

Ye Olde Time Debutante

By W. E. Hill

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A debutante of the dark ages entertaining a gentleman friend in the manner of the period with a plate of fudge and a choice rendition of vocal pieces. A favorite chorus ran:

"On a Sunday afternoon,
In the merry month of June,
Take a boat to Coney
Or down the bay,
A trip up the Hudson
Or Far Rockaway—"

The hour is 10 P. M., and mama and papa have been sent to bed early.



Twenty years ago a debutante who wanted to be in the swim (which was 1908 for knowing her onions) went to the fancy dress party as Maude Adams in "Peter Pan." No dance floor during the winter of 1908 was free from two or more debs who leaped hither and yon, crying "I am joy! I am youth! I am Peter Pan!"



Just a sweet girl debutante of the long, long ago, when mama was a girl, being photographed, as was the custom, in her Gibson picture hat and her gaslight green dimity.



The winter of 1917 was a serious time for the girls who came out. Things were so mixed up that season on account of the war that some of them had to come out all over again after the boys were back from France. Others made the best of a trying time and rushed up and down the aisles of theaters selling Liberty bonds and Thrift stamps.



A debutante in the days when mama and Aunt Stell were introduced to the social whirl would shun pictorial publicity something terrible. Rest your tired eyes on these lovely debs of 1906 or thereabouts looking daggers at a bold, bad newspaper photographer, and then upon the 1928 deb (above, center) trying to lure a news cameraman in her direction.



In the good old days, before the darkened movie auditorium came into its own, a deb who was a really nice girl would take a chaperon along when her special young man took her to the matinee. Of course, there were some girls who went unchaperoned, but it was thought that the boys would not respect them as much.



A prewar subdeb was not nearly as appetizing as is her 1928 sister. She was always having her teeth straightened or her gums raised or something which handicapped her at prep school dances. And maybe she didn't hate the specs her family made her wear, so she'd be able to read the small type without squinting when she got to be 50.



A couple of chaperons and three lovely debutantes of the vintage of 1908 all set for the sophomore hop. Fourth from the left is the girl who thought she looked just like Fritzi Scheff. She was suspected by the chaperons at the Delta Delta Dow house party of painting her cheeks, but it was never proved. The girl on her right, though christened Winifred, was called "Billie" by everybody because she was considered by many to be the image of Billie Burke.

In those far off days just before the great war a deb who wanted to make a big hit would say to her best boy, "Honestly, you maxixe a lot better than Vernon Castle," and it went big. That and a Ford joke or two would carry a girl through any dance intermission. "Tay Dongsonks," as people who knew called them, were considered very dashing in 1914.