

WOMAN and HER WORK.

Never has more attention been given by fashionable women to the make, fit and general style of their underwear than at the present time! Once it was thought that if a lady was well supplied with dainty lingerie made of fine, white longcloth, trimmed either with embroidery made by her own skilful fingers, or Hamburg edging supplemented by tucks and feather stitching, she had all that the heart of woman could desire. Super-fastidious brides insisted on fine linen trimmed with lace, but it was not thought that extravagance could go much further. Now, the women of fashion consider such silk of fine quality and delicate tint none too good for her underclothing, and she has it in such tints as pale blue, rose, mauve and primrose, and is most particular that corset cover and short underskirt shall match the other undergarments in shade and texture; even the trimming must be exactly alike.

When I was a child, the well-to-do woman's best undershirt was made of stiff watered moreen, and it she chanced to be very particular indeed she chose white moreen; while in summer she took great pride in the number and variety of frilled and embroidered white skirts her wardrobe contained. Now she is inclined to look upon white skirts as the essence of dowdiness, and wears nothing but tinted or black silk or satin profusely trimmed with lace. At least this was the generally accepted undershirt until the present spring styles were adopted rendering a very stiff undershirt necessary in order to support the full heavy skirts.

The latest, and most fashionable petticoat is made of woven horse hair, and is known by the fitting title of the Elizabethan petticoat. It is constructed thus. A deep yoke of silk, extends almost to the knees, and to this, is plaited in broad box plaits a flounce of the horsehair, the back breadths are entirely of horsehair closely plaited in to the belt. The haircloth comes in black, white, and gray, and is sometimes made up with a covering of silk. It seems to have been invented as a sort of compromise for those who object to the idea of crinoline, and there is no doubt that it will fulfil its mission in one way, and make the softest chalice or the lightest crepon stand out quite as well as the most pronounced crinoline could do; but considering the garment from the double points of view of both hygiene and comfort, give me the crinoline every time, it looks exactly the same and it is at least light, easily carried, and, above all cool, while the haircloth nightmare would require a female Hercules to carry it about, and it is about the warmest and most cumbersome garment that could possibly have been devised to torture humanity during "the heated term." Those who dislike both the crinoline and the heavy skirt, have their dresses lined to the knee with either haircloth, crinoline or grasscloth to keep them out at the foot and give the desired flare. It is rumored that as the season advances the French organdies, soft dotted muslins and French mulls which are to be so fashionable this summer, will absolutely necessitate a return to the flounced white skirt, as nothing can ever really take its place, with a thin dress. Some are already shown in the leading shops, flounced with deep lace nearly to the waist. Moreen is also shown, in the delicate shot effects so popular this season. It really makes a most satisfactory skirt, as it is very light and almost as stiff as horsehair.

The new Parisian skirts, to be worn with these expansive petticoats, are cut in divers new, and wonderful ways, the most popular of which are the "Parisian" the "Louis Philippe," and the new bell skirt. The "Parisian" is composed of seven breadths each 21 inches wide at the bottom, the front breadth sloped away to thirteen inches at the top, the side breadths to eight inches, and the back breadth to three inches. A very new and pretty way of trimming such a skirt is to cover each seam with a narrow fold of whatever trimming is to be employed, thus a black dress would have either revers or yoke of jet passementerie and the skirt seams covered with a narrow jet passementerie while if the trimming was of be of velvet, the folds would be of the same.

The "Louis Philippe" skirt has a front breadth 27 inches wide at the bottom, sloping to nine inches at the top, and two side breadths each two and a half yards wide at the bottom, gored to fit perfectly smooth over the hips, and with the seam down the centre of the back like the original bell skirt. It is usually cut on the cross of the material, and of course calls for very wide goods. The new bell skirt is also cut on the cross and all in one piece, the only seam being down the back. It measures five yards around the bottom and gored to fit smoothly into the belt at the top. All these skirts are lined to the knee with crinoline, most of them have the lining covered on the inside with silk, and a silk flounce in addition, also on the inside.

So much for skirts, which are more difficult to make, fit, and trim, than they have been for a long time. Some of the summer models are superlatively hideous! Imagine a summer girl clad in a black grenadine dress, made over a cerise satin foundation, and flounced up to the waist with four deep bias ruffles gathered very full, a sor

of plaited cape of the satin extending well down to the shoulders, and full puffed sleeves of the grenadine! For all the world like a pincushion, is it not?

I started out with the intention of confining my remarks exclusively to the subject of the latest fancies in lingerie, but somehow I have wandered so far away from my chosen theme that it will be useless to think of getting back again this week, so I will finish my gossip with a few miscellaneous fashion hints, and the description of a new and very lovely fancy in dress decoration recently produced in New York.

