

## ABOUT FALL FASHIONS.

SOME OF THE MOST INTERESTING OF AUTUMN'S ECCENTRICITIES.

The People Who Revive Trunk Hose Must Have a Sense of Humor—Fancy Jackets and Cloaks—The Sheath Skirt and the Skirt With Crinoline.

The autocracy of the tailor bodes even more ill than common this winter; for there is hardly a fashion or a fancy on the schedule for the season that does not already manifest a wild impatience to kick up its heels and run off into coltish vagaries. For example, I saw a very pretty pink-cheeked girl yesterday in a frock of plum color and apricot yellow. She wore a bonnet of plum colored velvet with a yellow crown overset with jet and trimmed with plum colored plumes. She had yellow gloves, a vest of yellow kid and—this was the touch of extravagance in the ensemble—to the back of her revers collar faced with yellow was pinned an apricot yellow velvet rosette with ends long enough to come forward under the arms on each side, and tie in a bow just below the bust, the loops falling quite to the hem of the gown. The ribbon, mind you, was not narrow ribbon, but broad and heavy and fully conscious of its own exceeding worth and dignity. At the early season tea to which the apricot and plume costume was

The bonnet worn with this toilet repeated the pink and grey and accentuated the colors with jet trimmings. By the way, what an amount of jet there is this autumn and how heavy it is. I noted a costume of the same private opening of which I have told you which offered a good illustration of jet tendencies. It is figured with a long cloak in the first picture. The bell shaped skirt—to say truth that other descriptive term extinguisher is quite as appropriate—was of beige cloth bordered with a leaf applique in black velvet. The long coat was in deep, narrow tab all around, finished with velvet leaves and a very deep jet fringe. The coat



LONG CLOAK AND DRESS WITH FRINGE.

opened over a gathered bodice of beige silk, and was to be worn with a little black velvet turban with Mercury's wings.

It is not easy, even after long experience, to understand the absolute lack of common sense manifested by fashion. Why, for example, should anybody wear jet fringe? Most people rejoice in the decline and fall of chiffon. It costs little, but in plain truth it is good for nothing. It is not especially beautiful at its best, and its best lasts sometimes less than an hour. The woman is fortunate who can get a week's wear out of the limp, crumpled textile. Comment of this sort was useless so long as the stuff was a "high novelty," but now that it falls from grace everybody can jump on it when it is down, though there may be a certain savor of ghoulish glee about the proceeding.

The most comical thing about the present fashion situation is the wavering between the sheath skirt and the looped skirt; between "draperies" tight as trousers and those which call for twenty yards of material. The newest sheath skirt is more of a sheath than ever. It is strained about the figure with not an inch to spare. It has a gored seam up the front and narrow gores on each side and no tulle except for four inches in the middle of the back. It is as narrow a skirt as ever made, and makes a pocket more than ever an unattainable luxury, to be classed with the things to be looked for only in the millennium. It is absolute in its emphasis of its side of the skirt question, but on the other hand the bell skirt is now made with three flounces reaching from waist to ground and quite on friendly terms with the crinoline. We shall see what we shall see.

ELLEN OSBORN.

## A CHANGE OF FIGURE.

Woman's Hips Out of Fashion—Good News for Stout Girls.

Those to whom their fairy godmothers have been good in the matter of figure ought to be specially grateful if they happen to be poor. It makes such a remarkable difference in the cost of dress! As all the fashions are now, and have been ever since we can remember, designed for long-waisted, slight figures, it is easy for such to look well, and a really beautiful form sets off the cheapest material, if only it be not clumsily cut.

There is no doubt that hips are quite out of the fashion, and if nature has unkindly failed to fall in with this arrangement the best that can be done under such trying circumstances is to have the best made of matter by a skillful dressmaker, or, better still, a ladies' tailor. Hips cannot be operated upon with deleterious effect to the health; therefore it is better that fashion should settle on them for one of her vagaries than on waists. They can, however, be made to look very small, and that simply by excellence of cut and sundry what we must call "dodges," known to skillful modistes.

Waists are still small, but as a good figure "up to date" requires a proper proportion between the waist and the hips it will be most undesirable for a woman to tight lace and incase herself with the assistance of a bedpost and a maid in her newest bodice, if the only result is to show more distinctly the largeness of her hips, which will too surely be the case if she artificially decreases the size of her waist. Ribs are, unfortunately, compressible to some extent, but hip bones are obstinate as facts, and though they may be glossed over and made the best of they are quite unalterable. Very slight people are by nature in the van of fashion now, and well proportioned women take a good second to them. Those who have tortured themselves to secure the wasp waists, which lasted for too many seasons, may take up their position in the rear, or else use a little padding to hide what has heretofore been their pride and glory, the disproportion of their waist to their shoulders and hips.

