

Woman and Her Work

It has long been the boast of lordly man that woman alone was responsible for the slaughter of the birds, and that, whatever his other sins that of sacrificing innocent winged creatures for his personal adornment could not be laid at his door. Some-one, a woman I feel satisfied, has been investigating this claim, and unearthed the fact of its invalidity. It transpires that the plumes worn in the busbies of certain cavalry regiments in the Imperial service are by regulation composed of egret feathers. The regiments so distinguished are the Hussars, the King's Royal Rifles, the Horse Artillery and the Rifle Brigade, whose plumes are always made of white egret, and heron feathers. I admit that the officers themselves are not in any way to blame for wearing egret plumer, the fault lies with the war office, and the regulation is an iniquitous one which should be changed without loss of time, as any other plume would answer equally well; but the reproach can no longer be cast at us that we alone are responsible for the threatened extermination of the beautiful egret.

I see that the milliners, and those interested in the sale of egret plumes and birds' feathers generally are striving to lull the scruples of their more tender hearted customers, and prevent the injury of their own trade by assuring them that the great majority of egret plumes sold are not really the product of nature, but of the manufacturer's skill, being really prepared from ordinary feathers skillfully manipulated to resemble the heron plumes. This is a bare faced fiction as Professor Hudson, an English ornithologist of wide reputation who has devoted much time and study to the problem of protecting bird life, and preventing the extermination of certain rare varieties, asserts that amongst numerous specimens of so-called manufactured plumes, he found none that were not absolutely genuine. Therefore I hope we shall not be too ready to gratify our vanity by wearing the beautiful plumes which have so long been forbidden to those amongst who have conscientious scruples on the subject, and at the same time quiet our consciences with the milliner's assurance that they really grew on a barn door fowl whose life was sacrificed not to feminine vanity but for food.

They say that our necks have been almost ruined by the high collar, and that the only thing which can save them even at the eleventh hour is a speedy return to those delightful low-cut gowns which disfigured our sex almost eight years ago. The remedy may be effective, but the question before the meeting just now, is whether it would not be worse than the disease during the transition stage. If the fashion was a trying one to any but the youngest and loveliest women when it first came out, and before the high collar had got in its deadly work, what would it be now, when, so it is said, all our necks are stamped with a dark circle around the base of the throat which makes us look as if we had been mortifying the flesh by wearing a rope around them. Those who have made a study of the subject say that even when this mark is not very apparent one has only to look carefully at the necks of the fair maids and matrons at a ball to see that there has been a sad degeneracy in the plumpness, and whiteness of the feminine throat during the last seven or eight years, and that instead of the firm, milk-white column which was a common possession of womankind then, the average woman's neck has a decidedly scrawny, not to say sere and yellow appearance. The cause of the calamity which has overtaken us lies in the fact that in order to look well the high collar especially when it is of linen, must be worn tight enough to interfere largely with the circulation, and the skin and flesh being deprived of enough blood to nourish them properly, soon be-

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gin to wither and fade, the muscles grow placid and weak, and the whole neck begins to assume an appearance of age the skin losing its delicate color and fine texture while the flesh becomes soft and flabby and loses its youthful appearance.

Women have begun to discover this serious drawback to the high collar, and becoming and convenient as it is, they are discarding it in all possible haste. This is the real secret of the sudden fancy for a soft Roman scarf, or broad ribbon wound rather loosely around the neck and tied in a sailor knot in front, which so many women affect now; but though this will help towards restoring the beauty of the neck, some more active treatment is required as well. One woman has discovered a short cut back to the original beauty of her throat and neck, in bathing them three times a day in very cold water, which makes the flesh firm and solid, then at night she rubs cocoa butter into neck, arms and shoulders, until she cannot rub any longer, and she declares that three months of this simple treatment restored them to all their former whiteness and plumpness. It is well to be very cautious in the use of cocoa butter, all the same! If it agrees with your skin nothing could be more soothing and beneficial, or a better skin food, but unfortunately there are some skins that cannot stand it at all, and these it turns yellow and utterly ruins. I speak feelingly on the subject for I believe that a daily application of cocoa butter, even when mixed with such soothing ingredients as almond oil and benzoin if persisted in for a month, would make my skin like a turkey's leg—an old turkey with the withered yellow legs that signalize more than middle age in the fowl kingdom.

