

WOMAN and HER WORK.

I don't think I have ever seen the prints and chollies as pretty as they are this season. Indeed it is almost impossible to make a choice because just as soon as you are certain you have selected the very prettiest print in town you see something so much prettier that your mind is all unsettled, and unless you chance to be a woman of great firmness of character and iron resolution you end by purchasing both. In fact the temptation to possess a number of print dresses for the coming summer will be very great.

One of the most charming prints I have seen yet, was an English cambric with heliothrops chrysanthemums, a little smaller than a half dollar; the flowers had their foliage of pale delicate green, and the black background threw them out so effectively that until you touched the fabric you were convinced it was chollie, and I am sure that if it were made up with vest or yoke and sleeve puffs of heliothrops washing silk, the illusion would be complete. Amongst all the novelties in chollies that I have seen, the design I thought prettiest was a cream colored ground sprinkled all over with pansies. The flowers were irregular in size and shape, ranging from the fully opened pansy to the tiniest bud, and as nearly as possible in the natural tints ranging from purple to pale lilac; some of them had tints of bronze, but all preserved the prevailing tone of purple. It would have made a lovely dress for a bright blonde, with the addition of bretelles and belt of violet velvet.

Plaids seen to be coming in more decidedly as spring approaches, some of the newest goods show the old fashioned but ever popular shepherd's plaid. Trimmed with black velvet, or military braid, no costume is more ladylike, more dainty or, I think, more stylish.

Revers, seem to be dividing the honors with yokes, and bretelles for they are seen on every variety of costume, on the cloth dress they are of velvet or passamentarie, and on the evening gown of lace or embroidery. I believe Felix the great parisian man dress-maker is using plaids quite extensively in his "creations" for spring especially the soft broken indistinct plaids, and one of the new spring features of his dresses, is the yoke into which the skirt is gathered. Imagine one of the pretty fitted peasant bodices which were so much worn last summer, cut off straight and plain around the top, and the skirt which has been cut down to fit, sewn to the lower edge. I cannot say I like the idea very much, pretty as it looks in a fashion plate because I fancy the weight of the skirt would have a tendency to make the yoke sag down and prevent it from fitting in the trim way a belt should, at the top. This yoke must not on any account be made of a straight piece of material slightly pointed on the lower edge like the belts of last year, it must be fitted to the figure with darts, whale boned at the points and made to sit perfectly smooth like the bodice of last year. With this skirt is worn one of the dainty shirt blouses which were so popular last summer with just this difference that instead of being collarless it must have quite a high collar, as everything is worn close up—I had almost said, to the ears—this season; so fickle is fashion. I fancy we shall all be rummaging through scrap bags soon in the hope of finding enough pieces of our last year's dresses to make collars for them, and if we do not succeed we shall be hopelessly out of the fashion.

The crinoline is really here at last. Only yesterday I saw one hanging up in a shop window in all its skeleton nakedness;—such a hideous object, and yet, I suppose the day is not far distant when we shall be obliged to bend to the dictates of our stern ruler, and don the monstrosity, or else look so very singular in our lean and attenuated outlines, that the very street urchins will point the finger of scorn at us and deride us as we pass them on the streets. Well, I for one, shall stick to my principles, and my natural outlines at the same time, until the very last; it is my fixed determination to hold out against the invader, until I become so singular, on account of it, that I shall attract as much attention on the streets as the Salvation Army; then, and only then will I give in.

Already the crinoline wrap has made its appearance, for of course, our closely-fitting, three-quarter length coats would be objects of derision if we tried to strain them over crinolined skirts, so the return of the shawl is predicted with a reasonable amount of confidence. It makes one feel absolutely faint and ill to think of it. I know, girls, and I am very sorry to be obliged to write about anything so awful, but what can I do, as a faithful chronicler of fashion's vagaries, but try to give you some idea of what that whimsical dame is contemplating for the future, as well as what she is really about in the present? I myself, feel a gloomy assurance that in a very short time, we shall all be trotting around contentedly not only in crinolines but also arrayed in bonnets with caps inside, and a pleated flounce at the back called a "curtain," shawls folded cornerwise, one-button gloves

and elastic sided boots. But if we do ever loose our senses to that extent, I hope most sincerely that the men will take the law into their own hands and give up marrying and giving in marriage while the lunacy lasts, so that at last the dread of being a generation of old maids will bring us to our senses. But the shawl of our ancestors is not here yet, thank fortune, and meanwhile we have a sort of two-story cape, made full and roomy so as to hang in natural folds at the bottom, to feast our eyes upon until its arrival. This wrap is built upon the plan of the shoulder cape, it is of course fuller and longer, the first one reaches about to the elbow, while the second is long enough to nearly cover the hands when held down by the sides. It is trimmed with rather scant fringe, headed by a border of passamentarie, or jet, or silk embroidery. It is a quaint, dowdy looking wrap and calculated to utterly disguise the most charming figure in the world. Another "crinoline wrap" consists of a long, tight fitting cloth coat, slashed in long tabs from the waist, where it is confined by a belt, to the foot of the skirt. And both these garments look as if they might have been cut out of a fashion book of 1866. Now, girls, do you wonder that I sometimes turn away heart-sick from the task of writing up the fashions?

