

Woman and Her Work

And now it is actually the night cap that has been resurrected from the oblivion to which it had been justly consigned for so many years and sprung upon us with an artificial air of freshness, that is absolutely ridiculous considering its real age. Verily the spirit of prophecy rested on my shoulders when I said last week that we were going steadily backward in our fashions, and must needs seek for "novelties" away back in the forties. I confess though that my wildest dreams never took the night cap into serious consideration, and though I should not be surprised if we took to wearing Roman togas one of these days, I fancied we would skip the night-cap era, in our backward course, and take up some more becoming fashion.

However it seems I was very much behind the times, and nightcaps it is, if you want to be very swell; and thoroughly up to date; according to a high authority there are no less than three different kinds of nightcaps being precipitated on the market at once, so you can take your choice, see which you look best in, and then adhere to that particular style. They are all sufficiently frivolous, and useless in their make up, and some of them must be so fragile that I can scarcely imagine their lasting through one night, especially if the wearer was at all a restless sleeper, while if she snored I am sure they would be blown to atoms at the very first blast. One—let us say sleeping cap, nightcap has such an unpleasant sound—is made of very fine lace, alternating with strips of interlined muslin which give it enough stiffness to stand up in a jaunty point at the top of the head; it fits tightly around the face, and is drawn in around the neck terminating in a little frill, something like the sunbonnet flounce of old, only about one fifth as wide. Strings of fine soft tulle fasten it beneath the chin.

The next model is called the baby cap, and is composed of still finer lace, combined with tiny tucks and strips of insertion of gossamer fineness and it is just the next thing to having nothing at all on your head. The lace of course forms a frill around the face and if you happen to be young and exceptionally good looking you can stand it, but if you are merely an ordinary mortal like the rest of us, you will bear a much stronger resemblance to a lady of the Irish apple woman variety, than is at all pleasant in spite of the dainty materials of which which your headgear is composed. The third style is of puffed mull separated by bands of fine lace insertion a frill of lace surrounds the face and a large bow of pink ribbon is perched on the top while strings of the same tie under the chin in a bow, which we are assured must be a large one. Each and all of these little "confections" are lined with softest silk in a becoming tint and scented by little flat sachet bags tacked into the lining. They sound delightful I know, but the practical minded woman will at once be struck with their utility, and the extreme difficulty of getting them laundered; while their discomfort will at once be apparent to even the most careless observer. Fancy tossing through a sleepless night, as so many of us do, with our heads tied up in an affair which suggests the babies' bonnets displayed in the show cases of the best milliners, and marked at a high figure because they have come over from Paris with the sample hats! I would just as soon sleep in my bonnet. And when one had a headache! Well I should just like to see the nightcap with the pink bow and strings the morning after its wearer had had a headache and bathed her throbbing temples alternately with camphor, eau de Cologne and vinegar and water, that's all.

The night cap, we are told is to form a very important feature of the coming bride's trousseau, and she will have an opportunity for quite a display of taste, in the choice and variety of these little trifles; if she is clever with her needle I have no doubt she will find a great deal of enjoyment in making them herself, and can rival her friends in the number and variety of her collection of night caps, but if she will take my advice she will keep them entirely as curiosities, display them to the admiring eyes of her friend, decorate her bedroom with them, in short do anything she likes except wearing them. Goodness knows we all look sufficiently unattractive when we are in undress uniform without making things worse than they need be by tying our heads up in lace and muslin and surrounding our features with a valance of lace. It takes a baby to wear that manner of headgear, and even the baby looks much better without it.

What a commentary it is on the inconsistency of fashion that in an age when we have eliminated the petticoat, the chemise,

and so many other articles which our grandmothers considered indispensable, we should have deliberately revived such a relic of the dark ages as the nightcap!

Everybody who is anybody should have a velvet dress this year! I suppose those unfortunates who are not anybody might make shift with velveteen, if need be, but as the velvet gown must be lined throughout with silk even the make shift would be expensive. Black is a good standard color to select for the velvet dress but dark blue is better that is to say it is more fashionable. All such dresses are lined either with white silk or pale blue, or Nile green, which will show when you lift it, and it is scarcely necessary to add that you must not go out walking on muddy days with a gown of this description. The blouse of this dress should be of silk which matches the skirt in color, and over the blouse is worn a bolero jacket of velvet which should be of the same delicate shade as the lining. It is frequently embroidered in gold and jewels, and is a very swell little garment indeed. A corset belt of black satin, and cream colored lace at throat and wrists finishes a costume which is thoroughly the thing, and in which any woman must feel well dressed.

