

WOMAN and HER WORK.

January is about the hardest month of the year in which to write either authoritatively or originally about fashions, because anyone who studies the fashion oracles must know that during the past two or three weeks absolutely nothing new has appeared, and people have been too busy with Christmas preparations and Christmas presents to give much thought to their garments, so the wheel of fashion seems to be at a standstill. But as a few very pretty designs for evening dresses came out just before Christmas, and this is the season for evening gowns, I may be able to give my readers a few useful hints this week.

In the first place, lovely as the sheer diaphanous fabrics are when they are first finished, and worn by some sweet young girl, who looks as fresh and dainty as her dress, there seems to be a steadily growing inclination towards more solid materials, since the gauzes and tulle are not only very expensive, but perishable "draggy" looking after the first freshness has worn off, and so flimsy that they are apt to catch on everything, from a button, to the table appointments at supper time, or even the bracelets of one's vis-a-vis. Therefore the tide has set very decidedly in the direction of a combination of light and heavy goods.

A very pretty example of this fashion was shown recently in a skirt of white faille silk, around the front of which was a deep flounce of baby blue silk muslin, very fully gathered, and headed by a wreath of forget-me-nots. At each side of the front breadth two long ribbons, between three and four inches wide, extended from the waist to the foot of the skirt, defining the breadth into a sort of tablier; on each ribbon was set a bunch of forget-me-nots. The bodice was of the faille made in baby fashion with a ruffle of the blue silk muslin to form a berth; and short puffed sleeves, the belt of the ribbon, fastened with a bunch of forget-me-nots. Long white kid gloves complete the costume.

Another charming ball dress was of caise satin with an overdrift of white and silver tissue, which is made perfectly plain, and free, then caught up at the left side by a cord which holds it in place. The bodice is of the brightly-hued satin, and has a berth of point lace, gathered into full epaulettes on the shoulders. A narrow, cherry satin ribbon forms the belt, with long ends hanging nearly to the foot.

The "baby waist" seems to be the popular bodice of the hour, and it is seen on nearly all evening dresses. Another feature which is steadily gaining in popularity is the panier, and a very lovely evening gown lately prepared for a New York belle was of thick pure white silk, made quite plain in front and devoid of any trimming, even at the foot, the back breadths were draped into paniers at the sides, and then fell in a short train at the back; around the train was a full flounce of lace about five inches wide, which extended up the sides to the waist in a sort of jabot, after the manner shown in old fashion magazines of the seventies. At the top of the jabot where it meets the waist, were placed three velvet pansies in a rich violet shade, and these flowers placed at short intervals, formed a sort of wreath all around the train heading the flounce. The bodice was of course in baby shape with full puffed sleeves and the low neck was finished with a shell plaiting and a pinked edge.

In the lighter materials, such as tulle and gauze, the skirts are made in three tiers, triple flounces all gathered very full, and overlapping each other with the inevitable baby waist and short puffed sleeves and belts of narrow ribbon with long ends.

In spite of all predictions to the contrary, the Eton jacket continues to hold its place in the world of fashion, and though comparatively few are seen in Canada, they form a prominent feature in many of the American fashion plates. Only last week in a page of a New York fashion journal, I noticed that out of a group of five figures no less than three had Eton jackets in some shape or other. One was gaily trimmed, cut off just below the waist line, and called a bolero jacket, another was amputated just sufficiently above the waist line to show the belt, and opened over a shirt front of pleated tan silk, while the third was cut sharply up from the front edge, nearly to the armhole, forming a deep point. Some of these jackets have the deep revers extending well over the armhole, which was seen last autumn, while others show a sort of high Stuart collar into which the revers extend after the manner of the English cut jackets, which came out with the later importations of winter coats, last month. There is not the slightest room for doubt upon the important subject of overskirts, they are slowly but surely making their way to an assured position, as they are seen on several of the newest dresses. Sometimes they take the form of draped skirts, the draping being effected by gathering the folds of the skirt into clusters and fastening these folds into position by sewing them to the foundation, over which all draped skirts are made. This foundation is made of lining, and faced with the dress material to the required depth, and the dress proper looped over it.

Other draped skirts are seen with the pretty wrinkled fronts so popular a few years ago, and so difficult for anyone but a professional dressmaker to put together; the wrinkling is obtained by means of two pleats taken in on each side of the front breadth just at the waist line, but it is the correct placing of these same pleats which forms the stumbling block for amateurs, it seems so simple and is in reality so difficult. In overskirts proper, the principal style is a long blunt point reaching to nearly the foot of the skirt and slightly raised at the sides by a cluster of deep pleats mased together. Some are cut round in apron fashion, but the pointed style obtains the most favor at present.

BEATRICE.—I am glad you were pleased with your answers. Your composition is fairly good, better than very many letters I get. You can wear any colored ribbon in your hair that will match your dress or its trimmings, but either black or brown is prettier. (4) I do not know any French boys so I can scarcely judge, but I have no doubt they are quite as nice as English ones, and probably much more polite. (5) I think any girl who would accept such a present from a young man must have a little respect for herself as he evidently had for her, but perhaps he did not know any better. I think you will have to curl your hair as it is so short and leave the back in waves, or else curl it too. Many thanks for your kind Christmas wishes.

