

THE HISTORY OF BUTTONS. Gigantic Catches, Once Set in Diamonds, Now Reduced to Little Rags.

Recently at the Hotel Drouot there was a sale of a curious and interesting collection of ancient buttons, the property of Baron Perignon of Paris. This collection, which was exhibited in 1889 at the Exhibition of Decorative Arts, might rival any one of those belonging to the most enthusiastic buttonists in the world. Clapissou, the musician, collected 7,750 different specimens. In 1849 a collector in Ghent exhibited more than 30,000, and M Maignien, the librarian of the Grenoble Library, gained a reputation in the branch of curiosities through his collection of buttons of liveries and uniforms.

The buttons of the eighteenth century bring high prices in the market at the present time. There are some of them that Fragonard, we are told, decorated with his marvellous pencil. In his time it was fashionable to make presents of buttons as big as a crown piece, on which allegories and various subjects were craved. Bachaumont writes in his "Secret Memoirs," Nov. 18, 1786: "The mania for buttons is today extremely ridiculous. They are not only of enormous size, some of them as big as six pound crowns, but miniatures and pictures are made upon them, and this ornamentation is extremely costly. Some of them represent the medals the twelve Caesars, others antique statues, and still others the Metamorphoses of Ovid."

Isabey, in his biographical notes, says that when he came to Paris he worked for a living by making copies of Vanloos and Bouchers on the lids of snuff boxes, and that for these madallions he was paid from 6 to 8 francs each. "As it was still the fashion," he said, "to wear buttons as big as a five-franc piece, upon which cupids, flowers, and landscapes were cut in cameo, I went into that business. I got 12 sols for each."

Two years after this period in the life of Bachaumont buttons abandoned erudition to take up idleness. All the fine monuments of Paris were carved on them. Then came the patriotic buttons, representing the taking of the Bastille, the emblem of the three orders, the Phrygian cap, the portraits of Louis XVI., of Mirabeau.

Shortly afterward these ornaments were laid aside. The reign of the artistic button was over, and the mother of pearl became general.

The oldest buttons at present in the museums and among the collections are the gold buttons discovered at Mycenae, at the time of the excavations undertaken by Dr. Schliemann, and also those found in the tomb of Childeric I. The latter were exhibited at the Louvre in the Musée des Souverains. They are made of gold and of colored glass, imitating garnet. Buttons detached from copes and religious garments of the middle ages and of the Renaissance have also been discovered.

But the richest things of the kind, beyond a doubt, are those that were worn by Louis XIV., M. Maze-Sencier, in the "Register of Diamonds and Presents to the King," at present preserved in the Minister of Foreign Affairs, gives an official account of the buttons of that pompous sovereign. It is as follows:—

"Feb. 3, 1685—Montary presented to the King eighty diamond buttons, valued at 180,000 livres.

"May 7, 1685—Made and delivered by Sieur Bose, six diamond buttons, 30,000 livres.

"July 26, 1685—Handed over by Montary to the Marquis de Seignelay for the King seventy-five diamond buttons, 556,703 livres.

"Aug. 1, 1685—Two diamond buttons, 67,866 livres.

"Aug. 16, 1685—Three diamond buttons 69,660 livres.

"Dec. 20, 1685—Four diamond buttons, 33,775 livres.

Another item in the same year: "July 26, 1685—Furnished by Mont-

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arcy for the King's vest: Forty-eight gold buttons, each set with a diamond, and ninety-six clasps, forty-eight of which were composed of five diamonds each, and forty-eight of one diamond each, 185,123 livres.

"Also 384 clasps for the doublet of the King, 162 of which were formed of five diamonds each, and 162 of one diamond each, 1,006,345.

"In addition, there were seven ornamental clasps of three diamonds each, 201,270 livres

"Sundry presents, thirty-three ornamented clasps, 574,366 livres."

That foots up a total of about three millions for the buttons of the "Great King" for the single year of 1685. The preceding year Louis XIV. received a lot of buttons that were valued at 1,071,000 livres. In these enumerations there is no mention of the diamonds for the shoes, the garters, the cuffs, and the hats of the monarch.

We are obliged to admit, with our coats and overcoats garnished with miserable little cloth and bone affairs, we cut a poor figure in fancy button business compared to the dudes of the days of Louis XIV.

