

# The Mid-Lent Carnival in Paris.



## THE QUEEN OF THE PARIS ART STUDENTS

### The Rollicking Fun of This 'Trilby' Is Keeping the Salon Waiting.

For the first time in its long history the French Salon is said to be in danger. If it should not be held this year there will be a woman at the bottom of it. It will be the funniest story ever told of what one little woman did, and as the possibility is already contemplated by the artists of Paris, there is no reason why the readers of this paper should not be gratified by the statement of the facts.

Sarah Brown, who recently died, was the favorite model of the artists of Paris. The representation of the eternal feminine in a nude or slightly draped condition is the great aim of French art, as the most untutored are probably aware. Sarah Brown's figure fulfilled the high French ideal and met the approval of the severest of critics. Many of the most successful painters secured her as a model, and felt that they had done their duty to an exacting public when they had sketched her on canvas. She appeared as the Goddess of War protecting France, a ballet girl changing her clothes, a lady of high society preparing for the ball, and as many other persons.

But poor Sarah died, and it was desirable to find a substitute of equal popularity. The substitute was found in the person of Suzanne, a little girl whose figure, if lacking somewhat the statuesque dignity of Sarah's, is still very pretty. Suzanne is now posing for as many artists as Sarah did. She, too, health and sobriety permitting, will figure as the Goddess of War, etc.

But Suzanne has a light heart, and is inclined to be happy while she can, knowing that she will be a long time dead. She has entered into the fetes of mid-Lent with such earnestness and assiduity that the works of art in which she is to be embodied have been kept waiting. There are more fetes in prospect, notably those of Easter week, and it is almost certain that she will take part in them. Not only does she delay the work of the ambitious by her actual participation in the fetes, but it is feared that her devotion to the cause of true art by appearing in public processions in very unconventional costumes will end in her being laid up with a very long time. That is why the Paris Salon is in danger, but many believe and hope

that it will pull through.

Suzanne is a little girl, not over five feet tall. But so fine is her figure that, if painted in proportion, she can pose for almost any figure. Suzanne is seventeen years old. Her complexion is like a rose-leaf. Her skin is white as milk and her hair hangs to her feet in a blue-black cloud. Last season Suzanne was discovered by a few American artists, who kept her secret, but this year she has learned her value and has blossomed forth as the queen of models.

The Mi-Careme celebration was as noisy as any that ever took place upon the Boulevard. The cavalcade was the longest and most brilliant, and the floats the most expensive ever designed by the bohemia of Paris, and Suzanne, who took the leading part, was naturally pleased and almost intoxicated by her surroundings.

The Easter fetes are to be as brilliant. The students of the artists' quarter and the hanger-ons of Bohemia are wearing old clothes to contribute money for the Easter processions.

In the Mi-Careme cavalcade Suzanne was driven along on top of a tall car as the "Queen of Comedy." In her hand she held the wand of laughter, and around her were all the insignias of mirth and joy. At her side stood her hand-maiden, Smiles. This hand-maiden bears the name of Madeleine, and is the chum of Suzanne, and herself a very pretty girl.

In this cavalcade Suzanne wore nothing but gauze. She was wrapped round and round with it until she was a fairy vision. When urged to wear her fannels underneath she emphatically declined to do so. It would mar her conception of the part of the airy Queen of Comedy if she were to be enveloped in fannels. Next day Suzanne was laid up with a cold, and for three days the artists cursed, implored, begged and threatened her to get well and parade no more.

In the Easter procession upon the boulevards—and there will be many of these processions—Suzanne has promised her services in the cavalcades dressed in the same diaphanous attire. And she cannot be dissuaded from it.

A wily young American getting a picture ready for the Salon, in which Suzanne

poses as a Maid of the Mist, suggested to the imperious little queen of models that she go as "Suzanne" dressed in a pale blue cashmere gown, with ends floating over the heads of those below.

