

Mrs. Cruger Exemplifies The Modern Ideal of Beauty.

For the purposes of comparison with her living sisters, the Venus de Milo labors under considerable disadvantage. In the first place, her arms—and how beautiful these arms must have been—are gone, and the world does not know whether her fingers were long and slender or dimpled and chubby, or whether her elbow had dimples or how long her arm were and ever so many other things that would be interesting to know. Then her peculiar pose, unimpeachable as it is without arms, throws the neck out of all proportion, and it is utterly impossible to ascertain just what its curves would be like if she were standing straight.

The absence of the arms and the peculiar twist of the neck bring into stronger prominence than they would otherwise have enjoyed the beautiful shoulders, and here, lacking no curve, unhampered by drapery and standing out in graceful relief, the world beholds the classic model of ideal shoulders.

In the days when Greece produced Praxiteles, when Hellenic culture was at its height and when the Greek standard of beauty, which all the world has since acknowledged, was first set up, the shoulders of the Venus di Milo were carved to represent the ideal woman's shoulders. And they were wonderfully beautiful.

Now let us skip blithely over a period of two thousand years or so and come down to Anno Domini, 1896. The Venus di Milo stands in armless glory in the Louvre in Paris and the society women of New York envy Mrs. Van Rensselaer for her beautiful shoulders, which, they say, are the most beautiful in this land.

Now Mrs. Van Rensselaer Cruger—known to most of her admirers as Jellen Gordon—is a very beautiful woman, gifted with a brilliant intellect and endowed with no little beauty. She has truly beautiful shoulders, and if the ladies of society say that they are the most beautiful shoulders in the land, why—the ladies of society ought to know.

But when it comes to this point and you find yourself discussing such a delicate matter as the comparative beauty of shoulders, it is no more than fair to give the immortal Venus di Milo a chance and consider her shoulders.

You see before you the shoulders of Mrs. Van Rensselaer Cruger and those of the Venus di Milo. The former are the envy of hundreds of the most beautiful women in this country. The latter the dream of all true artists.

Which do you think are the more beautiful? Nowadays we have no fixed standard of beauty such as the ancient Greeks had and there is far greater latitude of selection. You need not, therefore, feel yourself bound to abide by the verdict of the artists, for, after all, this is a matter that each must decide for himself.

Both, you will admit, are very beautiful, and both would look magnificent if you could see them peeping out of a \$3,000 pearl-trimmed Worth gown. But which are the more to your taste?

The shoulders of the Venus di Milo, you will observe, are broader, stronger and apparently more robust than the others. Mrs. Cruger's shoulders, however, have a deeper slope and possess more curves than do those of the Venus.

In the olden days sloping shoulders were not admired in women, nor are they to-day looked upon as an indication of the best of health, which is, after all, the foundation of all beauty. But, on the other hand, in the slope of Mrs. Cruger's shoulders there is absolutely nothing to indicate weakness or lack of health, and as there are so many women who envy her it would almost seem that the fashion in shoulders—if there be such a thing—has changed.

At any rate it is an interesting subject for speculation.

The writer hesitates to express his own opinion upon the subject. After gazing in admiration at the portrait of Mrs. Cruger for several minutes he was almost on the point of casting his vote for the sloping shoulders and would, no doubt, have done so, had his eyes not fallen upon the wonderful shoulders of the unfortunate armless Venuses.

So you see how it is.

Surprising Number of Leap Year Marriages.

The records show that there are more marriages in leap year than in other years. The sport which the funny men have had at the expense of the old maid and the new woman has a foundation in fact.

Figures are trustworthy, they say, and here they are for the marriages of the first three months of this year, the last leap year till 1904. Last year, the society reporters all agree, was a good year for weddings, but leap year is better:

Table with columns: Jan., Feb., March, Total. Rows for 1895 and 1896.

Difference..... 412

It will be seen at once that not only were the leap-year marriages more in number, but also that the marrying woman seems to have asked the question just as soon as she had the traditional license. For in January of this year the marriage record was abnormally large. In February it was also large, but not to so great a degree, while in March it fell off, the natural slump, the reaction after a period of abnormal activity.