All the new garments are being built with a view to emphasizing what may be styled the new figure. There is a rigid straight up and downness about the very recent coats which, though eminently stylish, is, for the first moment, just a little startling. Little women stand appalled before the revelations for the season, and raise a pathetic remembrance about their own neglected case.

## The Rose in the Hair.

The Spanish fashion of wearing a deep red rose in the hair, just behind the ear, is being copied today by women who are inclined to picturesque hair-dressing. The American woman looks well with either a red or a white rose placed as described, as her complexion is sufficiently delicate to permit the use of either.

## "ASTRA" TALKS WITH GIRLS.

[Correspondents seeking information in this department should address their queries to "Astra," Progress, St. John.]

I had such an odd little budget of letters some weeks ago, girls, that I laid them aside for a leisure time as they required a good deal both of time and patience to decipher them. And now as this is a very leisure time indeed, I thought it might amuse you if I laid aside the cares of office, so far as freckle lotions hair washes, deportment and love affairs were concerned, and let you have a look at those same letters. They are evidently from a class in a primary school, to judge by their appearance, for they all came in one envelope, and are apparently written with the same pencil. They are on slips of paper which not only bear every appearance of long and faithful service, but which are evidently the left over pieces of telegram blanks, or the lower portions of bill heads. Of course I do not mean to criticize the paper, if it was all that my young friends had at hand, I am merely stating the fact. The first is brief and very much to the point. I wish all my letters were as much so. And it reads thus:

DEAR ASTRA.—(1) Do you think it proper for a young lady, seventeen years of age, to be sitting on a fence with a young gentleman in the evening? SEA WEED.

Well, now, Sea Weed, that depends entirely on the meaning you wish me to ascribe to the term "on the fence," for you know that it has more than one. If you mean that the young lady referred to was metaphorically balancing herself upon a mental fence with regard to a young gentleman about whom she was unable to come to a satisfactory decision, of course it was reprehensible on her part. But if you mean that she was merely disporting herself on the ordinary post and rail fence of commerce, with her young man for company, as did Artemus Ward and his Betsy Jane, why of course it is a matter of taste, and I should think, of comfort, provided the fence is built on the old fashioned narrow gauge principles. If so take my advice Sea Weed, and go to the trying place, provided with a cushion, and something to hold on by.

The next letter is even more marked for its tendency to reach the point as soon as possible and begins in this manner:

Are you not Miss — of —? I saw your photo in Moncton, and think it a good one. A LOVER OF BEAUTY.

For the gracefully implied compliment of the signature I thank you from the bottom of my heart, my child; and at the same time let me ask you, as between woman and woman, what good would it do you if I told you whether I was that charming young person or not? Geoffrey would have a fit, of some kind, at the mere suggestion of my being Miss Anybody instead of Mrs. Geoffrey. If you saw any photo at all, which you fancied was mine, I am so glad it was a pretty one. I am sorry I cannot answer the only question you asked me.

All of my young friends seem given to a slight abruptness of address, and a third starts out thus:

How is Geoffrey? What do you think of a girl that likes a boy that looks like a monkey? (2) Do you think a girl fifteen years old is a young lady? LAMP POST.

Surely my dear lamp post if you fulfil your public duties, in the way of casting light into dark places, you should be able to throw some light on these knotty points yourself. Not of course, on the question of Geoffrey's health which is fair, thank you, but the others. I should think a girl who was fond of a boy of that description, must either be fond of animals or else contemplate adopting the profession of an organ grinder. Seriously, if the boy is a nice one, it does not matter much what he looks like. To your second question, no, most decidedly. A girl of fifteen is a child, and the sooner she realizes that fact the better, because she will be grown up quite soon enough.

Mayflower launches herself into the wide sea of literature after this very sudden manner.

Do you think it correct for a young lady to send her photograph to a young gentleman first? (2) What do you think of a young gentleman who asks you to go to the theatre and does not turn up until too late to go? MAYFLOWER.

Well, Mayflower, if the young man was a friend, and asked for the photo, I don't see any great harm in her sending it, because you see it is just possible that the young man may not have had one of his own to give her. As for your second question, any young man who could slight a girl in that manner is very far indeed from deserving to be called a "gentleman," and if I were you I would cut his acquaintance as soon as possible unless he can offer a satisfactory explanation.

