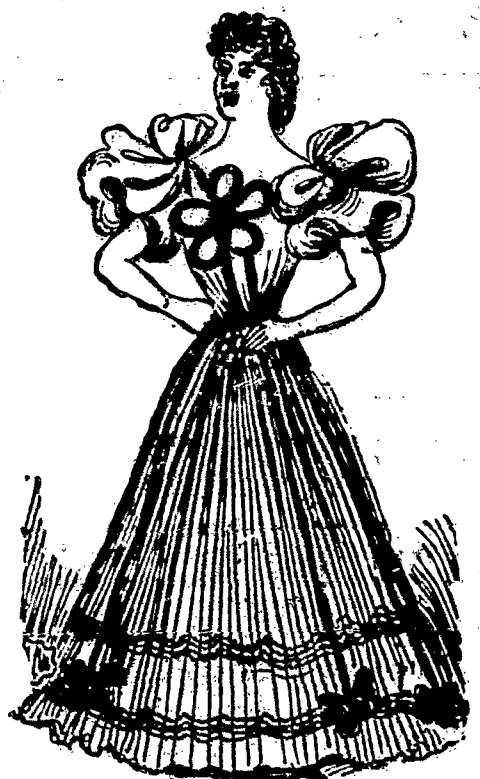


THE FASHION LETTER

ALLURING STYLES AND PATTERNS FOR WOMEN.

Some Pen Pictures of Up-to-Date Costumes for Street, House and Evening Wear—Bits of Fashion Miscellany.

THE TRIUMPH of thriftiness, the black silk gown, has not in many years been so much worn on smart occasions as this winter, where it appears at all sorts of functions, from the hysterically ecstatic o'clock tea to the gorgeous pageant of the swell wedding. It is worn by maid and matron alike, the difference in the arrangement consisting principally in the younger woman's choosing the more severe and sober style of arrangement because the delicacy of her coloring will admit of the trying framing. Young girls of 18 appear in the stiff



moires, all black, save for a collar of blue at the neck or a twist of velvet at the belt.

The dowagers appear in the same moire, resplendent with jet and white lace, and fur and violet or magenta velvet. Sequins are very much worn just now. Apparently Fashion said, "Let there be sequins and there were sequins," for all of a sudden they have flashed out on bodices and yokes, sometimes entirely covering the waist down to the belt. "Buckling to" is the order of the day, it would seem, for of late hats, dresses, coats, waistbands, and throat draperies are one and all decorated with the inevitable paste, steel, or jet buckle, and one of the prettiest neckties is made with a strip of velvet cut in the cross and passed through one of the new fashioned hauss-col buckles finished on either side with the brilliant ornament with a cascade of fine plaited lace. It is rather a craze just now with smart women to study the old portraits of their own or other people's ancestors with a view to successful modern editions of the costumes in which the dames of old were painted.

One lady who had been accustomed to designate her female progenitors as a "gallery of guys" modeled one of her greatest dress successes upon the portrait of a stiff-laced old great-grandmaunt she had been wont to include in this category. The skirt of rich brocade was made perfectly plain and filled on to a long-pointed bodice carefully cut to bring out all the picturesqueness and alienates all the stiffness of the Elizabethan period. Here is a stomacher of sable and embroidery, with a soft fish of lace and frills of lace falling over the most quaint and daring, but eminently successful, sleeves. Round the bodice is a balloon belt.

Another little economical whim is the combination of all sorts of things in the same gown, so that if one has odd bits of old finery and an artistic touch in their combination they may be utilized to the number of three or four in the same gown. And besides



all these eminently convenient fashions there are many odd little garnitures which transform the simplest gown into a dressy affair, suitable for evening or dinner wear. There are bits and stocks of lace, yokes of velvet or chiffon, garnitures of lace and jet, with long falling fringes of jet, ruffles not unlike those of the Elizabethan period, and no end of other devices. It is really entertaining to see the variety of successes a clever girl will make out of one good black gown with a few scraps of ribbon and lace and velvet. Even a wrinkled collar of velvet, a brilliant magenta in color, hooked at the back with a little fall of cream

white lace in front, leads to the gown-an air of distinction frequently wanting in more elaborate creations.

