OUR FASHION LETTER

ELBOW SLEEVES ARE SAID TO BE THE DECREE OF FASHION.

Shirt Waists Will Appear in Infinite Variety—Fichues are Being Renewed—To Arrange the Scarf.—Back-hair Nets are the Style.

The very newest golf or rainy-day skirt, shown in the accompanying illustration, has been named the Victoria. It laps over in front from right to left, with a round corner at the bottom, where it is universally tailor-stitched. The ever-increasing vogue of these skirts renders new ideas in their creation much sought, so if you are getting a new Spring one a Victoria is the proper thing.

Golf or Rainy-Day Skirt.

New Shirt Waists.

The short waist this summer will be anything but the severely starched affair usually called up by that name. To be sure, there are still man-made shirts of cambric and madras and cheviot, with the regulation shirt sleeve, stock collar, box plaited front band—this season with a yokeless back—but the truly adorable ones for everything but sporting wear are the softest, the frilliest, the most feminine of little garments.

The use of Valenciennes as a trimming for a dimity frock is really lovely. The dimity is a white one, having a design of large peacock feathers in their natural colors. So rich and unusual, in fact, is the design and coloring that it suggests a foulard more than a mouslin. The skirt is gathered about the waist with two rows of shirrings below the belt, while the hem is trimmed with three insets of Valenciennes insertions of different widths, each band turning up the front breadth, the six ending very near together at the waist line. This gives a little petticoat effect in front at the hem, which is filled in with plaited plain white lawn. The bodice has a high shaped girdle built of encircling insertions of Valenciennes sewed together with beadings, through which turquoise blue silk ribbons are run, three blue bows trimming the centre of the girdle front, one above the other. The dimity above is draped in surplice fashion, and has a choker and plastron of tucked white lawn. Tight elbow sleeves of printed dimity have a very deep flounce of the same, inset with three insertions and hemmed on the edge, an inner plaiting of white lawn adding to the grace of the drapery.

The prettiest of all summer dresses will undoubtedly have elbow sleeves, as tight as possible to the very shoulder, and finished with deep flounces which fall down the outside of the arm almost to the wrist, writes the fashion authority. It is an enchanting arrangement, showing off a rounded arm and wrist to the best possible advantage, and lending grace to the simplest frock.

A sprigged lawn frock has a line plaiting of the material for an elbow flounce, the outside very much longer than the inside. It is edged with Valenciennes, and a lace-edged ruche of the lawn makes a heading quite in character with the style of the sleeve. A little bow of ribbon on the inside of the elbow is characteristic, too, and some times the flounces are banished for a more severe arrangement of ribbon band and bow knot, under which the long glove is to be tucked.

Fichu Revived.

It is inevitable that with such a sleeve to the fore, the gathered skirt and the simple fichu should be resuscitated as well. The fichu, indeed, has been worn with success all winter with evening gowns, and bids fair to be the smartest trimming for the summer bodice. It may be called a "simple fichu," because of its air of demure purity, but it is, in reality, about the most difficult bit of drapery possible. Unless one has the taste of an artist and the time of a lady of leisure, one should wear only that fichu that is cut en forme and attached fixedly to the bodice. The knack of throwing the three-cornered scarf of gauze about the shoulders with a result at once graceful and becoming and permanent, is acquired only after long practice. It may look well a moment after it is arranged, but the slightest exertion or lightest breeze will make havoc of it at once. Having proved the necessity of relying for its success only upon a skilled gown maker, and firm but invisible tackings, let us come to the manner of wearing it.

To Arrange the Scarf.

If arranged high about the throat behind and drawn down in front to the waist line, the deep flounces falling over the shoulders almost to the elbows it has an air of demureness which should not be allowed to verge upon the sedate or old womanish. When drawn closely about the arms below the shoulders and knotted on the bust, it is more decidedly smart, especially when bordered with deep linen fringe.

