

## . . . LOS ANGELES BUTTON CLUB HOLDS ITS ANNUAL SHOW

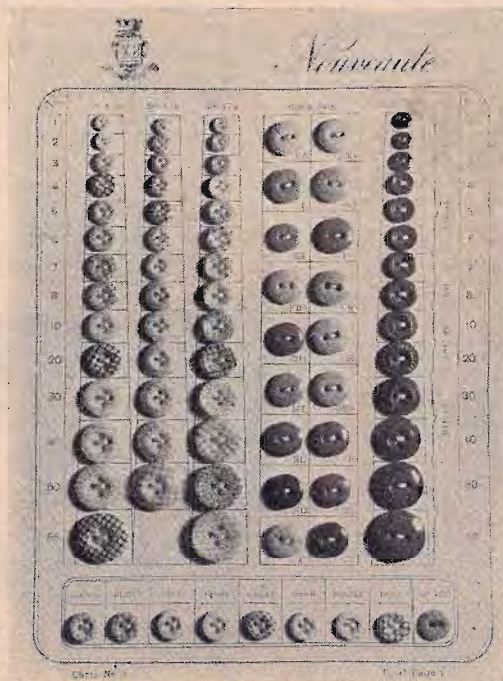
The third biggest hobby in the U. S. today, surpassed only by stamp and coin collecting, is button collecting. A few weeks ago, when the Los Angeles Button Club held its third annual show, more than 200,000 buttons were exhibited. Some of them were probably worth hundreds of dollars but no one could estimate the total value of the buttons on exhibit. It is one of the button collector's taboos ever to reveal the value of his collections or the price he has paid for a button.

The popularity of button collecting has risen spectacularly only in the last four years, but its seeds were sown back in the Gay '90s, when young girls collected buttons to make what were called "charm strings." Care was taken not to put more than

999 buttons on one string, for legend had it that 1,000 buttons meant the possessor would die a spinster. The fad died down soon after the turn of the century, but today there are thousands of collectors throughout the U. S. and some states, like California, have junior button clubs for children and teen-agers. Most buttons are bought at random in antique shops and old-clothes stores, though the National Button Society tries to make the hobby more scientific by publishing an 80-page quarterly magazine chock-full of latest information on new and rare items. Said one zealot in a burst of collector's enthusiasm in Los Angeles, "We're nutty about buttons, and once you start collecting buttons you'll get nutty too. A person just can't help it."



Brass overall buttons of 60 years ago were embossed with railroad trains and trolley cars and often had heart-shaped figures.



French salesman in 1840 used this original card of multicolored calico buttons as a sample of wares he sold.



Famous fables and stories are illustrated by these copper and brass buttons worn on women's coats and dresses around 1880.