Tulle, that old-time favorite for dancing gowns, has been restored to favor, and one of the daintiest of new evening gowns has been fashioned from it. The skirt has two groups of fine gold tinsel threads sewed on in rows, and is accented plaited. From the waist, at intervals white satin ribbons fall lengthways of the skirt, to finish at the braid with bows. The bodice of white satin crosses over surgically like, and is finished with a bow of the tinsel, and the sleeves are puffs of tulle.

Another evening gown for a young lady is of pale yellow and white brocade, the skirt trimmed with three bounces of plaited tulle, headed with white satin ribbon tied in bows. The low Victorian bodice is covered with tulle and straps of lace insertion. The sleeves are of pale violet velvet.

A dinner gown of pale pink moire antique is draped over a petticoat of black fished net. The waist has a stomacher of the same material. The sleeves are of black velvet, the collar of old point de Flandres with ruffles of the lace. A gown of changeable chiffon, pale yellow with tints of rose and a sheen of green, has a finish of jet on the low-cut waist, with long chains of fine cut and brilliant jet falling from the shoulder down the side, where it drapes the overskirt, to reveal a bit of the satin skirt over which the thin draperies are hung. Quaint and striking beyond all of these is a young girl's dancing dress of black spotted moire with a finish of fur, a pale blue baby waist with a fall of lace, and a belt of Russian workmanship, showing mock sapphires and garnets set in a filigree of dull old gold.

There are 5 o'clock dresses of velvet or cloth with a finish of jet and a trimming of Persian lamb that with the capes look like the new out-door pelisses.

There are simpler gowns, too, and less expensive, of which a dress of powder blue hop sack has a skirt festooned with black satin ribbon, having bows-knots on each wave, full satin sleeves, and a decoration of the ribbons on the waist.

A gown of spotted black mohair crepon has a shaped flounce frilled at the edge, rising high on each seam round the skirt, which is also finished with a narrow frill.

Among the small belongings, which add richness to the gowns and a dressy grace are the bodices of seal or baby Persian lamb, with pervers and gauntlets of heavy moire or satin, and large costly buttons of fur or of dull silver and enamel.

There are also berthes and fichus, and yokes and collars, ruffs of black net with white edges, capes and pelerines of lace and fur, or, oddly enough, of fur and lace together, and the little fancy affairs are made of chiffon, of liberty tissue that is so much worn in scarfs as well as fichus, of dotted silk



mul, of fine brocade, and of velvet and lace. In the shops the made-up articles are rather expensive, but the home artist can transform with \$3 worth of lace and velvet her last year's gown into a Paris creation just over for the occasion, and fairly rivaling the costly creations that great customers evolve for the few fortunate women who are not fashionably poor this season.

Solled Felts and Ribbons.

If ribbons or silks are streaked or spotted, hold them in soft soapy water to remove as much of the color, as possible, then dye them any color you wish with diamond dye. Velvet or plush may be dyed like other goods, if one is careful not to rub or wring them. After rinsing press between two cloths to remove some of the water. Hang the pieces out where the wind will whip them dry. If the pieces are small, baste them smoothly to a large piece of muslin, before hanging them up to dry.

Dip faded artificial flowers in a hot dye of any color you wish, but do not allow them to remain more than a second. Hang them up by the stems, and, when dry, you will be surprised to see how much they are improved. The colors most suitable for them are pink, yellow, blue, and a weak solution of purple, which makes lilac. Use the dyes for cotton.

These directions may seem long, but the work described is very easily and quickly done. It often takes more time to explain such things than to do them.

High Speed on the Railroad.

Engine No. 225 of the Pennsylvania's new class P, with seventy-eight inch wheels, did some fine running a few days ago, having reached the speed of ninety miles per hour, and averaged eighty-seven miles per hour for several miles. It also ran 53.2 miles (including six slow-ups) in 52.75 minutes, and from a standstill at Bay View it ran to Chasco, 11.4 miles, in 5 minutes and 59 seconds.

SUCCESSORS AT AND SMALL.

Referring to the Georgia farmer's hog and pig weighing respectively 500 and 300 pounds, Mr. W. F. Erb of Highlands, Ky., writes that he has a porker which weighs 800 pounds, also a pig fifteen months old which weighs 400.

A dog's bone has again been used in a New York hospital in repairing the broken leg of a man. The patient in this case was over sixty years old. The operation was performed over three weeks ago, and success seems assured.

