

WHILE JULY DAYS BEGIN

THE GIRL IN THE BLOUSE RE-JOICES IN THE FIELD.

The Blouse is of Silk or Sometimes of Flannel—Shoes Also Are Interesting—There is Much to Say About Millinery—And About Summer Gowns.

The girl in the blouse is the girl who is interesting. That is, of course, there may be interest in the girl or interest in the blouse or interest in both girl and blouse, which last is from some points of view the most to be desired state of affairs. I spent one frightfully hot evening this week in a school for teaching English to immigrant Russian Jewesses, maintained (the school, not the women) by the Baron Hirsch fund. The low-browed, swarthy, graceful



PRETTY SUMMER SHOES.

creatures were interesting, and they wore blouses, and these blouses were also interesting, being of light figured cambric and fastened with small white pearl buttons. They wore dingy leather belts and at least half of them had tucked under their belts pessimistic daisies or heavy-hearted roses of the sort you buy at the rate of three for five cents on any street corner.

Their blouses were not of the kind that usually find place in a fashion letter, though even better worth considering than those other blouses worn in a tennis match it was my good fortune to witness the morning after the school visit, which dissipation I had wound up by taking a night train for Newport.

The Newport tennis players were neither low browed nor swarthy, but I doubt if they were as graceful as my Russians. Your athletic girl somehow does not run to grace as a rule. They wore silk blouses in two cases out of three. A girl who appeared to be particularly good at something the experts call, I believe, a four-hand volley, wore an especially pretty blouse of pale yellow silk with a yoke of soie de chine in a deeper shade of yellow. The full sleeves were of the darker tone also, and were gathered into silk cuffs which looked too tight, though the slim brunette managed to use her slim olive-tinted wrists pretty actively. There was a gold passementerie trimming on the blouse and on the whole wool skirt, and the little flat sailor hat of white chip had a twist of yellow mull about it and a twist of pale yellow velvet under the brim.

A blouse of white surah was rather effective, combined as it was with a yoke of pleated silk and black velvet, and with full sleeves with black velvet cuffs. This was worn with a white flannel skirt trimmed with graduated rows of black velvet ribbon, and with a black sailor hat above which rose two white wings.

An exceedingly attractive blouse was worn by an exceedingly attractive girl, begging the pardon of the enthusiastic tennis people, who didn't like her at all because her underhand service—I don't play tennis myself and I hope, with a spice of fear in the hope, I may be getting these names straight—was so very awkward. It was a delicate shade of pink and was trimmed with points of black velvet.

Girls who were not playing wore jackets over their blouses. One was of striped blue and black silk with loose fronts. Another was in a pale lavender flannel and was worn by a yellow-haired girl, who also wore a blouse of white and lavender check.



HER COATS AND SHIRTS.

There were a good many blouses and shirts of spotted and figured satens, and for every blouse or shirt there was a different variety of belt, and some of the belts were most peculiar. There were gold and silver leather belts as big as peasant bodices, and belts with huge diamond-shaped expansions in front, and belts that lapped in points, and belts that buckled under the left arm.

The blouse that had a comfortable turn-down collar was the rare and angelic exception. Nine blouses in every ten were so high at the throat they made one wish to give utterance to a cry quite different from "God Save the Princess of Wales."

I was talking with a man the other day about shoes, or rather he was talking with me, and he said that the bright and cheerful colors—to put things mildly—which have begun to prevail among the followers of St. Crispin's craft, will continue to be loved by them. Gold and silver kid will go on giving the impression that the girl of the day walks to wealth beyond the riches of fairy tales. Slate gray Levant Morocco has a certain following, and the punching and the pinking and the decorating with

tinsel and moire bows and the cutting out of toe caps and fronts in all manner of fanciful devices proceeds with a constancy and a devotion calculated to give a pleasant impression of the fertility of imagination possessed by the modern shoe workman.

One doesn't go out much at this season when nothing of consequence is under way and yet I had opportunity the other evening to study in a room not too crowded, the beauties and the ugliness of the slippers worn by a considerable company of women. With a white mull dress, short waisted, in the revived empire style, was worn a yellow sash and long, narrow, yellow slippers, with baby straps. With a cream colored silk, figured with rosebuds and butterflies and cut with short puffy paniers, was worn a delicate cream-colored silk slipper, decorated on the vamp with roses wrought in pink silk and crystal beads. With a silver gray surah, cut with Greek draperies and clasped with massive gold on the shoulders, was worn a double strap classic boot in gray satin, sparkling with gold and jet embroidery. There was a glimpse of Catharine boots, high at the back and open in front, laced with gold cords. There were glossy black patent leather slippers also, fastened with jet buckles cunningly wrought in the monogram of the owner.