"Just the thing!" replied Suzanne in her soft, musical French. "But I shall wear gauze. Blue sky is this."

Suzanne's friend Madeleine is a blonde. She, too, is seventeen years old, but is not as mature as Suzanne. In another year she may have the plump cheeks, the pretty hands and the rounded outlines of her chum. Then she, too, will be wanted night and day to pose.

The work of getting a picture ready for the Salon is the most important thing in the life of an American art student abroad. It is believed that there is a certain style of painting of the day, and that one must have this in order to have a painting accepted. This is one reason why Suzanne is in demand. The craze for her was started by an American girl, who placed the face of Suzanne upon some birthday cards painted as "potboilers" for a wealthy American woman residing in Paris, upon the Avenue Champs Elysees.

Paris is very gay this year. There is scarcely a day that confetti does not lie a foot deep upon the boulevards. This paper plaything is sold in Paris by the measure. It is colored paper, cut round, and not one piece bigger than a gold dollar. All colors come in the measure, and the students use it by handfuls, throwing it at each other playfully. Around a favorite it lies two or three feet deep.

Another plaything with the students is the "serpentina," a twisted paper confetti that is flung into the air. It twists like a spiral and curls around things. You see it hanging from the trees like the Spanish moss of the South. It comes in all colors, and is thrown from hand to hand and caught around the fair victim whom the playful students would ensnare. These are the natural diversions of the art student in Paris.

There are now in the city of Paris 1,000 American art students, recruited from all parts of the United States, and one and all are in the city of light and art for the purpose of entering the Salon with their pictures. They may not be able to do it this year, but they are going to study until they can.

Paris, March 13.

**"SKY-SCRAPING" AILMENT.**  
Peculiar Nervous Affection Resulting from Working in Tower Buildings.

A nervous condition, bordering on prostration, to which the doctors have not as yet given a name, has lately been observed to affect persons who work many hours a day high up in the modern skyscrapers. The ailment resembles nervous prostration, except in the principal symptom, which is a condition of intense restlessness, and is one of the victims to the new complaint expressed it, "a singular desire to scream or to get down to the earth quickly."

A sensation of relief is noticeable when the patient is taken to grass, so to speak, which leads some physicians to the belief that the change in the rarity of the air, slight as it is, has a peculiar effect upon certain very sensitive organizations. Others think that the constant trips in the elevators cause a slight derangement of the nerve centres, which brings on the condition referred to. In any case, there is no doubt that a new ailment has come among us with the advent of the sky-scraper.

## GOLD CHEAPER THAN CHINA.

Millionaires Now Use Plates That Cost \$2,729 Each. FAVOR DELFT IF YOU ARE UP TO DATE. The Only Complete Dinner Set of This Ware Is Owned in New York.

Multi-millionaires use plates of china that are worth more than their weight in gold. Of course the china plates are much more extravagant than gold plates. In fact, the common use of a whole dinner service made of the yellow metal would be a real economy, for then at least there would be no breakage, whereas the china plates are very fragile.

The plates that are most popular among



are the Octagon Church, the Athenaeum, the State House, and the hospital, in Boston; the Capitol at Washington, Mount Vernon on the Potomac, the Hartford Bank and Dumb Asylum, the New York City Hall, and the Philadelphia Exchange and Library.

Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt has some exquisite pieces of real old Delft, among them being several plates of unique design. Mrs. John Westervelt has the dining room at her residence, on West Fifth-street, charmingly decorated with some fine old pieces of Delft. They are quite large and are artistically arranged upon the walls. It may be said that the whole room has been arranged as a background for the plates. It is all done in Delft colors and is remarkably pretty and cheerful.

There are a great many fine collections of plates in this city. Mr. Horatio Neilson Fraser has an extensive collection. All around above the oak wainscoting of his dining room at West Eighty-sixth street, the plates form a line. They are of all makes, but all of them are old. Among them is an old Delft plate, but unlike most of those of this ware, it is not decorated with a landscape. It is almost completely covered with a stamlike figure in the soft blue. A Capo di Monti plate in the collection treats of "the rape of the Sabine." Each figure is exquisitely proportioned and finely and is raised. About the edge is a row of heads, also raised.