The largest gasometer in the world is at East Greenwich, England. When full it contains 12,000,000 cubic feet of gas. It weighs 2,320 tons, is 129 feet high, 300 feet in diameter, requires 1,200 tons of coal to fill it with gas and cost \$300,000.

The respiration apparatus invented by Professor Voit, of Germany, has been received by the Yale college medical school. Its purpose is to measure the oxygen absorbed by the body and the carbonic acid and water given off. From the data thus obtained, the decomposition of the body can be determined, and the decomposition caused by the digestion of the various kinds of food compared. It is hoped that the experiments will result in the selection of diets that will prolong the lives of those suffering from consumption and other diseases.

The famous leaning tower of Pisa is a campanile or bell tower. The building, which is cylindrical in form, is 197 feet high and fifty feet in diameter, made entirely of white marble. It is called the leaning tower from the fact that it inclines some thirty feet from the perpendicular, and it is not generally known that this inclination, which gives the tower such a remarkable appearance, was not intentional. At the time it was about half done the error in measurement was perceived. It was guarded against by the use of extra braces in the further construction of the building, and an adaptation of the stone in the highest portion. There are seven bells on the top of the tower, the largest of which weighs 12,000 pounds, and these are so placed as to counteract, as far as possible, the leaning of the tower itself.

TAKEN FROM LIFE.

The "lady life insurance agent" is becoming one of the features of business life in London.

A pot containing \$3,009 in gold and silver has been found on Dr. Bailey's farm near Lancaster, Pa.

General court martial orders No. 114 brings the important intelligence that Private H. D. Card has been turned down and compelled to forfeit \$5 of his pay to the United States for remarking "this hash is not fit to eat," or words to that effect.

James McGuire, a farmer of Scott township, Lawrence county, Pa., heard a noise in his hen-coop, and looked the door while he went two miles for a constable. An hour later, when the door was opened, Mrs. McGuire was found lying on the floor. She had fainted and was benumbed with the cold.

While a Chicago minister, Rev. H. H. Barbour, was preaching on the doom of Sodom and Gomorrah, he repeated in his extemporized words of the text: "Except ye thy life. Look not behind thee," etc. Just then a tall, patriarchal-looking man arose and with unintentionally but all the same powerfully dramatic effort pointed to the ceiling, which was one mass of flame. The alarm thus given turned into a panic, and in half a minute the church was cleared.

One of the best of "applause" stories is related of a singer who was exceedingly self-conscious—not to say intolerably conceited—who, at a concert at which she was to vocalize, handed the German gentleman who was accompanying her at the piano-forte a copy of her song marked in several places: "Wait for the applause." At the end of one verse there came a dead silence among the audience. The accompanist laid not a finger on a key, but blinked placidly through his spectacles at the lady. "What are you waiting for, she asked, in an exasperated undertone. "I am waiting for the applause," replied the pianist, "and he nod good-bye."

FADS AND FANCIES.

In old Rome a law was passed forbidding men to debate themselves by wearing silk, which was considered fit only for women.

The most noted shot among English women is Lady Eva Quin, wife of Captain Wyndham, heir presumptive to the earl of Dunraven. She has killed six full-grown tigers from the frail shelter of a howdah.

Fencing is universal in callisthenics as a means of physical culture, contends Mrs. William Bloodgood, the New York fencing expert. She declares that in fencing every muscle of the body is brought into active play.

Secretary Jang, of the Korean legation, at Washington, has a practical way of learning the English language, which he is earnestly trying to master. He studies each day the things he has to handle in the affairs of the household.

A recent craze in Paris has been for frames, dainty boxes, card cases and the like, made of white or pale pink kid, painted with a sprinkling of flowers copied from old Dresden china. This is a suggestion for using the upper part of long white kid gloves.

STEPPED ON SHAKES.

The Horrible Death of a Farmer's Wife in Georgia.

It was about the middle of May, 1893, and Mrs. Richard Smith, the wife of a farmer, had gone to the field with her husband, who was replanting corn that had failed to come up regularly. While they were at work Mrs. Smith wandered off to one side of the field where there was thickets of dewberry vines. While picking the berries she stood upon a pile of rocks that had been picked up from the field and thrown in a heap and the vines had covered them. When she finally started to step down some of the stones were dislodged and rolled noisily down.