By the way—speaking of turkey's legs reminds me of a perfectly new fad amongst womankind. This is no less than the wearing of a turkey's foot mounted in either gold or silver, as the owner's inclination and purse suggest, and worn either as a chatelaine ornament or a pin. Only a little while ago the superstitious fair one who wanted a real charm, and considered a four-leaved clover too commonplace, wore a rabbit's foot, but as everybody who is at all versed in matters occult knows that the only rabbit's foot which really possesses virtue as a charm, is the left hind foot of a molly cottontail which has been killed in a grave yard at twelve o'clock some night in the full of the moon, and the slayer must be a red headed negro, or the charm will be useless. Now as these conditions are not by any means easy to fulfil, especially the last, it stands to reason that the rabbit's foot charm is rather a rare article, so perhaps it is as well that something more attainable is taking its place. It must not be imagined for a moment, however, that the ordinary turkey's foot of commerce will answer for a charm—by no means! To be effective it must once have belonged to a fat gobbler which had been saved by his owner for some special occasion and then stolen by a straight haired gentleman of the colored persuasion, and ministerial profession at midnight when the moon is new. It is terrible to think that any colored shepherd would set such an example to his flock, but he must do it, or else the charm is useless; and in consequence it also, is far from being either a common or inexpensive ornament. But all the same the up to date jeweller seems to have an inexhaustible supply of the genuine article always on hand, and they sell like hot cakes in cold weather. Just what luck the turkey's foot is supposed to bring or what danger it averts no one seems to know, not even the wearers them-

selves, but all the same the really swell girl who makes it a point always to have the latest thing out, is wearing her Ascot tie secured by a big unsightly looking turkey's foot with outspread toes, and long skinny legs, and the man who follows in the train of her admirers, is apt to shudder when he catches sight of the grisly looking object and wonder helplessly what vagary will seize the angelic sex next.

There is little to record beyond rumors, in the world of fashion just at this season of the year, but luckily there are plenty of rumors else the fashion writers would indeed be in despair. One rumor says that revers are on the decline, and will soon be seen no more on the fashionably costume; but all the same some very new looking models which have every appearance of having been recently imported, show not only one, but three revers on each side. One, is a costume of gray cloth with a bodice of heliotrope corduroy velvet, and a vest of cream lace, the triple revers being composed respectively of velvet, gray silk with a ruche of gray chiffon on the edge, and white silk covered with lace, which turns back from the lace vest. The gray revers fall under this, with the velvet one last, and each is a trifle wider than the one above it.

Another rumor which seems to be contradicted by the early spring importations is that tinsel sequin, and jeweled trimmings have had their day, and will not be a feature of the coming spring fashions. Still they are seen in every imaginable variety, and the gown which has no decoration of spangles, or bead trimming of any kind, really has more distinction than the one which glitters with shining ornaments as it is much more unusual. Many handsome gowns of cloth and velvet amongst the latest importation are made perfectly plain, and that is doubtless the reason that the early downfall of tinsel trimmings is predicted. Bengaline silk in both white and light colors is used a great deal in combination with cloth for plaited panel in the skirt and for the finishing touches of the bodice. Satin antique is another silk which is very popular for this purpose, and it is often used in combination with bengaline for the trimming of a cloth dress. The satin is in some pretty light color, and the bengaline white. Three of the newest dresses are made with the effect of a double bodice, and if the contrasts are well chosen, nothing could possibly be prettier. For instance, a form of grey cloth has an inner bodice of rose pink antique satin which forms part of the guimpe and shows fully an inch at one side, where the bodice fastens. The guimpe is completed by a chemisette of tucked white chiffon, and the collar band is a combination of cloth and white bengaline, which forms the plaited panels in the skirt. A double bertha collar of cloth and bengaline may outline the low-cut neck of the first cloth bodice, or it may be finished with a ruche of gray chiffon. A good many examples of the ruffled skirt are already being shown in the shops, and the decorations are frequently two fold; for example a black silk skirt has three or five ruffles as the wearer may fancy, each ruffle being trimmed with three graduated rows of black velvet ribbon. The waist is of black net with chenille dots, over black silk and is finished with cream lace. Another black silk is of the taffeta variety, and is adorned with seven pinked ruffles. The bodice is also of taffeta, and is striped with black lace insertion underlaid with a strip of green silk. The vest is of cream lace with a band of green velvet trimmed with fancy buttons on each side. A still newer fancy in the ruffled skirt is to have it ruffled only at the back and sides, leaving the front breadth quite plain. A band of jet covered the ends of the ruffles where they join the front breadth. An evening dress of