CRUMBS, St. John.—So you did not approve of what I said about the sparrows, and call it an "attack" upon them? Well if no one ever attacks them more violently than I did the cheeky little fellows will fare pretty well. It is quite a new sensation for me, to be accused of unkindness to anything living, no matter how insignificant, and I am so accustomed to being regarded as a sort of harmless lunatic on the subject of all "God's little beasts" that it was really refreshing to have any one take up the cudgels for them against me. But I honor you for your defence of the little birds, all the same Crumbs, and I should dearly like to shake hands with you for your kind words you say about the birds and the love your pretty letter revealed for God's helpless creatures, you must have observed them very closely, to be able to tell me so much about their habits and the funny ways they have with each other. You are a dear girl, Crumbs, and I hope you will write to me often. Do you really think I said anything untrue about the sparrows, or abused them in any way? If so, I will make them a public apology; but as you have watched them so closely, can you deny that they are impudent personified? I know the parent birds are devoted to their young but is not mother love the same in all animals, human, beast, and bird, and it was not their domestic relations I was treating of, but their general attitude towards the rest of their species, and the bird world in general. I do know a little about them too, Crumbs because it ever there was an open air soup kitchen, an "out door relief" dispensary, it is our back yard, and I really wish you could see it. I am sure it would do your heart good. We are quite a large family you know, so it takes a good deal to feed us, and there are a great many scraps left, but in spite of that there is no "swill tub" kept in our shed, just a large clean box in which all the potato, apple and turnip peelings, cabbage leaves, turnip and celery tops, are thrown, and saved for some hungry horse or cow; the rest of the scraps, bones, scraps of meat, fish, and even old bits of dry pastry cake and pudding are all thrown out a certain spot near the back door, summer and winter! and I can assure you they never either freeze or spoil, so many footed pensioners are always on the look-out for them, and many an *al fresco* meal is enjoyed there. Hungry dogs, half starved cats and every variety of bird swarm around our back fence, and I believe many a poor creature has been saved from starvation by that soup kitchen.

As for the birds they fare especially well because not only are the crumbs saved for them, but every scrap of dry bread, and every crust or "heel" of a loaf is either pounded up, or soaked and thrown out for the pigeons and sparrows, and the poor fellows cluster in swarms around the fences and even roost on all the neighboring house tops waiting for their meals. I assure you the pigeons are the most to be pitied, they are quite wild and homeless, and so timid that they never seem to get used to us but fly away if we even go to the window, while the sparrows scarcely pause to look up at us. Some of the pigeons are lame, two of them had broken legs and one had only one leg, and used to lie down on his side while he ate; but the sparrows were always well and hearty, and brimful of fight. The pigeons have no home, they are huddled under the eaves in the coldest weather, and only a few nights ago I was awakened by hearing their poor little cold feet scratching along the roof, over my head and it was such a cold night too; so I think the poor pigeons are entitled to a little consideration too Crumbs, and you must remember that pigeons never roost in trees except in their wild state, and they are much too large to gather in, barns up amongst the rafters, as sparrows can easily do, so that their lot is really much harder, and their food harder to find because a sparrow would thrive for a whole day upon what would scarcely be a mouthful for a pigeon, and I really cannot understand why you should think the pigeons greedy because they too are so hungry that they are ready to fight for a morsel to eat, just as the sparrows do. Now I have written you a long letter Crumbs; and I hope I have succeeded in convincing you that I did not intend to do the sparrows any injustice, or even to take from them the little character they possess. I am sure that if they could speak they would one and all unite in assuring you that they and all their feathered friends never had a better friend than

CHIRP SPARROW'S CASE.

What He Puts Forward in Regard to Himself and His Woes.

The following letter which I received last week from my little friend "Chirp Sparrow jr" seems to me worthy of publication, as the sturdy little bird puts his own case far better than any human could, and of course he possesses the advantage of a more thorough acquaintance with his own race than any of us can boast of, and a valiant champion the whole sparrow family have in him.

"And was it thou," Astra? Alas I am undone. My friend of the brown eyes, who always looks for "Astra's" talks first, hunted through *PROGRESS* then said, "Astra has not written anything this time only in the Woman's work column, I will read that later." How could she have overlooked your name. No matter how busy she may be, when *PROGRESS* comes, she always sits down and reads Astra first. Oh why did you not put your name to the article and save us this mistake? Now alas! I have offended my best friend. Instead of crying over the pigeon's cold toes, I feel more like crying over my own woes. I thought you had gone away to spend Christmas and some one who "hates sparrows"—as I sometimes hear people say—had written that article to induce the boys and men to persecute us with their stones and guns. I am much pained to think that you should class us with the mongrel flock in the neighboring republic when our family belongs to the very first sparrows in the old country, and our blood is the bluest of the blue! Doubtless some sparrows were brought over as emigrants, but not our family. It must have been "some other fellows." I have often heard my grandfather tell how he and my grandmother build a nest in the smoke-stack of a steamer and in that way crossed the big ocean in company with a few other birds, and the sailors were so pleased to see the little "land birds" as they called them that they fed them every day.