Instantly the pile availed with furious serpents, that hissed and writhed about the frightened woman like so many demons. The sight was so terrible that Mrs. Smith stood horror-stricken while the venomous creatures twisted and twined about her limbs and glided over her person, striking and biting her furiously. At last fear gave way and she screamed for help. The men soon came to her rescue and were nearly overcome by the sight. The wretched woman was now fighting with all her strength for life. She grappled the writhing things and attempted to tear them away. Acting on the direction of her friends, she stumbled to the open field, where they could assist her, and in a few minutes seventeen copperheads and four rattlesnakes had been killed. Several of them had followed her from the stone-pile, hissing and writhing in anger.

As soon as possible Mrs. Smith was taken to her home and assistance summoned, but there was not the slightest chance of saving her life. Her body became quickly swollen to an enormous extent, and the skin assumed hideous colors. She had been bitten a dozen times in the face, and her features became one mass of bloated green and black. Sight died and speech left her. The pain soon drove her into delirium, and in the most horrible agony life passed away.

FLORAL CURIOSITIES.

Violet Plants That Cost Over Sixty Dollars Each.

Few people would want to pay \$5,000 for thirty-two violet plants. Yet that is what a San Francisco florist sold that many roots for, and he does not think he was overpaid either. As may be supposed, the violets are curiosities.

They are the outcome of years of patient hybridizing. Only violets of one gender grow on a plant. This renders them capable of being experimented with successfully. The big, bold double violet is the male flower. The demure single blossom is the female. From the double flower the pollen is carefully cut and placed in the cup of the single blossom. Only one blossom in a hundred of those artificially treated will produce seed. This seed is then planted, and the resultant violet is again hybridized with some other remarkable specimen.

Sometimes odd colors are obtained. Sometimes odd form. A year ago a nurseryman produced a violet plant. It was four times larger than the ordinary flower, and grew on a stem from twelve to fifteen inches long. The plant on which these remarkable blossoms grew was up from one of the seeds resulting from a long series of hybridizing. It was a hybridized and now there are thirty-two plants. These were purchased by a city florist for \$7,000. An iron-bound contract prevents the propagator from giving away, selling or keeping a single rootlet. A nursery will be started to be devoted to multiplying the peculiar plant. None of the plants or blossoms will be sold for two years, by which time the thirty-two roots will have grown to 4,000,000 or 5,000,000. The violet has been named the "Tiberius Parrott," after the well-known capitalist.

A Thing of Fear and Fidelity.

What an elusive thing a new language is, to be sure. A lovely old German lady, showing me her wonderfully trained birds, ordered one of them to sing, and as it prettily obeyed she lovingly said: "Poor creature! he is blind all over," meaning totally blind. Old Mr. Sothner, the German merchant, well versed in his own language, but always in hot water with ours, once writing an English letter fell into controversy with the word "before" and not satisfied as to its final letter, he swung out to his partner in the other room: "Oh, Benham, is there behind an s in before?"

Jimmy Wain's Converted.

The story is told of a parent who had become a recent convert to hypnosis. His small son, who had heard him discussing the subject, asked what hypnosis was. He did not answer, but with the imperative manner of a professional mesmerist, said: Now, Jimmy, do you hear? That is not a clock, but a ducky-bird, chirp, chirp! Jimmy turned and fled precipitately, crying: "Mamma! Mamma! Papa's got the jim-jams!"

Artemus and the Hoopsticks.

While in the show business in Pennsylvania, Artemus Ward was put to sleep in an attic where the ash had been taken out for ventilation. In the night it turned cold. Artemus got up, and was busy at the window. "What are you doing, Artemus?" his companion asked. "I'm so cold," he chattered. "I was hanging up some of these hoopsticks. I thought they'd keep the coldest of the cold out."

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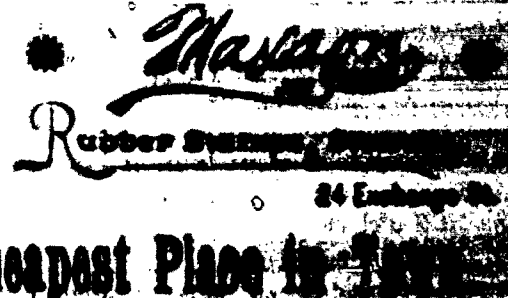
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