Of course everybody is tired of hearing about the very newest sleeve, its variety is so infinite and its shape seems to change regularly every week when the fashion journals come out, but a sleeve that will positively be a favorite model during the coming spring, is rather graceful and therefore worth hearing about. It is gathered in at the shoulder without any rise at all, and hangs like a bag to the elbow, then tightens gradually but without the skin tightness of some of the winter sleeves, down to the wrist, where it flares broadly over the hand. The soft droop of the bag-like puff is rather pretty, and much more graceful than the stiff high puff crowning the painfully tight sleeve, that has been worn this winter.

I saw an odd dress the other day which may perhaps be a forecast of some spring models. It was of Scotch plaid, and made with no less than three skirts, like three very deep flounces. The first skirt reached nearly to the knee, and the second a few inches below the hips: of course these flounces were attached to a foundation. The bodice was a full blouse of the plaid, with a deep folded belt of velvet in the shade matching the darkest color in the plaid. Above this was a closed bolero which reached just below the bust, and fastened far over on the left side.

One of the oldest freaks of fashion, this year has been the adoption of purple, and the various shades of violet, for travelling dresses, especially for bridal travelling gowns; this color has been hitherto avoided by brides, on account of its connection with mourning, but now that it has become the fashion the old prejudice seems to have been forgotten. A true example of a purple travelling dress was worn by a bride lately. The skirt was perfectly plain, as most of the very stylish skirts are, and the bodice plain and tight fitting in the back, but with a full front of white satin and lace that lightened it up wonderfully. A wide velvet belt ended in a smart bow at the left side, and the velvet collar was finished with a ruching of white lace, which also fell over the hands in a wide frill. The bonnet worn with this dress was of violets, and lace, with black ostrich tips, and simple as it sounds the whole costume was most tasteful and attractive.

Blue and yellow does not sound like a pretty combination, but still there are many shades of both these colors, and if the proper tints are selected there is no reason why the result should not be happy. A dress of broad-cloth in the true cadet blue, which is only a little lighter than navy, was made up with a full vest and folded girdle of pale canary silk, and instead of looking either startling or loud it was simply very stylish and French in its effect. The skirt was quite plain, and the bodice an eton jacket over a full vest. The girdle was finished with a large bow at the left side, and the hat worn with the gown was a toque of blue, with bunches of canary color. The separate waists that are still so fashionable are now chosen with some reference to the skirt with which they are to be worn. Thus with a skirt of mixed goods, the blouse could be of one of the colors which appeared in the skirt. A walking dress of the dark red cloth, which is so much worn when decorated, and toned down with black braid, has a blouse of red changeable silk with a shirred yoke, and collar, and wide belt of red velvet.

The milliners are already beginning to prepare for spring openings, and though we shall not see them for a while yet, the styles and shapes of the spring hats and bonnets have been pretty well decided upon; and one thing which we are permitted to know, is that strings are to be

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revved, and those who wear bonnets will have them tied under their chins. Sometimes these strings are of lace, and sometimes of ribbon, but in some shapes for other they will be there, and very becoming they are too, even if they do give a matronly look to the frivolous little bonnets we wear for best.

ASTRA.

RUSKIN'S SERVANTS.

How the Great Writer Dealt With his Servants in Every Day Life.

'I have got two Davids and a Kate that I wouldn't change for anybody else's servants in the world; and I believe the only quarrel they have with is that I don't give them enough to do for me. This very morning I must stop writing presently to find the stoutest of the Davids some business, or he will be miserable all day.' So wrote Ruskin in 'Fors Clavigera.' The words did not express merely a poetic sentiment of the author; they also represented a phase of his domestic life, as the following extract from an English periodical proves:

Mr. Ruskin and I were dining together. During the meal, as we were enjoying a rhubarb tart, I happened to say it was the first I had tasted that season, and how delicious it was.

The professor was delighted at my appreciation of his rhubarb, and ringing for one of the servants, he said, 'Please tell Jackson I want him.'

This was the gardener—one of the 'Davids,' I suppose. When he came into the room, his master said, 'Jackson, I am very pleased to tell you that your first pulling of rhubarb is quite a success; and my friend here, who has had some pie made of it, says it is delicious.'

Jackson, with a true gardener's pride, thanked us both for our appreciation of his early rhubarb, and left the room.