I don't believe you know me, Astra, though I know you well, and often see you on your way to church, so some fine morning I will come in front of your window with my sisters and my cousins and my aunts and you will see what a well behaved family we are. As to quarrelling we never! no never!—well, hardly ever!

Just now I am feeling rather dull because you are angry with me. So if you see a little bird, with tears in its eyes, standing on one foot, and wiping away its tears with the other; with feathers all rough as if they had been pulled out and put in wrong, and with a most dejected droop of wings and tail,—That's me! And if some fine morning, when you set out for church you hear a dismal little chirp, if you look up you will see me on some branch or telephone wire, trying to say, "forgive me."

I know you love and cherish me, and only reprove me for my good, and that paragraph in your article last week, comforted my sad heart a little. Do you not think we tiny creatures have a mission in life! Thy brown eyed friend often watches me and my brothers picking up crumbs, and often her eyes were full of sorrow. In our own way of finding out things for,

"Beasts and birds have seen and heard That which man knoweth not."

We discovered that not long before, a dearly loved friend had been suddenly taken from her, and when the sense of loss was overpowering she found a few moments diversion in watching our little selves. The tears would vanish, and the sweet sad face would grow a little brighter and once I heard her softly say as she turned from the window,

"Whose habitations in the tree tops even Are half-way houses on the road to Heaven." As to the pigeons, I am glad you are so very fond of them. If they are such torpid frozen creatures as you picture, might not the S. P. C. A. shoot them and so end their misery, and it there is a bounty on our poor little selves, would there not be a bigger one on the great pigeons? Perhaps when we are all gone the canker-worms will again spin down from the trees upon "each woman's bonnet, shawl and gown." Please tell the editor, "Thank you very much for putting my letter in *PROGRESS*," I felt so proud, and if you dear Astra will forgive me, I shall be the happiest bird in the city. Yours saucily,

CHIRP SPARROW, JR.

I have much pleasure in informing my saucy little correspondent that if he thinks I have anything to forgive, he has my full and free pardon, and if he will just come round to our door some day with his feathers in the condition he describes in such a graphic manner that he really must have been reading "The Jackdaw of Rheims," I will recognize him at once and be most happy to cement our friendship with an unlimited amount of crumbs, or any other treat that Chirp will select.

I will let the little bird convey his own thanks to the Editor, and I will waive all further claim I may have, to agreement on the subject of Chirp's ancestry leaving the little fellow the satisfaction of having the last word, because perhaps I was rather hard on him in the beginning and that is the only amendment I can make. But Chirp my friend, a word in your ear—I am afraid we will never meet on the pathway to church, because I simply never go to morning service, and you are snugly tucked away in your little nest long before I start out for evening church, so don't wait for me I beg, or else your poor little feet will freeze to the telephone wire, and you will be sure to catch the prevalent grip. You are a funny little bird, and your remedy for the pigeons troubles is indeed original. I think you must be a poet, like all birds or you could never have quoted so many beautiful lines, and described your ancestors' journey in such graceful language.

Write to me again sometime little friend and for the present good bye. ASTRA.

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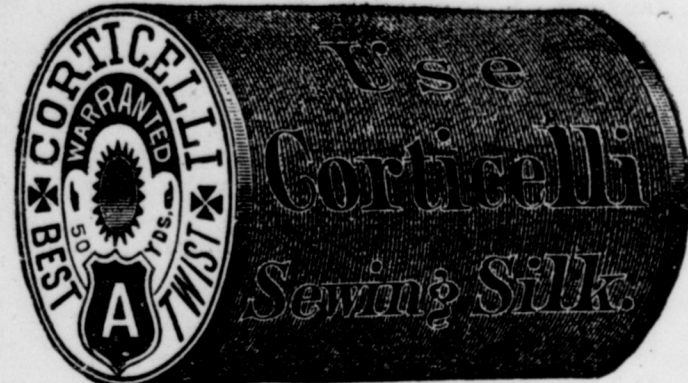
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Keep the back especially between the shoulder blades, well covered; also the chest well protected.

In sleeping in a cold room establish a habit of breathing through the nose, and never with the mouth open.

Never go in bed with cold or damp feet. Never omit regular bathing, for, unless the skin is in active condition, the cold will close the pores and favor congestion and other diseases.

After exercises of any kind never ride in an open carriage or near the window of a car for a moment; it is dangerous to health or even life.

When hoarse speak as little as possible until the hoarseness is recovered from, else the voice may be permanently lost, or difficulties of the throat be produced.

Merely warm the back by the fire and never continue keeping the back exposed to the heat after it has become comfortably warm. To do otherwise is debilitating.

When going from a warm atmosphere into a cooler one keep the mouth closed, so that the air may be warmed in its passage through the nose before it reaches the lungs.

Never stand still in cold weather, especially after a slight degree of exercise, and always avoid standing on ice or snow, or where the person is exposed to cold wind.

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