

Frills of Fashion.

No true woman is ever stronger than bargain temptations in the shape of fine lingerie. She may heroically pass by hats of appealing loveliness and price, withstand amazing sales in silks, satins, gloves and ribbons, but she is not capable of resisting the midsummer reductions in underwear, which can be safely accepted as proof positive that for beauty's sake alone, not vanity's does the average woman adore fine twined linen. She will overdraw her bank account, run up big bills or quite beggar herself for no purpose but to revel in the hidden loveliness of a lace-fretted camisole or cobwebby chemise and feel, when in possession of either, full compensation for her monetary outlay. Now inexcusable as this may seem from an economic standpoint, ample extenuation of the extravagance lies in the garments themselves. Every season they grow more elaborate in pattern and ornamentation, and whereas many devices used to be practised for the saving of lace and labor in their make-up, nowadays the movement is steadily toward the adoption of white lingerie only and that of the most elaborate fashion. Every modish creature, moreover, takes an unalloyed delight in wearing the simplest of duck or cotton gowns upon a stratum of lawn and tucks and frills and frumpies that cost a small fortune.

To meet the demand of the luxury-loving and prompt-paying Americans, the Parisians set the pace in undergarments, and do all their labor of construction by hand, but our own manufacturers follow their lead so closely and admirably in machine-wrought pieces that it is really a matter more of sentiment than worth that dictates the purchase of the French article. On both sides of the water the effort is always tending toward a reconciliation between excessive graceful daintiness, what every woman demands and precautions against bulkiness, that no woman can allow.

Turn over a heap of garments all fresh from Paris and you will find that though silk is so slightly used in their make-up, none save petticoats, perhaps, but will run through the circle of a thumb ring. Everywhere that an inch of goods might be pruned away the artist's scissors have sliced to good effect and with no loss in the charm of the garment. For example, all chemises are sloped to fit the figure like a glove. The newest French pattern shows a novel arrangement by which a tiny side body is introduced under the arm and the seam so skillfully manipulated that it can never act as an irritating cause against tender flesh. To obviate any awkwardness in getting in and out of such a chemise the long slip either buttons or ties on the shoulders, or is opened down the front well below the waist line, and this delicate garment is shuffled off as easily as a pinafore.

In taking away from the chemise about the waist line the skirt length has been increased. The long chemise has logically done away with that absurd little exotic in the feminine wardrobe, the short petticoat. She who wears a silk undervest is in comfort bound to adopt a brief tunic under her silk or cambric undershirt, and though by this device she pares away some bulk at the bust and shoulder line, she doubles the thickness at her waist and hips. With the tight-fitting, long-skirted chemise the fattest of women gets all the relief she deserves and carries two under garments instead of three.

Right at the top and bottom all the chemise decoration is done. Some of them are long enough to reach half way to the ankle, and have their edges cut in deep vandykes or scallops or wedged-shaped tabs, and to these are applied little wavelets of lace. About the shoulders nothing is smarter than the simulated fichu drape, done in the softest handkerchief batiste, and handworked either in small embroidered dots or buttonhole edged rings. Sometimes these dots and rings are done in colored thread, but on the whole women prefer that these garments shall be of a whiteness to rival the snowdrift and ivory white. Not even the time tinted laces are used on the cream of these creations.

Camisole, cache-corset or underbody, call that garment what you will, but do not give it any length below the waist line. The prettiest and most useful styles are made in bolero and handkerchief shape, and an exceedingly recent invention in this line is cut to fold fichu wise, but perfectly flat, over the shoulders, across the bust, and, passing under the arms, the ends of it fasten by two flat pearl buttons in the centre of the back. Those that button, orthodox fashion, down the front are cut off sharply at the waist, a load embroidered beading serves as a belt, and through this a ribbon is run for beauty's sake.