Mrs. Potter Palmer, of Chicago, is another collector of plates and obtained many additions to her collection during the Chicago Fair. Mrs. Palmer has many dishes that are simply valuable for their quality, shape or as curiosities, as well as a great number of costly and beautiful sets. Among her curious plates are some made some used by the Emperor Napoleon, and some from Switzerland, made of carved wood. She has also a unique Chinese set depicting many wondrous scenes.

Miss Marie Patterson, of Washington, D. C., has a very interesting collection of plates, picked up at sales both abroad and in this country. Her dining room is decorated with a number of them. Just below the frieze at one end of the room is placed a row of queer yellow plates, the pictures on which quality represent the seasons and the signs of the Zodiac.

Mr. H. W. Ranger, the well-known landscape painter, has an exquisite set of Dutch plate that is declared by connoisseurs to be worth \$650. He found the plate among a number of other pretty trifles while travelling in Holland and paid twenty-five cents for it. It was only when upon arriving in England he showed it to a dealer that he learned its real value.

Mrs. Frederick D. Grant has quite a wonderful collection of China. It began at the time of her marriage in wedding gifts and was augmented gradually during her residence in the White House, while her father-in-law was President, and afterward when her husband was Minister to Austria.

Mrs. William Astor has an entire service of purest gold, consisting of thirty pieces, plates and ornaments, except for the coat-of-arms and initials that appear on each. Mrs. John Jacob Astor has also a set of gold dinner dishes, but it is not so complete.

It is said that the objection to gold plates is that they are easily scratched with a knife, and for this reason are not kept in stock by American jewellers, and if bought here must be made to order. In England they are more readily obtained.

When questioned on the subject, the representative of one of New York's best-known firms said that gold plates would cost from \$225 up. The price would depend upon the weight and decorations. A plate gold the size and thickness of an ordinary dinner plate would weigh much more than the china. If the plates were elaborately engraved, chased or inlaid with such plates might cost. As a matter of fact, however, the dishes of gold that are known to be in use in this city are quite plain, and were bought in England.

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## THE OPAL IS NOW FASHION'S GEM. Society Gives It Preference Over the Diamond or Any Other Jewel.

The opal has succeeded the diamond as the gem of society. Of course diamonds will never go out of fashion entirely, but society leaders are already restricting their use greatly, and the opal is taking their place.

The superstitious fear of the opal, the leading gem dealers say, is no longer fashionable, and therefore does not deter purchasers from buying the stones.

The result of this state of affairs is that opals for the last five years have been rapidly increasing in price. And while the price of diamonds has not shown any material depreciation, it is not owing to the steady demand so much as to the skillful maneuvering under the guidance of Cecil Rhodes, organizer and life governor of the De Beers Mining Company, the man who has lately come into such prominence in connection with the Jameson raid in the Transvaal.

This company is the autocratic ruler of the diamond business of the world, and the output is carefully restricted so that the price shall not be allowed to diminish.

London's fashion authority has declared against the diamond in favor of the opal in the following language: "Society leaders are frowning upon diamonds, and the opal is the favorite stone with those of extreme good taste."

The same condition exists in New York, and in those exclusive circles where only good taste finds toleration lavish displays of diamonds have the past season been less and less frequent. On the other hand, such jewels as opals, emeralds and sapphires have been worn much more, and are now extremely fashionable.