When we had finished dining, a servant came in, bringing a number of lighted candles. The windows being shaded by the overhanging trees above, the room was almost dark even before the sun had gone down. After placing the candles, she was leaving the room, when she said, 'Please, sir, there is a beautiful sunset sky just now over the 'Old Man.'

The professor rose from his chair at once and said, 'Thank you, Kate, for telling us; but before disturbing my friend, I will go and see it it is worth looking at.'

He left the room, and soon returned. 'Yes,' he said, 'it is worth seeing;' and he led the way up-stairs to his own bedroom.

It was certainly a glorious sight, the sun sinking behind the Coniston 'Old Man' Mountain, and the mist and ripples on the lake tinged with a crimson flush.

'We sat in the window recess till the sun

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went down behind the mountain. Not a word was spoken by either of us. I was thinking of the charming relationship and sympathy manifested between master and servant, and how strange it would seem to most of us that even such a trifling matter as a gardener's first rhubarb is not to be left as a matter of course, nor such a common occurrence as a beautiful sunset to be left to pass away unnoticed in this exceptional household.

A FREAK AMONG FLOWERS.

Venus Fly Trap and its Almost Human Action.

Now and again, in exploring American woods and swamps, botanists have come across floral curiosities that almost bridge over the great gulf that divides the animal and vegetable kingdoms, says the Designer. One of these, to be met with nowhere in the world save in North Carolina, is scientifically classified as *dionea muscipula*, but is colloquially known as 'Venus' fly trap.'

In appearance the extraordinary plant is pretty but unassuming; the leafless flower stem, running from six to eight inches in height and surmounted by a cluster of five petalled blossoms, rising erect like a rosette-like bed of leaves. It is in the edge of the leaves that the death-dealing apparatus is set—for this modest little plant, which is so delicate that it dies of the slightest injury to root or stem, sustains its life by feeding upon the unwary insects enticing them to their destruction by exuding from the edges of its fatal traps a viscous fluid, somewhat resembling honey.

The traps consist of two soft velvety leaves, fringed with delicate bristles and hinged together on one side. The unsuspecting fly, lured by the honey, alights on these bristles in anticipation of a feast, but at the first touch of its feet the hinges close the two leaves come together, the bristles interlock, and the hapless insect is imprisoned in a cell from which escape is impossible.

Under the stimulus of the victim's struggles the tiny glands with which the inner walls of the trap are furnished pour forth a secretion which Darwin analyzed as a vegetable gastric juice, resembling that which insures digestion in animal life. Under the influence of this curious fluid, the fly is actually digested alive, and its juices being extracted the trap doors are reopened and the skeleton is flung out.

The scientists declare that the plant unquestionably lives upon the juices of its victims, but one or two expert florists take exception to his statement. It is worthy of note that, although the habit of the plant is carnivorous, experiments have proved that it lives longer and thrives better when so inclosed that no insects can reach it—a superabundance of its favorite diet apparently rendering it even more delicate than it is by nature. The set of muscles controlling its leaves are said to resemble those of the human eyelids.—New York Herald.

Cross Women.

A druggist doing business in a large Ontario town recently wrote as follows: 'I have lately met with some very cross women. For reasons best known to themselves they purchased common package dyes instead of the reliable and never-failing Diamond Dyes for home dyeing. They were sorely disappointed in results, and had their goods spoiled. They came to me afterward, knowing that I sell only the Diamond Dyes.'

Moral: When you are coloring goods at home use the 'Diamond' that guarantee success; refuse all imitations.

After the football is over, after the field is clear, straighten my nose and shoulder, help me to find my ear.—Spare Moments.

Automatic Window Brush.

A new brush for washing carriages or windows, which is shown herewith, has been made the subject of an English patent. It is designed to avoid any waste of water, and to allow the operator to apply the water just as wanted. For this purpose the water is led up to the brush through a hollow handle, and passes out in a spray over the brush. A reservoir which is supported by the head of the brush, may contain some cleansing material, such as soap powder, if desired, a small quantity being carried to the surface to be cleaned by the issuing water.

Kind Words from the Fred Vicor Mission Bible Class.

On behalf of the Fred Vicor Mission Bible Class I wish to express our gratitude to you for the box of Chase's Ointment which you supplied in aid of our charitable work to the infant child of Mrs. Brownrig 102 River Street. Ten days ago the child was awfully afflicted with scald head, the face being literally one scab from forehead to chin, and in that brief time a complete cure has been effected. Surely your gift was worth more than its weight in gold.

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