A KING AND HIS SONS.

Something Interesting About the Royal Family of Greece.

The present revolution in Crete has had one effect, which, perhaps, nobody foresaw. It has made the royal family of Greece very popular.

The King of Greece is not a native—and Greece does not always take kindly to alien rulers. Otho of Bavaria, the first to ascend the throne after independence had been won from Turkey, ended by being driven out of the country. The Duke of Edinburgh, their first choice, declined the sovereignty. Finally the National Assembly elected the second son of the present King of Denmark, and he was crowned in 1863 as Georgios I.

King George was then only eighteen years of age. Little was known of him, save that he was tall and strong and came of a wealthy family, that he had served in the Danish navy, and that he was inclined to be cautious and taciturn in manner.

He began to be personally liked when, in 1867, he married the Grand Duchess Olga, eldest daughter of the Grand Duke Constantine of Russia, great uncle to the present tsar. She belonged to the Greek Church, and that helped the Greeks to overlook the fact that George himself is a Lutheran Protestant.

Still the Greeks could not yield full allegiance to a king who was not a Greek. Once or twice, when he followed unwise counsels, the nation seemed on the verge of anarchy. But in 1886, after the Servo-Bulgarian war, he and his subjects agreed that it was high time to fight Turkey; and though England intererred, the Greeks felt that their king had shown the spirit of a patriot. Needless to say, the attitude of the royal family toward the Cretan revolutionists—who themselves are Greeks in all but name—has bound the throne and the people very closely together.

Perhaps the best-loved man in southern Europe at this time is Prince George, the king's second son. Companion readers have heard of him before. It was he who, by attacking and disarming a mad fanatic in a Japanese town, six years ago, saved the life of the present tsar.

The action showed courage and presence of mind, and it proved also that the young man, who will be twenty-eight in June, is very much of an athlete. In fact, he served as relayer of the Olympic Games at Athens last spring. Admiring friends say that the prince—who is the captain of a flotilla of gunboats—is the strongest man in the Greek navy.

Prince Constantine, Duke of Sparta, the elder brother of George and the heir apparent, has also 'gone to the war,' and is in command of the Greek troops on the Thessalian frontier. He is George's senior by less than a year, but he is married and the father of two sons.

Whether the fine qualities of these young princes shall be displayed in war or in peace is still an open question. The story goes that whenever a Russian minister brings forward a proposal calculated to trouble the tranquillity of England, the tsar quietly suppresses it, on the ground that 'grandmamma (Queen Victoria) must not be bothered.'

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"THROWN UPON THE WOULD." History of Some Ladies Who are Working in Government Offices

A visitor to one of the government offices where women are employed in one of our cities desires to give in the Companion an exact account of what he saw and heard there. He was conducted by the superintendent, an old man of large experience. The last room inspected was filled with women at work.

The visitor remarked, "This is a higher class of women than that employed at the same work in some other kinds of business. These women have been educated, and have refined faces and voices. I should judge they are not used to manual labor of any kind."

"They are not," was the reply. "In almost every case they are the widows or daughters of men whose income died with them, but who, while living, gave to their families luxuries beyond their means."

"That young girl by the window was in fashionable society in New York two years ago. Her father, with a salary of five thousand dollars, lived far beyond his means. The woman in mourning is the widow of a physician whose income averaged six thousand dollars. He probably spent eight."

"That pale girl is the daughter of a master-builder, who lived comfortably among his old friends until he was seized with political ambition. He moved into a fine house, had his carriage, servants, and gave balls. He died, and his daughter earns twelve dollars a week, on which she supports her mother. There is hardly a woman here who is not the victim of the vulgar ambition which makes a family as its weather neighbors in its outlay."

"That is an ambition not peculiar to us Americans," said the visitor. "It is more common among us, because in other countries social position depends upon birth, while here it is usually fixed by money. How many families in every class do you know who are pretending to a larger pecuniary wealth than they have?" The visitor passes on the question to the reader.—Youths Companion.

HE HAILED PRINCE GEORGE.

An American in a Predicament Asked Royal Help and Got It.

