgive me this, dear; it IS awful.

One really must have a touch of fur on everything this winter to be smart. Even high shoes and the new Russian boots to wear with slit skirts have bands of fur at the top. One, too, must have among her millinery at least one fur trimmed or all fur hat, while one's negligees and evening

frocks have a peltry trimming, and I presume in a few weeks we'll have our nighties adorned with fur.

Tell me in your next letter what you'll select for the trimming of your robe de nuit if worse comes to the worst. Devotedly,
MABEL,
New York.

To Whiten Ivory.
To whiten ivory rub it well with unsalted butter and place it in the sunshine. If it is discolored it may be whitened by rubbing it with a paste composed of burned pumice stone and water and putting it in the sun under glass.

Science Accepts the Divining Rod.
The first congress for establishing the scientific value of the divining rod, which met in Berlin recently, closed by placing on record its opinion that it was a scientific fact that a forked willow or hazel stick, or even an iron or steel rod, in the hands of certain persons, would indicate subterranean water sources and coal, potash and other mineral beds.

The congress decided that, in view of the mass of evidence secured during two days of successful practical experiments in the vicinity of the place where the meeting was held and elsewhere, under conditions which precluded any fraud, science could no longer deny the results that have been achieved.

Steps were taken at the closing session to organize an international society of men in all countries for the scientific study of the divining rod.

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THEATRES FOR THE PEOPLE.
Russia Leads the World in Cheap High Class Entertainment.

Russia, backward in most things of culture, leads the world in people's theatres. That is, in theatres with good art and low-priced seats, where the tired workingman, to whom half a dollar is an exorbitant charge, can see things worth seeing for much less.

In most European countries people's theatres are few. Yet barbarous Russia has 407 theatres existing wholly and entirely for the working classes.

They range from splendid stone playhouses and opera houses, one of which is the second biggest theatre in the world, down to modest frame buildings in remote towns; and even Siberia boasts about 30.

People's theatres existed in Russia at times when there were none at all elsewhere. They existed under serfdom, and, in fact, originated with serfdom. Wealthy owners of thousands of "souls" used to send the most promising "souls" to Moscow and Petersburg that they might learn to dance, play and sing, and these histrionic monkies, though remaining slaves, were kept for my lord's entertainment, just as the medieval barons kept jesters and buffoons.

Soon after emancipation the need for doing something to entertain the now free monkies led to small theatres being started by kind-hearted people in towns and even in villages, chiefly in Tambov and Kursk governments. Several towns later started municipal people's theatres with popular prices, or allotted the use of the ordinary theatres for several days in the week to audiences of workingmen.

The foundation and management of the people's theatres are carried out either by the local state temperance association, by the municipality or by private associations and philanthropists. Sometimes the three collaborate. In one case the association subsidizes a municipal people's theatre or agrees to make up its deficit; sometimes it finds the money for construction, while the municipality contracts to bear the deficit; sometimes it makes a contract for sharing the cost with local rich men or associations.

"The People's House of Nicholas II," in St. Petersburg, consists of theatre, library and restaurants, and last year it had a triumph in the addition on its left wing of a vast People's Opera House, which holds 3,500 spectators. The opera house has thus no rival in the world. Since its addition, the people's house as a whole, counting the two theatres, restaurants, libraries and grounds, can hold 30,000 persons, and every Sunday and holiday it is filled.

It has staged all the best Russian, Italian, French and German composers, and can claim with the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, to have been the only theatre other than Bayreuth, to play Wagner's Parsifal. So well was Wagner done that one of the Bayreuth managers went to St. Petersburg to see if he could pick up notions. In this way, at prices as low as six cents, a musical feast is given to the St. Petersburg workmen which is not enjoyed by the richest citizens anywhere else.

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