In a square effect, the muslin folded narrowly and the double ruffles falling softly over the corsage, it is more truly like the Marie Antoinette fichu. A little black velvet bow fastens it squarely on each side of the bust, and it knots with a brooch and no ends in the centre. This is used to best advantage with a square cut decolletage. For day dresses, a gauzy fichu frilled with lace is charming when knotted on the bust, after being passed tightly across the arms below the shoulders, its ends hanging quite to the knees and ankles, broadening and ruffled all about. This verges upon the realm of the Directoire scarf, which is also a feature of the summer fashions. A variation of the fichu are bolero scarf ends arranged on the front of a summer bodice, knotting softly in the centre, and with short, pointed ends hanging just below the waist line. It is trimmed with lace frills, and is, curiously enough, to be seen upon dainty shirt waists, as well as upon whole frocks.

Hair Ornaments.

The serpentine comb, that is the ornament from shell with a gliding snake along the front, is having surprising vogue. Used as a basis for the crown coil, it has a rather startling appearance over a fresh young face. And it is the ingenue who especially affects the snaky ornaments of the moment.

More than ever are we wearing simple shell pins in our hair in place of the old kind made from steel. And whether the chances of being struck by lightning are lessened, as some insist, certainly the weight is much decreased. Two or three pins from shell, or of a substance which looks like it, do as much work as half a handful of metal ones. And they are far more sightly, too.

Variety in hair ornaments increases. One almost feels not dressed without something ornamental in her hair when she goes to the theatre. And we are beginning to wear becoming little decorations in our hair at all hours of the day. With some women the black velvet bowknot is as much a part of their coiffure as is their hairpins. Many times one is able to make her headdress more symmetrical by just the proper placing of the velvet bow.

Other women are matching their hair in whatever color it may be, and using velvet knots of that shade. It is coming natural to us, too, to slip a jeweled brooch into our arranged locks in some becoming way above the face.

Tulle wings make a charming finish to an evening toilet. Cut full and outlined with finest ribbon wire, they are worn just where the pompadour leaves off and back knot begins.

One of the simplest hair ornaments is made with a bunch of artificial violets and a narrow violet ribbon. The ribbon simply serves to hold the flowers together, while the short ends give a jaunty appearance to the little ornament, which is worn at the side of the head or primly in front, as one prefers.

Back-hair Nets.

Back-hair nets are in again, though not much on this side of the water yet, the fancy being so recent it has not had time to thrive even among those who lead in the adoption of new ideas.

Well-dressed French women are responsible for the cachet. In weariness of the straggling locks which have marked the epoch of the pompadour, the Paris woman thinks nothing more important now than an entirely tidy coiffure.

Finding it impossible to produce the desired effect, retaining her Marcel waves, without further aid than the little pin at the nape of the neck afforded, something else had to be devised. The invisible hair net was thought of. A new friend from an old one! And the special novelty in the method of using is through its adjustment with a jeweled stud in place of the familiar invisible hairpin, whose principal characteristic was not so much that of doing its work unseen as of getting lost.

Spring Suit for Small Girl.

Of course, the hair net must be the color of hair over which it is worn, and one must be careful not to tear it with her sidecombs and ornamental pins.

Not Popular.

There seems to be small disposition to imitate the headdress of Mrs. Langtry, who once so controlled the fashion in hairdressing that the Langtry knot low in the neck was the universal coiffure for those who thought to dress at all in the mode. The pompadour does not coincide with the Langtry knot, and women's hats, gowns, all are made with the chief idea—that of slenderness and height. The high hairdressing contributes not a little to this impression.

The pompadour front now is parted usually at one side and the hair arranged loosely to fall over one temple more than the other. "Bangs" have not come back precisely; but you would not have a woman's short hair hanging straight around her face, would you? Indeed, you would prefer it the least bit curled on an occasional fron. And that is just what women themselves have chosen to do, compromising with the mode, which would introduce short forehead curls again, and one's disinclination to bother once more with untidy "bangs."

BOER'S SIDE OF IT.

CONDITIONS OF LIFE AND GOVERNMENT IN OOM PAUL'S REPUBLIC.