And how and why were all these foot coverings visible? My friendly inquirer, if ever you feel any curiosity about slippers or about tan and yellow or silver stockings, just hang about in the dressing room at any reception and when the maid is helping my lady with her toilet you won't find my lady at all careful, as her street boots are unbuttoned and her evening shoes slipped on, to keep her feet from being observed. Why, I could give you quite a talk, if ever the mood should take me, on distinguished ankles I have seen. But not now. Other people say enough about stockings to excuse me from discourse on their embroideries.

There are going to be evenings if evenings are not now common, and there will be fine gowns. One finished and packed for Saratoga yesterday is worth a moment's attention. Black chantilly, as shown in the illustration, is draped over a black silk foundation. Deep flounces are arranged at the waist and about the round corsage, and wide black ribbons hang down over the skirt ending in great bows. The beauty of the toilet is completed by a very long, plummy black ostrich fan, which is cunningly devised to add to its fascinations.

There are always words that may be said about millinery. In a somewhat lengthy and varied experience I do not remember a summer when millinery could justly claim an equal number of syllables. I noted yesterday a hat covered with the old-fashioned pinks, which are to me the sweetest and dearest of all summer flowers. The foundation was of white chip crossed with a net work of pale sea-blue silk cord. Worn at a garden party early in the



GOWN OF BLACK CHANTILLY.

week was a great glaring white leghorn; its crown and brim were laden with drooping roses, and I think its curves and its daringness and its general becomingness have been topics of conversation ever since in many circles. Conversational topics, you know, are not plenty at the beginning of July.

A twist of inch-wide sea green velvet ribbon was the foundation of a bonnet as small as the leghorn hat was large. The velvet crossed at the back, passed around to the throat and tied there in a bow. About the circumference of its head circle was set a loose wreath of sweet peas. That was all. The minute bonnet rested on a twist of yellow hair perched high on the head and yet not on top; upon a twist that was all ripples, like running gold. Upon that particular twist of that especial hair the bonnet was the prettiest thing I have seen in New York, and yet I doubt if it would be at all interesting over a less interesting coiffure.

The airy silk muslins one sees everywhere are the most charming muslins of many seasons. They have colored spray flower designs, and when they give up being charming and become simply vulgar and common even though half-priced, they are ornamented with jet stone. Black silk tulle make some of the prettiest of the summer dresses, and there are cobwebby gauzes worn with gold and silver threads that will glitter and glow in the ball room. The front breathes of skirt are embroidered with trailing vines, lilacs, hyacinths, but-tercupes, etc., and upon other parts of the costume will be introduced the same devices in smaller figures. Locust brocades are brought out in several of the more novel patterns, with the woody parts of the stem of amethysts, emeralds and other colored stones. There seems no prospect that the mock jewel mania will abate, but there is a little more taste and method in its midsummer madness.

ELLEN OSBORN.

A Handsome Fan.

The handsomest feather fan made sold in London two years ago for, it is said, \$2,000. It is composed of three white ostrich plumes, each a yard long, and amply wide, without a blemish to mar their perfection. In the centre near the handle was a tiny pompon having an aigrette set with diamonds, and the carved mother-of-pearl handle had the owner's monogram in diamonds.

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WHITE NOT IN FASHION.

EXCEPT WHEN WORN AT WATER-ING PLACES.

White Gowns are Bad Form on the Street—The Revival of the Spencer—Oscar Wilde, and those who Backed Him When in America.

During the hot weather when the thermometer runs up like a race horse and acts as if its goal was sheol, we all owe a grudge to mother Eve, our relation on the mother's side, for listening to the seductive wiles of the serpent. By so doing she has entailed upon us poor women the endless misery and worry of clothes, whose burden we never feel as keenly as during a spell of weather like the present. In such a climate conventional dress is an absurd-



dity; why not adopt the airy garments of the Indian odalisque or even the Anglo-Indian garb worn by the Europeans in tropical countries.

White is almost tabooed except at watering places, a white gown upon the street being deemed bad form. Last summer was a white season, but not in town where the fashion would be a sensible innovation. Thin fabrics of all kinds however are more in vogue than they have been during the past twenty years. Grandma's purple spotted organdie with its yellow lace can be taken out from its long sleep between the old linen sheets with their lingering fragrance of lavender blossoms; the be-flooned, beflowered Swiss, with its faded ribbons is made almost in the fashion of today, flounced up to the waist and trimmed with narrow lace. The much respected sewing silk grenadine with its many breadths again sees the light, for all of these materials, and even the style of make, is once more reproduced.

The Spencer, an article of departed finery has been revived, and is useful to smarten up skirts which are not in their first youth. It is prettiest made of changeable surah or of striped Corah silk, and is folded into a band at the neck and has full sleeves gathered into a deep cuff. It may be shirred, pulled or smoked, and is becoming only to slender figures; being an abomination upon the short pudgy woman.

Neglige waists of lawn, saten or percale are infinitely more comfortable than the tailor-made bodice, and may be worn with propriety in the morning either in city or country.