I am not sure whether there is any danger of "overdoing it" in the matter of Lenten cookery, but if I should fall into that error, you can cut the receipts out, and save them for next year, though many of these toothsome Lenten dishes would do for any season of the year. Just read these delicious variations on the always attractive theme of oysters, and see if they would not be tempting fare for any month in the year, provided the said month contained the indispensable R.

Oysters au Gratin.

One cupful of thick, drawn butter, in which after it is taken from the fire, have been mixed two beaten eggs and a teaspoonful of salad dressing, (Duke's is best.) bread crumbs, pepper, and salt. Drain the oysters, lay them on a soft cloth, and, spreading another over them pat it to absorb all the moisture; on a layer of these arranged in a bake dish, salted and peppered, put one of drawn butter, more oysters, more drawn butter etc., until the materials are used up, cover with fine crumbs, drop bits of butter on top, and bake, covered half an hour, then brown.

Deviled Oysters.

Wipe large "frying-size" oysters dry, and lay in a mixture made by allowing the juice of a lemon, to two tablespoonfuls of butter, a little salt, and a pinch of cayenne. Turn the oysters over and over in this, then in fine bread crumbs, and broil on a large broiler over a clear fire. Serve hot.

Little Pigs in Blankets.

A novel way of serving oysters is to cut fat English bacon into very thin slices, wrap an oyster well seasoned with pepper and salt in each slice, and fasten together with little wooden skewers. Then heat a frying-pan and put in the "little pigs." Cook just long enough to crisp the bacon—about two minutes—and serve immediately on rounds of toast. This forms a most acceptable breakfast or luncheon delicacy.

Oysters Scalloped with Mushroom.

A quart of oysters; half a can of mushrooms; a heaping teaspoonful of butter; pepper, salt, and cracker crumbs; a cup of rich milk; one beaten egg. Lay a stratum of oysters in a butter bake dish, season with pepper and salt, sprinkle with chopped mushrooms; cover with crumbs wet with milk and dotted with butter; proceed in this order until the dish is full; the top-most layer should be quite moist with milk, in which an egg has been beaten, and seasoned well with pepper, salt and butter. Bake, covered, thirty minutes, then brown. Serve with crackers and cut lemon.

Potato Soup and Croutons.

Wash and peel six or eight potatoes; put them into a saucepan with two onions cut into tiny pieces and three pints of cold water. Bring them to a boil, and when perfectly tender, which should be in about thirty-five or forty minutes, pass the whole through a sieve. Return to the fire and season with pepper and salt, a pinch of grated nutmeg and a lump of butter the size of a walnut. Bring again to a boil and stir in quickly a cup of rich milk; serve immediately. Bear in mind that all these soups are to be poured over croutons, and that this is the way you prepare them.

Remove the crust from slices of stale bread; cut into small dice and drop into boiling butter; shake very gently but thoroughly till light golden brown. When done, which will be in about a minute take them up with a skimmer and lay them in the mouth of the oven on brown paper to dry. Lard may be used instead of butter; the croutons are not quite so rich, but a prettier color; in either case the fat must nearly cover the bread to make it boiling.

True Soupe Maigre.

Simmer very gently until quite tender a quart of dried peas, two large onions, a head of celery, a carrot, two turnips, a handful of spinach and a sprig of mint; when perfectly soft, pass through a sieve and return to the fire with two lumps of sugar, a piece of butter the size of a walnut, a head of lettuce sliced, and salt and pepper to taste. If you can get them, boil asparagus tips apart in a little salted water, drain and add when dishing the soup.

Golden Soupe Maigre.

Another maigre soup is a little troublesome, but very delicate and savory. Boil young peas, asparagus tips and small dice of carrots until thoroughly done, but do not mash; drain and add after you prepare a soup as follows:

Boil two onions and a few stalks of celery in two pints of water, strain them out and pour in a pint of new milk; salt and pepper. When boiling stir in three tablespoonfuls of flour which has been perfectly

blended with a little cold milk; let it boil nearly ten minutes, stirring constantly. Have ready in the tureen the well beaten yolks of two eggs. Pour the soup on these very gently, stirring quickly. Season with celery, salt, and add the previously prepared vegetables. Serve very hot with croutons.