When Prince George of Greece was in the United States to attend the World's Fair his presence was hardly noticed, and he was not compelled to run the gantlet of Chicago interviewers. So it came that perhaps the Prince's first experience with the American method of acquiring knowledge for dissemination was afforded by an American artist who attended the Olympic games to illustrate an article for a New York magazine.

On the day of the swimming contests the artist was unable to find the boat which he, together with a party of friends, had chartered for the occasion. The races took place on the harbor, about three miles from the city, and the artist, armed with camera and sketching tools, wandered about on the crowded shores until he bargained successfully with two men for a boat. After paddling about for a time without seeing much chance of viewing the races he made up his mind to board one of the larger vessels with which the water was crowded. He chose for his piratical designs one of the largest and best appearing of all the gayly decked craft and made his wishes known to his boatmen. Although he did not understand one word of Greek, there was no misunderstanding the fact that they forcibly remonstrated, and the more he commanded the more emphatic became their expostulations. He finally overruled their objections and induced them to row within calling distance of the big vessel. The artist hailed a man on deck in French telling him who he was and what he wanted. The stranger answered in very good English, and, after inviting the artist aboard, he brought a chair and arranged a place from which a good view of the start and finish could be had. Then he excused himself.

The American was very busy for a while, but it gradually occurred to him that the boat he was on was receiving a great deal of attention. After it began to move every other vessel saluted. When the races were finished and his host returned to the deck, the artist learned that he had been received by Prince George of Greece. He suffered a little consternation at the beginning, but the Prince did not appear to notice it and chatted cordially while he showed his guest about the vessel, finally posing before the camera. The artist was set ashore at his own request after a little trip about the bay, in the course of which the missing boat was encountered, and he had the pleasure of nodding to his friends from the deck of the royal yacht.

At one of the fetes following the games, at which there were many Americans—and by the way, it was distinctly worth while being an American during the week of the games—one of the young Americans regarded the Prince with some boyish awe, and gravely saluted as he saw the Greeks salute. The Prince told him, tactfully, that he did not salute thus, "because you are an American."

Not Much Ahead. The disposition of the irrepressible Yankee not to let a man of any other nationality crow over him crops out in many ways.

"We have a lot of national anniversaries

THINK OF THE LITTLE THINGS about the house that would be improved by being painted. Painting is not the hard work it used to be. You can get just the color you want, mixed, ready to use, and no matching of colors, no fussing, no trouble. Open the can, stir the paint, dip in the brush, and go to painting. In the time it took to mix paints, by the old methods, you can now have the work well finished. One kind of paint will not do for a house, table, buggy, and a bath tub any more than one kind of cloth would answer for all sorts of clothing. THE SHERWIN-WILLIAMS PAINTS are made for all purposes. Not one paint for all surfaces, but a different paint for each surface. THE SHERWIN-WILLIAMS FAMILY PAINT is made for cupboards, shelves, baseboards, etc. It has an oil finish that can be washed. It is made in twenty-one colors. Our booklet, "Paint Points," is a good thing for you to have. It tells many interesting things about paints—good and bad paints. It tells what to paint, and how to paint it. It is free. A postal will bring it. For booklet, address 7 St. Genevieve Street, Montreal. THE SHERWIN-WILLIAMS CO. CLEVELAND CHICAGO NEW YORK MONTREAL

in our country that you don't know anything about," said an Englishman. "You haven't any Guy Fawkes day." "No," replied the American. "We haven't any 'gay fox day' that I've ever heard of, but we've got a ground-hog day, and don't you forget it!"

EXPERIENCE NEEDED.

The Teacher's Theory was Right but the old Man Knew It All.

At a village debate—one of a series held in saltville for the discussion of scientific and political questions—nearly all present agreed that the report of a gun was caused by the rushing of the air into the gun-barrel immediately after the discharge.

The chairman of the evening was an old soldier, who listened to the statements of the speakers with an expression of good-natured scorn on his bronzed countenance. When appealed to at last for his opinion, he gave it with great deliberation. "It's been real interestin' to hear the young fellers talk and expound their knowledge," said the chairman, nodding toward the district schoolteacher and another young man who had set forth their views in high sounding terms, and had been listened to with mingled wonder and delight.