It may not be generally known that Gilbert and Sullivan were the backers of Oscar Wilde when upon his lecture tour in this country. Deeming that the untutored Americans would not appreciate the satire on sad-colored gowns, and the ridiculing of high art fads, which formed the text of *Patience*, these astute opera-bouffists induced the long-haired Oscar to become a full-fledged aesthete and exhibit his silk clad calves for the benefit of an American audience, thus usurping the functions but not the title of an operatic advance agent. Oscar came and saw and conquered, and albeit thought ridiculed found many disciples, most of them however belonging to the female sex.

It is difficult to say whether the corset-less and bonnetless cult is on the ascending or the receding wave, but there is one thing certain, and that is that with all its absurdities its tendency has rather been elevating than demoralizing.

A woman now studies her particular style, and if she has no figure dons a flowing garment in lieu of a tailor-made suit, which accentuates her shortcomings and fails to enhance her charms. The dreamy subdued colorings of the flowered silks which seemed to be painted with the brush and not with the loom, lend a portly beauty to even a plain face, and with such a wealth of style and material from which to choose, a woman seems almost guilty of criminal negligence if she does not at least make of herself a picturesque, if not a beautiful object.

Nowadays also art makes a brave fight against nature and the creed of the women of the nineteenth century is not to let herself be as God made her but to put forth a superhuman endeavor, to repair the neglect of niggard nature. In the matter of complexion she can have recourse to powder and paint, but how is she to fill up the hills and hollows in her neck and arms? Parisian art has come to her

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LADIES

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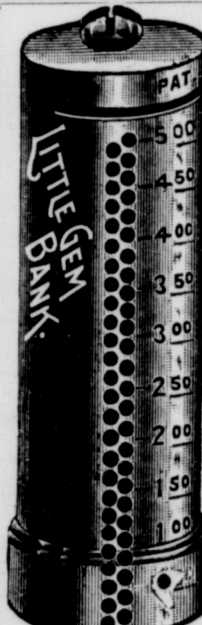
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JOHN CHINAMAN'S WIFE.

She is a Drudge, but Very Neat in Appearance.

The domestic life of the Amoy Chinese is admirable and detestable. The wife is not a companion, but a drudge. Unless she belongs to the coolie or boatman class, her feet have been bandaged in infancy so that her gait suggest a young boy learning to use stilts. Her costume is unique, consisting of four to seven blouses, as many trousers, hose and low-cut shoes. She wears no hat, and in lieu of gloves buries her hands in the folds of her long sleeves. In appearance she is neat as a fashion plate. Her hair, oiled every day and shampooed every week, gleams like carved jet; her face shines from soap, water and friction; her clothes are spotless and are brushed and ironed every morning. She is mild mannered and courteous. But her ignorance is unathomable, and her superstition a wonder. She burns joss sticks at the door to keep away evil spirits; in her garden to scare midew and parasites from her plants; in the dining room as an antidote to poisons, and in the bedroom to intimidate the nightmare, burglars and wild beast. She receives no company but the few women of whom her husband approves. She knows no men outside of her family circle. It is a deadly insult to ask a Chinese gentleman how his wife is. She is sad when her better half makes money, because she fears he will take an additional wife or two and purchase one or more concubines. If he dies it is her duty, prescribed by a custom 7,000 years old, to commit suicide, so that her sons can erect a monument to their mother as "a virtuous widow." She goes nowhere, reads little or nothing, sees no amusements and has no social pleasures.

She never complains, because she has been taught to be what she is, and no thought of change or difference has probably ever crossed her mind. At times she catches a glimpse of European women, but regards them with more contempt and deeper loathing than the outcasts of her own sex and race. Her happiness is in her kitchen, her garden and her children. It is through having nothing else to do that she has acquired her marvellous skill in raising silkworms, in spinning the thread, weaving the tissue and making the exquisite embroideries for which China is famous.

Fern Gathering.

When the sky is blue and the wild morning glories bloom and the trumpet mosses and trailing ivy covers the ground, then on the edge of the hazels and under the firs it occurs to the woman who is out of the city for a month or a day or an hour to wonder how she can take home some maiden-hairs. It would be better, of course, not to disturb the shy beauties except early in the spring and late in the fall, but when she will she will, and so let her dig very carefully, not wrenching the roots from the soil.

Wrap each fern with a bit of damp moss and roll it in stout brown paper, letting the fronds project well. Leave three or four fronds on a fern of average size, six or seven on one that is quite large. Look for gold thread and Solomon's seal and partridge vines to dig also, and put all into boxes covered with birch bark, if you can find it on reaching home. If they don't get too much dust or too much gas the ferns will live indoors over summer, and in the autumn you should put them out to be well cooled and rested in the snow. *New York Record.*

COUNTESS ANNIE DE MONTAIGU.