

1867 view of female foibles

Females, from page A1

point, the newspaperman engaged in journalistic "overkill." Continued Gabe, "Curls, crimps, bands, waterfalls and we know not what, vie with each other in destroying the fair semblance of the human head. The more homely a fashion, the more likely it is to be a favorite; the more unbecoming the more apt it is to endure."

Although Gabe did not claim to speak for all males, his sarcasm must have stung many a Bloomington female who considered herself a fashion-setter, or, at least, a leader. Grumbled the newspaperman, "One cannot go into company that pretends to be elegant, without having his eyes pained by the uncouthness of the hair-dressing, and distortion of all that good taste would suggest. He is reminded of stage goblins, or of his childish notions of the monsters of Arabian tales."

Gabe's plea was for a courageous natural woman, who would sensibly choose simplicity, fitness and grace. He hoped

their example would influence others of their sex. Otherwise, he wrote, "A woman might as well have a hump on her back, or walk on stilts, as it is said she did in the early days of Venice, or cover one of her soft cheeks with a plaster, or wear rings in her nose."

If Gabe's opinion of women's latest fashions could have been forgiven, he put himself beyond that felicitous relationship by reporting a quote from a George Francis Train (occupation or place of residence unspecified).

Train's pleasantry was:

"Clergyman — Will you take this brownstone, this carriage and span, these diamonds, for they wedded husband? Yes.

"Will you take this unpaid milliner's bill, this high waterfall of foreign hair, these affectation accomplishments, and feeble constitution for thy wedded wife? Yes.

"Then, what man has joined together let the next best man run away with, so the first divorce court may tear them asunder."