Boers Interest in Education—Fine and Well Arranged Public Buildings—Vast Cost of the Military—Good Government and Good Laws.

It was in Pretoria, the first Sunday after the Jameson raid. The Dopper Church was crowded to its utmost, and the congregation sang the classic battle hymn of the Huguenots, Psalm 68:1: "Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered; let them also that hate him flee before him." Oom Paul was sitting in his chair, to the right of the pulpit, holding the Bible in front of his face, so that his faithful burghers could not see his emotion and his eyes, filled with tears. Did he think of the sore trials through which his people had passed, of their "trekking" into the wilderness to escape from English rule. Possibly visions of years gone loomed before him, when he himself, a boy, formed part of that gallant band of men who went forth to found

A Boer Scout.

a new state in the unknown interior of South Africa, after having sacrificed their homes. Perhaps in his mind he reviewed all those thrilling events connected with the early history of the Transvaal, the almost unsurmountable difficulties which beset the path of the brave pioneers, which were only overcome by their childlike faith in Him, whom the Boers call "their Great General." But their new fatherland did not prove a haven of rest, and their independence was again taken from them, to be regained only at the point of the sword. And now, once more, an attempt had been made to rob his people of their liberty, but had met with ignominious failure. Small wonder, therefore, that the venerable President of the Transvaal could not restrain his tears.

The Boers.

It has often been asserted that the Boers are opposed to civilizing influences and scorn education. If the boys know how to shoot and handle a horse their education is completed. Nothing, however, warrants this accusation. The history of the Transvaal shows that the Boers have always evinced great solicitude for good schools. Even during the trying days of the "Greek Trek" education was not lost sight of. When the Boers formed a "laager" and remained in one spot for some months instruction was given to the children by a minister or other person qualified to do so.

Of course, in a country so thinly settled as the Transvaal, where the people, except in a few cities, live spread over a vast area and wide apart, it is sometimes extremely difficult to send the children to school, on account of the long distances they would have to travel. In order to give their children the advantages of education the Boers, who live too far from school, often take a teacher in the house, giving him board and lodging and a salary. Quite a number of Boers, who can afford it, send their children to universities in Cape Colony or Europe, and, though only a minority is able to do this, it goes to show that the Boers, as a people, are aware of the advantages of good education, even if they have not enjoyed those advantages themselves.

Their Education.

In the cities and villages much has been done for education. Take, for instance, the Girls' High School in Pretoria, a fine and well arranged building, surrounded by a beautiful garden. The instruction given there is very good, and that the Boers appreciate that institution is shown by the large attendance. Then there is the State Model School, intended, as the name indicates, to serve as a model for schools yet to be built, and which is being faithfully copied all over the Transvaal. This building would be a credit to any country.

That Dutch is being taught in the schools is only natural, and no reasonable man can reproach the Boers on that score. English is also taught, but it holds a place second to the language of the country.

The two men who have done most for public instruction in the Transvaal are Professor Mansvelt, the Superintendent of the Department of Education, and the Minister of that department, De Jonge, who was killed at the battle of Elandslaagte. A few extracts from Professor Mansvelt's report for the year 1898 may give some idea of what has been accomplished. The number of children who attended school rose from 12,099 in 1897 to 15,512 in 1898. There were 509 schools in 1898, against 457 in 1897, and the teachers employed numbered 836 in 1898 and 687 in 1897. The high school were attended by 1306 in 1898, against 954 in 1897.

Vast Sums for Military.

No doubt much more would have been done for education if the threatening attitude of the Uitlanders, backed up by England, had not forced the Transvaal government to expend vast sums for military purposes, which money might otherwise have been [illegible] voted to school [illegible] the Orange Free State [illegible] excellent schools. Grey College in Bloemfontein, and the girls' boarding school there have earned a world-wide reputation, and are ably and intelligently conducted. Translating something else, the government printing establishment at Pretoria is admirably arranged and does good work. When it is considered that all this has been accomplished by a people small in number, and who, sixty years ago, were but a lot of farmers, who had sold their possessions in Cape Colony for next to nothing, and were, in consequence, almost ruined, much credit should be given to the man who led the destinies of the Transvaal, and who, never losing faith in the future of their country, realized that when the time came for the younger generation to take their places education would be essential for them in order to bring their country to prosperity and greatness. There are no military schools in the Transvaal, but, judging by recent events, the Transvaal needs none. Generalship seems to come natural to them.