Leap year has the best of the bargain by 412 for the first three months of this season, and at that rate would be 1,648 ahead by the end of 1896. Taken at the usual rate of marriages leap year has about 10 per cent more weddings than the ordinary year. The records, unfortunately, do not show which of the newly-married twains popped the question, or it might be shown that at least the greater part of the proposals came from the blushing girl who is led to the altar.

A comparison of the figures for the first three months of 1895 and 1896, so far as obtainable, however, shows that the number of brides between the ages of twenty and thirty-five who married men of their own ages in 1895 was 177, as compared with 181 in 1896. During the same period in the same years a decided increase is shown, when the facts concerning the marriage of women to men younger than themselves are considered. In the first three months of 1895 48 women whose ages ranged from thirty-five to fifty married men whose ages numbered from twenty to thirty-five. In the corresponding period in 1896 the marriages in which the ratio of years was the same numbered 71, an increase of 23.

So it will be seen from the table that the brides of greater age than the bridegrooms have been greater in number this year than last, and that after they had passed the age of thirty-five years they seemed much more ready to take part in the drawing of the lottery of life. Nobody knows how many times on the average each one had to propose before getting the masculine fish to take the hook. The city has negligently overlooked the value of a record like that.

The records at the City Hall are not compiled in a fashion to show the proportions any nearer than given in the above table. They do not show the averages for each year, but to remedy the deficiency, 200 licenses of 1895 were counted out, an average struck and the average age for 200 more in 1896 was computed in the same way. This is the result:

Table with columns: Bride, Bridegroom. Rows for 1895 and 1896.

These figures are from the method of calculation, only approximate, but they show the tendency clearly. The brides of leap year are not only bolder, but they are older. The bridegrooms are not only more timid, but they are a trifle younger on the average. Perhaps this state of things is explained by the bridegrooms in leap year having waited to be proposed to, and perhaps it is that the old girls have captured, by preference the young and tender birds of promise.

The marriage figures of the divorced seem to indicate that they had had enough of it in one trial. The percentage of divorces is more than five per cent of the weddings, it is said, but less than one per cent wanted to tread the path of matrimony again.

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL

SHOULDERS IN NEW YORK.

A Visit to Hildreth, the Train Wrecker, In Auburn Prison.



Lichtenstein Has the Tiniest National Row In All Europe.

The war spirit that has thrilled the great nations of Europe for months past has even invaded one of the tiny sovereign states. Lichtenstein is on the verge of a constitutional crisis and its army of seven and one-half men is under arms.

Almost every one will find it necessary to consult the atlas to learn just where Lichtenstein is, for no one ever hears of the plucky little place, next in size to the smallest government of its kind in Europe.

It is an independent as Wurtemberg or Bavaria, however, and like all little things, thinks a great deal more of its independence and its dignity than much larger places. Its ruler is the Prince of Lichtenstein, and just now his subjects are on the verge of a constitutional crisis. No empire will be disrupted or kingdoms broken no matter which way the crisis goes, but that doesn't minimize the importance of the matter to the people of Lichtenstein. They are facing the crisis with all the fervor of a French revolutionist.

It seems that the Prince of Lichtenstein finds that the affairs of his sovereignty run along generally just as well when he is away as when he is on hand, and for that reason he spends most of his time in the gay court circle at Vienna. He appointed a manager, however, to conduct the Government of Lichtenstein, just as a merchant appoints a superintendent of his business. This manager has been putting on more airs than his princely employer ever assumed, and on many occasions has antagonized the people by doing things which they regard as a violation of the Constitution of Lichtenstein.

His latest act has forced the crisis. This was the establishment of a press censorship over the one and only newspaper published in the principality. The editor of this paper had the courage to take the manager over the coals for some governmental act; hence the censorship. Now the people of Lichtenstein say that a press censorship is contrary to the Constitution of the principality, and they are preparing to uphold it at any cost. They have a miniature Legislature, and the latter has passed an act calling upon the Prince to return from Vienna and uphold the Constitution. Should he do so, no one knows what will happen.

For the army of the German Empire, Lichtenstein is yearly assessed a regiment



The Venus De Milo.

of seven and one-half men.

Very little is known in this country about those of their kind claim the right to the throne. From 1882 to 1888 the government ran itself, as the people did not know what to do without a ruler, and none of the Bartoloni family evinced an inclination for the throne.