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black net is properly trimmed with ruffles, all of which are finished on the edge with a simple row of black velvet ribbon.

Amongst the new colors for spring, heliotrope in every imaginable shade is said to head the list, and the numerous people to whom this lovely shade is becoming, will rejoice accordingly. Black is to be very fashionable for gowns of cloth, and lighter materials, such as grenadine and nun's veiling, and by the way—the new nun's veiling which has taken the place of the material known by that name ten years ago, is the daintiest of fabrics made of silk and wool mixed, and very thin and sheer. It comes in all light pretty tints as well as black, and has a striped border for trimmings.

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ANOTHER STORY ABOUT GEORGE.

How Washington Shared His Bed With a Negro.

Throughout the Revolutionary War, Primus Hall was the body-servant of Colonel Pickering, of Massachusetts. It was well known that there was no officer in the whole American army whose memory was dearer to Washington, and whose counsel was more esteemed by him, than that of the honest and patriotic Colonel Pickering. Whenever he was stationed within such a distance as to admit of it, he passed many nights with the Colonel. Washington was, therefore, often brought into contact with the servant of Colonel Pickering, the departed Primus.

On one occasion the great general was engaged in earnest consultation with Colonel Pickering, in his tent, until after the night had fairly set in. Headquarters were at a considerable distance, and Washington signified his preference to staying with the Colonel over night, provided he had a spare blanket and straw.

"Oh, yes," said Primus, who was appealed to, "plenty of straw and blankets—plenty."

Upon this assurance, Washington continued his conference with the Colonel until it was time to retire to rest. Two humble beds were spread side by side in the tent, and the officers laid themselves down, while Primus seemed to be busy with duties that required his attention before he himself could sleep. He worked, or appeared to work, until the breathing of the prostrate gentlemen satisfied him that they were sleeping; and then, seating himself upon a box or stool, he leaned his head upon his hands to obtain such repose as so inconvenient a position would allow. In the middle of the night Washington awoke. He looked about and descried the negro as he sat. He gazed at him awhile and then spoke. "Primus!" said he, calling, "Primus!"

Primus started up and rubbed his eyes. "What, General?" said he. "Washington rose up in bed. 'Primus,' said he, 'what did you mean by saying that you had blankets and straw enough? Here you have given up your blanket and straw to me that I may sleep comfortably, while you are obliged to sit through the night.'

"It's nothing, General," said Primus. "It's nothing. I'm well enough. Don't trouble yourself about me, General, but go to sleep again. No matter about me. I sleep very good."

"But it is matter—it is matter," said Washington, earnestly. "I cannot do it, Primus. It is either of us to sit up, I will. But I think there is no need of either sitting up. The blanket is wide enough for two. Come and lie down here with me."

"Oh, no, General!" said Primus, starting and protesting such a proposition. "No, let me sit here. I'll do very well on the stool."

"I say, come and lie down here!" said Washington, authoritatively. "There is room enough for both, and I insist upon it."

He threw open the blanket as he spoke, and moved to one side of the straw. Primus protested to have been exceedingly shocked at the idea of lying under the same covering with the commander-in-chief, but his tone was so resolute and determined that he could not hesitate. He prepared himself, therefore, and laid himself down by Washington; and on the same straw, and under the same blanket, the general and the negro slept until morning.

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