These statements are borne out by the leading gem dealers in New York. At Tiffany's it was reported that the trade in opals in the last four years had grown wonderfully. George P. Kunz, Tiffany's gem expert, also an honorary member of the Chamber of Commerce of Precious Stones, and special agent of the United States Geological Survey, has compiled statistics showing in exact figures the production of precious stones, and some surprising information is given. The diamond imports for the year ending June 30, 1897, were \$1,318,617; 1877, \$2,235,246. For the year ending December 31, 1887, they were \$10,831,880; 1890, \$13,105,691; 1891, \$12,707,079; 1892, \$14,521,851; 1893, \$10,107,005; 1894, \$9,708,338. The figures for 1895 are not out yet, but they are very low.

For every year up to 1892 from 1867 there was a steady increase in the use of diamonds in America. It was a period in which the masses were growing wealthier, and the first ambition of the new wealthy was to have valuable gems. But the last few years the diminution of this desire for display has been very noticeable.

There have been other influences at work

in this direction without doubt, but the change in the methods of the "Four Hundred" in that regard has been the great factor. A few years ago a bride in fashionable society who failed to receive a costly parure of diamonds or something of that sort was pitied. Nowadays such presents are not considered in the best of taste.

"While the diamond trade has been steadily in one way," said Mr. Kunz, "there is no doubt of a perceptible decadence in their use. You will still see them at the ball, at the opera, but you no longer see them in the street cars or on the promenade and garish displays are a rarity."

"The trade in opals has not been as carefully watched as the diamond sales, and so it cannot be put in accurate figures. But it is true that in the past four or five years it has increased two hundred to four hundred per cent. It is particularly good this year. The opal is a handsome jewel and is becoming a leader in the jewel trade."

Herman Marcus, of Marcus & Co., this city, is the owner perhaps of the finest opal in the world. Not that it is such an extraordinarily large stone, but in fineness of coloring, in brilliancy, it is unapproached. Its value can only be guessed at, for it is unequalled. Mr. Marcus is a great admirer of opals and has done much to popularize them. In speaking of the stone, George Marcus, of the same firm, said:

"Ten persons buy opals nowadays where one bought them ten years ago. No doubt the old superstition had something to do with it, but it is true that opals are now the fashion. The opal will sometimes change in lustre, and emanations from the body in certain diseased conditions will produce this effect. The variation in the moisture contained in the tiny crystals of the stone produces these changes, and it may be this that originally gave rise to the superstitious dread. But the sentiment of the opal is 'hope, innocence, purity.' All through ancient literature we find that the opal was regarded with particularly good favor. Intelligence is bringing the stone back into its true place again."

"In a little publication which we have gotten out concerning the opal it is pointed out that Sir Walter Scott had something to do with the fear which up to a few years ago obtained in regard to this stone. In his 'Anne of Geierstein' he exaggerates its properties and uses it to heighten an uncanny element in his story, and to carry out the plot makes use of the supernatural. Other writers have done the same thing, but if any superstition ought to attach to a stone, the opal should be one of the lucky ones."

It may be of interest to know that the Mexican opal, often the most brilliant, found almost everywhere in its coloring, is the most perfect of the different ones on the market. The Hungarian opals are the best, but the Australian stones are also of fine quality.

Mrs. T. Lynch, the Union square gem dealer, whose dealings in gems are not confined to this country, has this reason of how the opal came to be regarded as unlucky:

"Years ago a dealer in precious stones came from Germany to London, where I then was, to fill an order from one of the royal families in Germany, a wedding order. I remember rightly. Opals were then high. He had printed the story that opals were unlucky, and spread the report diligently. In a short time the price went down, and he was enabled to fill his order and make a handsome profit."

"Ten years ago a man came into my store with a good-sized handful of fine opals. He wanted only \$50 for them, and I bought them. But I am willing to confess that the constant telling of bad-luck stories about opals had its effect on me. I wasn't much in love with the purchase. So, inside of an hour, when a customer was telling what a bargain I had found, I told him I was willing to sell."

"What will you take?" he asked.

"One hundred dollars," I said.

"So he bought them. If I had them now I could easily sell them for \$2,000. Opals are getting higher in price every month."