Finally the people drew up a constitution and elected a President. The country's independence was formally recognized by Italy in 1887. It is an advanced republic in a way, for the women vote as well as the men. Every six years a President and his Council are elected, and they serve without pay. This republic has not a single policeman, no army or navy and no jail or courts. Everything runs smoothly. The people fish, farm and raise fruit; are happy and contented. In short, Tavorola is an Utopian reality.

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And Now the "X" Rays Can Make Men Bald.

It has now been discovered that Roentgen rays make men bald. At least that is a natural inference from the discovery made a few weeks ago by Professor John Daniel, of Vanderbilt University.

He and Dr. William L. Dudley decided to make an attempt to photograph through the head of a child in an effort to locate a bullet which was supposed to be lodged in the brain. A plate holder containing a sensitive plate was tied on one side of the child's head with a coin between the plate and the head.

The Crookes tube from which the X rays were to emanate was placed on the other side of the head and the current was then turned on. The electricity played into the tube for about an hour, and Professor Daniel says the current was weak rather than strong.

The Roentgen rays were procured, but when the plate was developed it showed that they failed to penetrate through the head of the child, so that the experiment, so far as locating the bullet was concerned, was a failure. The strange result of this work, which shows that the Roentgen rays are deadly to hair, did not develop for twenty-one days.

Then it was discovered that the spot on the head of the child which had been directly exposed to the Roentgen rays was perfectly bald. All the hair had come out on a spot that was about two inches in diameter.

The skin looks healthy, and there has been no pain or other indication of disorder, but there is nothing to show that the hair will grow again. The tube which germinated the Roentgen rays had been held about half an inch from the hair of the head, and there is hardly a doubt that the rays caused the hair to come out.

The intensity of the discharge was not sufficient to heat the tube more than slightly, and the occasional small electrostatic spark from the surface of the tube to the hair was hardly noticeable. Neither of these causes will account for the falling out of the child's hair at the spot where the Roentgen rays entered its head. Scientific men are much puzzled to account for this strange behavior of the new light.

Auburn, N. Y., May 15.—A boy so young that he looks as though he should still be in knickerbockers is wearing the striped suit of a convict behind the walls of Auburn Prison.

He is only seventeen years old and has been sentenced to pass his life behind barred doors as a criminal among criminals, all of them older than he and proficient in every form of vice and of crime. He no longer has a name. He is known by a number that is registered in the prison book. He is convict 24,433. That is all that will distinguish him from his fellows, who are all striped like himself. Murderers, thieves and crooks of all sorts will be his companions. Though he should live to be old and gray, as "life men" usually do, he will never again look upon the sunshine as a free man.

He is "Jack" Hildreth, the boy convicted as the leader of a band of would-be boy desperadoes, who pose as dime novel heroes. These boys loosened a rail in the track of the New York Central Railroad near Rome one night last November, with the result that the limited fast mail run off the track, killing the engineer and one other man, and injuring a number of passengers.

Had the boys been caught that night by the men who were on board the wrecked train, there is little doubt that they would have received swifter punishment for their reckless act. I was a passenger on board the train which followed directly on the fast mail, the wreck of which stopped our train. About two in the morning we picked up most of the passengers and carried them on to their destinations. Many of the women were crying, and I well remember the violent indignation of the men, for they had discovered that the train had been purposely wrecked. None imagined, however, that a group of half-grown boys had been the wreckers.

THE YOUNGER CONVICT.

I saw Hildreth through the courtesy of Warden Stout, whose kind heart is very much touched by the boy's sad fate. Hildreth is the youngest convict ever in the prison, and a special prison suit had to be made for him on account of his smallness.

It is not the custom to allow convicts to receive visitors except on the regular visiting day each month, and newspaper representatives are especially barred, but the warden made an exception for me. There was a little pause while a keeper went after the lad, as I waited. In spite of the warden's words I fully expected to see a rough-looking and repellent youth. When the door opened I could hardly repress a cry of surprise.

Hildreth is small and has a particularly boyish and innocent-looking face. He could easily pass for five years younger for the age given is seventeen.

He is a typical "bad boy" in appearance, for the mischief in his eye contradicts the ingenuousness of his face. He has a round low head, slightly bullet-shaped in the back, and the hair inclined to be reddish. Close cropped as it is, it clearly defined his head. His eyes are blue and twinkling, and somewhat deep set. The lower part of his face is good. The prison pallor has not yet settled upon him, nor has his manner of talking or of walking become that of the watchful, soft-footed, shifting-eyed convict. As he stood there, he looked like a mischievous mischief who might have been caught robbing the preserves closet, nothing worse.