We are getting near the end now, girls; only two more, and the next is from "Elephant," who is evidently struggling hard with some of the real problems of life. She says:

Do you think it right for a young gentleman to kiss a young lady good night? Give my love to Geoffrey and your dog. ELEPHANT.

If the young gentleman is the young lady's brother, my dear, of course it would be quite right, or if he was engaged to her, but not unless. So take my advice and save up your kisses very carefully. Thank you for the love, Geoffrey and Jock shall have it all safe. They are always glad to get such messages.

The last correspondent on my list like the first evidently had enlarged ideas on the subject of beginning a letter than her intermediate sisters, for she begins:

DEAR ASTRA.—What would you call a man who can lift a barrel of pork with his teeth and has a face 2 feet long. LORD GABE.

Good gracious, Lord Gabe, I hope it is not your own portrait you are drawing in such alarming colors! If so I should be very much terrified at the prospect of meeting you, and should feel inclined to lapse into undignified shrieks for Geoffrey and the pup. A barrel of pork with his teeth, the pup. A barrel of pork with his face is a Hercules. How do you know his face is just two feet long, did you measure it? I think he must be a very wonderful man indeed, and might earn a lot of money by exhibiting himself.

Good bye, my dear young friends, I hope you enjoyed writing those notes as much as I enjoyed reading them and answering them. I am sure. They are so brief, so pointed and, above all, so direct.

BLUE EYED NUISANCE.—I have inquired for the book you asked about, and I am sorry to say that I cannot find out anything about it. ASTRA.

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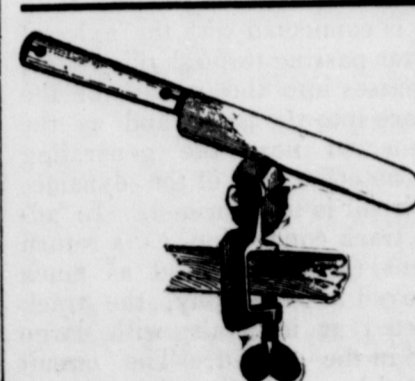
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THE TRUNK HOSE.

invited, its wearer stepped on the velvet ribbon at least half a dozen times while alighting from the carriage and going up half a dozen steps to the front door.

I don't know that the eccentricities of fashion are of large interest and yet in a way it gratifies one's sense of humor to see what is being worn. Take as an instance the travelling cloak I have figured. It was worn by a tall and extremely handsome red-headed girl. You can imagine how the long, straight lengths of it seemed to sweep down and away from her. Its fabric was tan-colored camel's hair; its back was fitted close, a deep box plait running down the middle. Its fronts were loose, bound with dark and red braid and fastened with buttons. Over the sleeves were caps forming doubles, capes which reached to the bottom of the waist behind. It's not a bad sort of garment, and it's nothing against it if it reminds one of costume plaits of the twelfth century, but it cannot be denied that it is extreme.

Consider too the jacket that is set down in the second illustration; it too may be a very good sort of jacket but quite decidedly it is extreme. I made a study of this jacket at one of those functions called private openings, meaning displays for the benefit of invited guests chosen from the "elite directory." I am not sure that I can describe it correctly as to its details. The waistcoat with its deep basque cut in one



THE JACKET A LA MODE.

with the garment was of a dark Spanish yellow cloth inclining to brown with yellowish ivory buttons mottled with brown. The coat was of a rich dark mahogany cloth edged with a narrow band of even darker velvet. From beneath the square collar standing up the throat came the ends of a dark velvet tie expanding on the white shirt front frilled with white ruffles. Note the lace puffs at the wrists below the square cuffs, and tell me if the young woman who wears this jacket will not figure bravely as a fine young cavalier. Yet I haven't committed myself to the admiration of it, mark this please. As if paniers did not announce with sufficient clearness fashion's intentions to accentuate the trip, look at the picture I give you of trunk hose. It was at one of the autumn weddings that I saw this costume worn by a piquant young matron, sister to the bride. I recollect the colors and materials, the sleeve caps and bodice belt were of pink velvet with flower brocade in gray; the bodice front was of mercury gray silk, and the double ruffle at the waist forming the curious resemblance of trunk hose was of the same material. Such a design could not be any conceivable stretch of the imagination be artistically suitable to a woman's figure, but on the young matron who wore it, she being extremely slender, it was a little objectionable, as it is capable of being.