"I dunno how I've been at a more instructin' talk—dunno's I ever have. But there's jest one thing I'd like to have some of you knowledgeable folks bear in mind: theory is one thing, and practice is another; and your theory that it's the air that makes the noise won't hold for an old soldier like me."

"I'll give ye a case in pint; suppose you drill a deep hole in a solid rock, fill it full o' powder, and tetch it off. The rock, gentlemen and friends," said the chairman, in his best official manner, "the rock is blown to smithereens, hole an' all! Now what would make the noise in such a case, if your theory was right? I tell ye, it's one thing to read books, and it's another to have experience, an' I've got experience, my friends!"

It is said that among the older members of the audience there were some who seriously talked of the unfitness of the district school-teacher for his position. Their feelings was quieted, however, by the chairman's generous statement that "it wasn't fair to expect a feller only goin' on thutty to know everything."

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A BOY'S DIARY.

Boys get Sentimental Over Belles as Well as do the Girls.

A mother describes in the Interior how she came to look upon the rubbish in her boy's drawer as his unwritten diary and the basis of his autobiography. She said to him one day:

"My son, your bureau drawer is full of rubbish. You had better clear it out." Yes, that would be his great delight; so we began.

"This horseshoe is of no use—"

"Oh yes, it is; I found it under gran'pa's corn-crib, and he let me have it."

"These clamshells you'd better break up for the hens—"

"Why, mamma, I got them on the beach, you know, last summer!"

"And this faded ribbon—burn it up."

"Oh no! That was our class badge for the last day of school, and I want to keep it."

"Here is that old tin flute yet! Why do you heap up such trash?"

"That is a nice flute that Willie gave me two Christmases ago. Didn't we have a splendid time that day?"

"Well, this bottle is good for nothing—"

"Oh yes, it is. That is the bottle I used for a bobber when we went fishing at Green's Lake. A black bass pulled that bottle away under water!"

Then the mother thought that to destroy these historical relics would be to obliterate pleasant memories.

TO CHECK EXPECTORATION.

This Might Apply in Many Other Offices Outside of Indianapolis.

The following interesting but repulsive story is taken from the Indianapolis Journal, where it appears as the talk of a lady typewriter. It must be that it is much exaggerated, but even so it may do good. "It testimony concerning the prevalence of masculine expectoration could be taken from type-writers, some startling revelations might be made. I am in an office with seven or eight alleged gentlemen, who

all dictate letters to me, and who all expectorate freely around me as I sit at my machine. After they have departed I throw blotters on the floor all about, to make my surroundings endurable.

"Strange to say, not one of them has ever noticed how my floor is strewn with blotters, except in one instance, when our president remarked, 'Miss Mary, you use a great many blotters.' My response was 'Yes, sir; I have to.'"

"The colored porter finally made out the reason of my conduct. He probably appraised some of the men in the office, for matters have been pleasant for me since. To all girls who have been annoyed in this way, I earnestly recommend the blotter system. To attract attention to a reform helps it on."

Not a Coward.

While a number of white boys were skating in Kentucky, a negro boy came to the creek and commenced putting on his skates. The skaters tried to drive him away, but he would not go. This aroused their anger, and one of them challenged him to fight and called him a coward because he refused.

"A little while later the pugilistic lad broke through the ice. The white boys ran frantically about from his peril; but the negro threw off his coat, dived into the icy water and happily succeeded in saving the life of the youngster who had called him a coward.

The rescued boy cannot be destitute of the sense of shame, and in this he has no doubt been sufficiently punished without having his name printed.

"Run It by Water."

A young lumberman of northern Minnesota, whose habits of drinking had given the "blind staggers" to his business, reformed and ran his sawmill with profit. While in the transition period he met Tom an old friend.

"How are you?" asked Tom.

"Pretty well, thank you; but I have just seen a doctor to have him examine my throat."

"What's the matter?"

"Well, the doctor couldn't give me any encouragement. At least, he could not find what I want to find."

"What did you expect him to find?"

"I asked him to look down my throat for the sawmill and farm that had gone down their in drink."

"And did he see anything of them?"

"No; but he advised me if ever I got another mill to run it by water."

Oh, Sirs Re-seated, Came, Splint, Perforated. Duval, 17 Waterloo.

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