"This is Mr. Hildreth," said the Warden, smiling at the boy and motioning him to a seat. Evidently the Warden has relaxed somewhat toward him. Few convicts are addressed by their names; none are called "Mister" or allowed to sit in the Warden's office. I am sure that every mother in the country will bless Warden Stout for this effort to keep some spark of respect alive in the heart of his motherless boy.

A PATHETIC SPECTACLE.

He stood in the doorway carrying a cap made of the same material as his suit. It was of flannel, gray, with wide black stripes, running horizontally around the body and the legs. It was a pathetic, awful sight, to see such a bright, boyish face above such a garb.

"Do you wish to see me?" he asked with a very polite bow.

I told him that I had come from New York to see him, and he seated himself in an easy attitude in a big arm chair, which swallowed him up in its capacious depths.

"I hope you won't mind my being present," the Warden said apologetically. Hildreth smiled at this.

I asked him some questions about the crime for which he has been imprisoned, but he would not talk on the subject.

"I must ask you to excuse me," he said, "but I refuse to discuss that matter. I have said all that I intend to say about it."

"No doubt, you deeply regret that you were even implicated in such a deed," I said.

"I am very sorry that such a thing happened, certainly," he answered earnestly.

"How do you feel about your long term of imprisonment?" I asked him. "Are you discouraged?"

"Well, my future does not look very bright; but I am sure that with good behavior the other boys and myself will get along all right."

I asked him about his sweetheart, Miss Perryn, of Rome, but he only smiled and would say nothing.

"How old is she?" I asked.

"I really couldn't say," he answered, still smiling.

"Do you ever expect to see her again?"

"An almost imperceptible shadow passed over the boy's face. The Warden saw it and broke in hastily:

"He can visit him every month, you know." The lad's face brightened a bit.

"Tell me some of your school escapades," I said, "or about some other scrape that you were in before."

He looked at me a trifle indignantly—I fancied.

"I never was in any scrape before; this is the first time I ever got in trouble."

"Your mother is not living, is she?"

"She died when I was a little over a year old," he replied, and his voice grew softer. "I don't even remember her."

"And you ran away from home because of your stepmother's unkindness?"

"Yes; I do not care to talk about that now."

"You did not live with your father when a child?"

"No, I lived with my grandparents at Upper Red Hook, Dutchess County. They both died in February, 1892, and I came to New York and lived with my father for a while. I was about twelve years old then. I left home and came to Rome, where I found employment. I was very anxious to learn grafting. I have always been interested in scientific matters. I never told my father that I was at an agricultural college. That is one of the many untruths that have been printed about me. I visited my father's home in New York October last, and came back to Rome November first. My intention was to spend the Winter with Mr. and Mrs. Bowman, who were always very kind to me. Since my grandparents' death their home was the only home I have had."

"I have one sister and two brothers. Yes, I suppose I might be called the black sheep, especially now; but the fact is that I never did anything worse than any other boy. I have been described as a 'hard case' and all that sort of thing, but people who know me know different."

Hildreth rose to leave the room, and bowed politely and pleasantly. As he reached the door he turned and bowed again.

"I want to see you soon to arrange for your future," said Warden Stout as he passed out of the room.

The boy smiled again. "Good by," he said, and turned into the prison hall that stretched before him.

"His future! What a mockery that is!" I said.

"He has not yet been assigned to any particular work," answered the warden; "that is what I meant. You see, he is only a boy; I feel very sorry for the poor little chap."

HILDRETH A BAD BOY.

That was exactly the way in which Hildreth impressed me. He is a bad boy, who, instead of being properly corrected for his faults, has been allowed free rein with a money allowance. The worst boys often make the best men, and I think that Hildreth, if properly trained, would yet be a good man.

As it is, he will have no chance to improve. He has remarkable self-possession and nerve for a boy. While talking to him I was frequently overcome with the horror of his position and was unable to speak to him, but he never showed the slightest emotion. Certainly he has fed on a dime novel diet and the effects are evident in his manner, though his speech is well chosen and refined.

KATE MASTERSON.