In making the skirts I have described, the best dressmakers no longer sew the skirt to a belt which add to the apparent size of the waist, and is sure to wear out long before the dress itself. They simply bind the top of the skirt with silk or ribbon taking care that it shall not fit too tightly to the figure, but rather slip down a little leaving the waist as slight as possible. It is stated on the best authority in the circles where fashion holds sway, that amongst the other obsolete fashions which have been lately revived, ear-rings will be brought out again from the retirement of the past few years and restored to public favor; not the tiny buttons which were worn just before ear-rings "went out" nor yet the long pendants worn by our mothers in their young days, but respectable sized ornaments occupying quite a prominent place in woman's adornment, I am sorry because I don't believe nature ever intended us to wear jewels in our ears, any more than in our noses.

The new purple vails sounded very unbecoming when we first heard of them, and until I was almost forced to try one on, I could never believe they would be anything but a disfigurement; once I looked into a glass and saw the effect I confess I was surprised, it really was so good. There is something about the violet net which gives the wearer a color, instead of destroying all she originally possessed, as I thought it would; but now the latest news is that the war between violet and green which has raged so fiercely this spring is extending to veils, and there is to be a close rivalry between violet and green veils. Picture it ye shades of 1830! Green veils! What atrocity will fashion bring before our astonished eyes? Boots laced at the sides, I suppose.

A new and very lovely decoration for an evening dress is of Parisian design, and consists of embroidered bands of peacock's feathers copied with absolute fidelity to nature. The gorgeous colors show to best advantage against a background of cream colored silk, or satin, but they would look very well on cream cashmere. The skirt is quite plain, guileless of flounce or ruffle, and has a moderate train. Down the centre of the front is a panel either embroidered with gold thread, or composed of jewelled passementerie in blue and gold, it extends from the waist to the foot of the dress, and beginning on each side of it, about two inches from the lower edge of the skirt, is a strip of embroidered peacock's feathers extending all around the train. Around the top of the low bodice is another strip of the embroidery which meets on the right shoulder, then crosses the bust to the left hip, extends to within a foot of the bottom of the skirt, and passes around the train forming a second row, and then up the right side to correspond with the left, thus outlining a tablier.

It is a very charming idea and the girl who is skilful with her needle and loves fancy work, could very easily carry it out for herself. If I were making a dress of the kind I think I would save time by painting instead of embroidering the gay plumage; nearly every girl paints enough to be able to decorate her dresses now-a-days, and I have seen some lovely examples of what artistic skill can do in the shape of dress ornamentation. One lady of my acquaintance who is a very talented artist has the loveliest pansy dress imaginable, designed and executed by her own clever fingers: it is of cream colored cashmere, and pansies are growing all over it. The pansy is the wearer's favorite flower, so the dress is not only beautiful, but characteristic. I should infinitely prefer it to the "peacock" dress because I am superstitious enough to have a holy dread of peacock's feathers and to firmly believe all the evil reports concerning them. I think they do really bring misfortune to anyone who possesses them.

The Feminine Bachelor.

The lady bachelor is an exaggerated and laughter-provoking type of womanhood, who has come to the front in these later days. She must not be mistaken for the strong-minded woman, but is a glorified edition of the old maid. She does not admit that she is an old maid. Oh, no! of course not, if the expression be used in its ancient sense, which has been handed down from those Jewish days when it was a reproach to a woman to be old and unmarried. For the time being, however, she is one, nevertheless. There are people who say that she would not exist were there men enough to take to wife all the marriageable maidens. But such people are, no doubt, men, and how can they tell? Of course they selfishly wish to monopolize the joys of bachelorhood themselves.

"I see marriage in your hand," says the palmist to the lady bachelor; "you will marry when you are about thirty-five." "Oh, no; I hope not. I would rather not marry; I am so comfortable as I am. A husband would be such a nuisance." Like her masculine counterpart, she enjoys a flirtation. I rather think, to tell the truth, that she takes more pains to indulge her liking for this amusement than he does. He takes this kind of excitement chiefly when it is offered him, being rather too lazy to go out of his way to procure it. She, however, will on occasion wander into haunts of conventionality in search of it.

CUSTOMS AND THEIR MEANING.

Ordinary Observances Which Had Their Origin a Long While Ago.

A good many of the ordinary observances which go to make up our everyday life, formerly had meanings we now little dream of. Why, for instance, is it the almost universal practice of mankind to nod the head for "yes" and shake it for "no"?

At first thought we might imagine this practice to be somewhat meaningless, but it is not so. Its origin seems to have been in two somewhat similar signs observed in savage sign language—waving the hands straight forward from the face signifying the affirmative and waving the hand backwards and forwards, as it motioning away, implying "no."