Coffee Jelly.

One package of Cox's gelatine soaked for four hours in enough cold water to cover it an inch deep; two cups of black coffee strained clear, one tablespoonful of granulated sugar, two cups of boiling water. When the gelatine is soaked put it with the sugar into a large bowl and let it stand for half an hour; then stir in the water, which must be actually boiling at the time it is put in, and when the gelatine is dissolved add the coffee; strain without pressing in a flannel bag and pour into a wet mould to form. It should be served with cream. This is the recipe, but my own experience tells me that the quantity of sugar should be doubled at least.

ASTRA.

Getting the Mitten.

Says the Listener, in the Boston Transcript: "L. T. B." explains the origin of a familiar phrase thus: "An old-time New England expression, 'getting the mitten,' meaning getting your offer of marriage rejected by your 'best girl,' has an origin in the customs of the earlier days. One hundred years ago gloves were unknown in the country towns. Mittens were knitted and worn in all families. If a young man, going home from singing school with the girl of his choice, was holding her mittened hand to keep it from getting cold, and took that opportunity to urge his suit, if the offer proved acceptable the hand would remain. If taken by surprise, an effort to withdraw the hand would leave the mitten. So the suitor would 'get the mitten' but would not get the hand." This is certainly a very easy and plausible explanation, when you know what it is; but if you had not been told, the phrase would be puzzling. The use of the word "muff," meaning a foolish, blundering person, also has an easy explanation: a stupid youth was said to be a "muff" because, like the article of feminine wear called by that name, he held a woman's hand without squeezing it! The sedate old times were not without their galantries.

Women Inventors.

Among successful women inventors is Mrs. Catherine Green, to whom is due the invention of the improved cotton gin. Mrs. A. Manning is the designer of a reaper and mower and clover cleaner. Another woman took out a patent for an improvement on this machine in the shape of a device for charging the knives without stopping the wheels. Miss Maggie Knight is the inventor of one of the most complicated machines in the world. It is used in the manufacture of re-enforced bottom paper bags. The street-sweeper is also due to the ingenuity of a woman who had a dress ruined by a defective sweeper; and after all the great inventors and machinists had failed in studying out a device for deadening the sound of car wheels on the elevated, a woman, Mrs. Mary B. Walton, rode up and down the road a single day, caught the idea, and went home to formulate and patent it.

Should Women Propose?

Mr. Labouchere, of the London Truth says women should propose if they want to, and Mr. McAllister says they should not. The latter adds, and it seems very reasonable, that "as long as men have any desire to get married they will offer themselves, and when they have ceased to care about marriage, it won't help the women any to propose." But he spoils it by adding: "There is no knowing to what lengths these progressive women will go. They have done nothing but harm already, carrying domestic unhappiness wherever they go."

Earnings of Lady Doctors.

Dr. Rosa Kerschbaumer, the only licensed lady doctor in Austria, says that there are many lady doctors in America who earn more than five or six thousand pounds a year. There is at least one lady doctor in London who earns more than that. But America certainly is the happy hunting-ground of the lady doctor. The number of lady practitioners in the States is estimated at three thousand. There are seventy in London, five in Edinburgh, 700 in Russia, at least 100 in British India, and, curiously enough, only one in Italy.

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Something Big in Sausages.

In former times it was the custom in many German towns to manufacture sausages of enormous length, and carry them on festive occasions in solemn procession through the streets. On New Year's day in 1558 a giant sausage, 198 ells in length, was carried in triumph by forty-eight persons. But in the year 1583 it took ninety-one persons to carry a sausage, 596 ells long, and weighing 434 lb. The chronicler of the period says: "The butchers' men were all neatly attired in white blouses. The first man wound one end of the sausage several times round his neck with a portion of it hanging down in front, the rest followed at equal distances carrying the trophy on their shoulders, and the last one had the other end wound round his neck like the man at the head of the procession." In the year 1601 we are told that the sausage attained a length of 1,005 ells, 130 of which were presented to their Serene Highnesses at the castle. All this happened in Konigsberg. In 1613 the Emperor Matthias regaled the Princes of the House of Austria with a tournament, at which the butchers of Vienna gave a representation of a peasant's wedding, and paraded the streets with a sausage measuring 999 ells.—German Paper.

Needles and Their Origin.

Originally, all the needles used in Europe must have come from the East; and it seems passing strange that no record has been kept of the time of which these useful little instruments were first manufactured there, but it must have been at a very early period. They were made in Nuremberg in great quantities in the fourteenth century. Their manufacture was introduced into England under Queen Elizabeth, and flourished to such an extent that the workmen soon constituted a guild, for we read that in 1597 the "pinners and the needlers" petitioned the Queen not to allow foreign pins and needles to be imported.

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