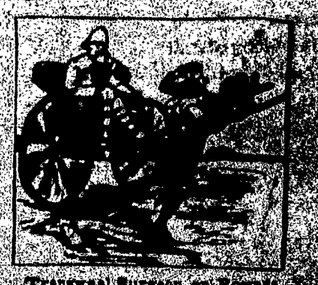
These facts and fine public buildings are particularly interesting, because almost every word published in America about the Boers comes from English sources or from Americans whose interests are tied up with English interests in the Transvaal.

It is asserted that the Boers are uncouth, unprogressive, illiterate, cruel to the blacks, narrow and bigoted. We hear much of "progress" so-called, and "manifest destiny," and the grievous necessity which England labors under in her unselfish desire to civilize the world. Americans and English, in discussing slavery in the Transvaal, are prone to forget that slavery existed in this free country until forty years ago, and that the slaves of the world were stolen in Africa by British sailors and carried to America in British ships. The Boers are descended from "the most Protestant nation in Europe," and the rigidity of their spines is naturally obnoxious to an arrogant and overbearing people. That the Boers are obstinate is proven by their stubborn defense of their country, when all the world cried out that they had not a ghost of a show against England.

Government and Laws.

Long before the Uitlanders came into the country the Boers had a good government and laws. The country was divided into thirteen districts, each with an almost independent administration. There were many prosperous villages, the Transvaal being then entirely a farming community. There was no aristocratic land ownership, as in England, and R. Campbell Johnston who visited the South African Republic in 1873 or 1874, said that, in his opinion, it would be a blessing if the Transvaal system of recording should be adopted in England. The laws were well administered, there were judges for each district, and the constitution adopted in 1858, although rather a crude document, opened the country to every foreigner, guaranteeing him freedom of religion and speech and the right of assembly, provided that he respected the laws of the country. Freedom of the press also prevailed, although the number of newspapers was very small.

Only during recent years, when the Uitlander press openly incited to rebellion, and never ceased to abuse the government and the people of the country, where they enjoyed hospitality in the most immeasurable terms, have steps been taken to restrict the liberties guaranteed in the constitution. This may be considered as an unwise move on the part of the Transvaal government, but it must also be admitted that they acted under great provocation.



Transvaal Surgeon on Parade.

Sight should not be lost of the fact that the Uitlanders, in their struggle for wealth, have rendered the Transvaal great services, but neither should it be forgotten that the Dutch are the true colonists of South Africa, and have made the country what it is from Table bay to the Zambesi river, even if the British have developed the mines. The Uitlanders have made the mistake, by their arrogance, of estranging that portion of the Boer population which desired reforms, causing progressive and conservative Boers to stand shoulder to shoulder against foreign intermeddling and aggression. When it is considered how long it took England to regulate suffrage, and when even to-day the hereditary House of Lords can block, if so minded, all legislation in favor of the people of England, it was certainly absurd and unwise of the Uitlanders to so bitterly criticise the Boer government when patience and appreciation of the many advantages they enjoyed might, and no doubt would, have brought about good results.

The Die Cast.

The die is now cast, and a brave and manly people is engaged in a life and death struggle with the mightiest empire in the world. It is impossible to foretell the outcome, but if the Uitlanders could have foreseen the result of their agitation they might have paused on the brink for sanguine as England still feels about the final outcome of the war, its confidence in England's ability to conquer the Boers is much shaken. If more Majuba Hills should follow those already suffered, Great Britain's position would be extremely critical, and might require all of the empire's resources to successfully end a war which was so rashly undertaken.

And even if England should eventually succeed it is not [illegible] the Afrikanders will [illegible] in vassalage. A people who have shown such determination [illegible] will not [illegible] [illegible]