This habit of nodding somewhat corresponds with the deaf-and-dumb signs for truth and the reverse, or "sideway speaking." The nod of greeting when two acquaintances pass each other in the street is no doubt a hurried salute used in place of raising the hat. The custom of raising the hat does to some extent retain a portion of its original meaning, though, instead of being looked upon as a mark of servility, it is now generally considered a token of deference.

Most savage nations, and some few who profess civilization, recognise in the uncovering of the head a token of complete submission in a captive. Springing from this also is the Spaniard's form of courtesy—that of slightly lifting the corner of the cloak from the shoulder with the right hand.

The old-fashioned courtesy has now nearly disappeared, giving place to the more graceful bow of the present day; both forms, however, are but relics of the bygone custom of kneeling and prostration, which was the general sign of submission and of reverence.

The fan which is now a lady's indispensable companion, whether at ball, party, or opera, was no doubt originally used not so much to cool the wearer, but to keep the flies away.

The shake of the hand with which we are ever prone to greet each other is an inheritance from much less peaceable times than the present. The right being the sword arm, the mere offer of the hand was considered a sign of peace, and the clasp of it a preventive from being taken unawares by an enemy sailing under false colors.

A marriage furnishes us with the "dregs" of many old customs. Take "that hoop of gold," the wedding ring. These rings were introduced by the Jews and their form is supposed to symbolize truthfulness and eternity. Placed on a woman's left hand, a wedding ring is regarded as a sign of submissiveness.

In old days the ring was used as a seal by which all orders were signed, and a person endowed with another's ring received with it, and exercised, all the power and authority of the donor for the time being. By the gift of a ring to a woman, the husband was understood to authorize her to issue commands and act in all things as his representative.

The bridal veil comes to us from the time when all unmarried women wore a veil; the bride wearing it at her marriage because it was the last occasion on which she would be allowed to do so, the cap or veil being her adornment after the ceremony.

The general adoption of wearing orange blossoms is comparatively modern, although Saracen brides used them for the matrimonial ceremony. Throwing the slipper, however, can boast of great antiquity, and was not simply thrown "for luck," as it is now generally supposed.

The giving back of a shoe was an evidence and symbol of rejecting or resigning dominion or ownership, and this throwing of a shoe after the bride meant a renunciation of authority over her by her father. Kissing under the mistletoe is but a relic of Scandinavian mythology, and therefore was not introduced solely to put a flavor to Christmas festivities. What was the origin of ordinary kissing—mistletoe or no mistletoe—has yet to be discovered; but there are as yet no signs of its being likely to become out of date.

The pavement regulation of pedestrian traffic "Pass to the right" is something more than an order to prevent hasty individuals "bumping" against their fellow travellers. The "right" was chosen at a time when sword wearing was the order of the day, and allowed the sword arm to be free in case of emergency; and even the custom of wearing two buttons on the back of our coats is nothing but a phantom of the long-skirted coats, the tails of which were looped back on the then necessary buttons. —[Casell's Sat. Journal.

Cooked Cheese.

Cooked cheese is much more digestible than the uncooked. For example, a man may eat four ounces of cheese in a Welsh rarebit and digest it perfectly, whereas one ounce, eaten uncooked, might produce a fit of indigestion. In cooking cheese it is important that the right kinds be used with special dishes. Parmesan cheese is used a great deal where a delicate flavor is desired. This cheese is made from skim milk, but unlike most skim-milk cheese, all its pores are filled with an oily substance. The peculiarly fine quality of this cheese is supposed to be due to the rich grass which is fed to the cows. It becomes very hard with age and can be grated like dried bread, into fine crumbs. It can be bought for thirty-five cents a pound, or it can be had grated, put up in bottles of various sizes. For ordinary use a bottle, costing forty cents, will last a small family for several months. —[Good Housekeeping.

The Table Napkin.

Curiously enough the article now considered almost indispensable, the table napkin, was first used only by children, and was only adopted by older members of the family about the middle of the fifteenth century. In etiquette books of an earlier date than this, among many other sage pieces of advice for children, are instructions about wiping the fingers and lips with their napkins. It seems that the tablecloth was long enough to reach the floor, and served the grown people in place of napkins. When they did begin to use napkins they placed them first on the shoulder, then on the left arm, and finally tied them about the neck. Napkins became popular in France sooner than in England. At one time it was customary at great French dinners to change the napkins at every course, to perfume them with rose water, and to have them folded a different way for each guest.

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Women of Their Period.

In the great momentum of the women movement, which gains new victims every day, one is inclined to overlook the fact that woman was a power morally, socially, and intellectually in the fifteenth century as well as the nineteenth, that the doors of universities were open to her not only to study but to teach within their sacred precincts. In the University of Salamanca she had a place, and when Isabella of Spain desired to acquire the Latin tongue it was to a woman that she turned for a tutor.

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