The camisole's chief mission is to hide the laces and relieve the puritanical severity of the corset. We have just passed through a very dark age in stays when we erred and strayed after that after prophet the Parisian eccentric, who preached the efficacy of the short couille clasp. Just now we are beginning to find out proper figures and waist line again with an improved long stay, and we are emancipated at the same time from the vulgarity of the brocaded satin, colored cotton and the lace garnished corsets. A purely white figure moulded of thin, very strong couille stiffened with the fewest possible choice bones, and not decorated with even so much as an embroidered arrowhead, is what the regenerated makers of stays are sending us. A good French corset is cut low under the shoulder blades, but long on the hips, and the front steels are as stiffly straight as the proverbial ramrod.

If the chemise and camisole have been obliged to eliminate a deal of old-time amplitude under the requirements of the new fashion law the petticoat and the pantalon and the nightdress go triumphantly on their wide gored way. They, with the exception of the taffeta jupe, all are made of the limpest white goods procurable, and the laundress that starches the French batiste, Indian lawn and English nainsook lingerie is likely to suffer the extreme penalty at her employer's hands. As the seaweed clings to a mermaid so every woman desires her underwear to droop and gather about her body, and with the gown of the period a perfectly starched white lawn skirt, shaped without a pucker at the hips, and spreading lace hung flounces to the floor, is the proper thing.

Silk petticoats are as a rule as tempestuous as ever. It is true they take the hips perfectly smoothly, but expand with a whirl and a rush below the knees. Of an evening with a dancing dress a bone white taffeta, carrying a two-foot-wide flounce of thickly kilted white chiffon, this valance ruched at top and bottom takes undeniable precedence. Another well esteemed type is white silk in combination with blond lace. Women whose bank accounts are as big as their ambitions, and whose love of color will not remain unsatisfied wear genuine creations of taffeta bearing embroidered tulle and chiffon flounces falling upon wreaths of flowers bound round the bottom of the long petticoat.

A price quite dizzy but not exorbitant, all things considered, is asked for the black or white silk petticoat to which lace is applied in detached flower clusters, and under every lace flower is introduced a bit of colored silk that gives to the bouquets a most blooming appearance. At a country house ball at Lenox recently was worn a white taffeta skirt, bearing a large flounce on which an eglantine pattern of lace was laid. Under the foliage leaves green silk was introduced, under the petals rose-pink silk appeared, and the making of such a skirt represented the most costly hand labor known to modern sartorial art. These Marie Antoinette petticoats, as they are called, are not hidden by their owners under a bushel. When such a treasure is possessed its wearer never takes a step without deliberately catching her own draperies in both hands and so high that the adorable floriated flounce is thoroughly displayed, and such a petticoat is boldly worn as a breakfast negligee with a lace or crepe de chine or flowered silk peignoir. In the effort to introduce colored lawn petticoats one type of its class has assuredly grown popular, and this is a flounced affair of any light tint desired, edged with white embroidery, or every valance rimmed with a stitched on band of plain white lawn.

As long skirted as the old style riding habit is the robe of to-night; its throat widely opened, with big embroidered tops or collars rolling on the shoulders, or

else the other extreme is followed, and there are not only high, close neckbands, but also big ear flaps of lace curling upon either side. The most becoming pattern yet has a full fichu drape over shoulders and bust, and one of the daintiest suggestions was shown in a bridal set where the batiste nightrobe was embroidered here and there on the long, full expanse of skirt with clusters of small white flowers, their petals folded and pendant in sleep. In the same trousseau were night robes with bishop sleeve made full by the device of running a beading up the inside seam, and weaving through this a draw string in the form of a line of bebe wash ribbon. When this sleeve went to the laundry the ribbon was drawn out and left a perfectly flat sleeve measuring nearly a yard and a half in length. For August nights, when the thermometer seems to run races with the moon, were capital sleeveless gowns of cool china linen, cut low about the neck and showing a gracious lace bordered shoulder drape. Throughout this corbeille of fine underwear scarcely a tuck was seen, and this may be accepted as conclusive evidence that the inset of lace or fine embroidery is esteemed above many tucks, however narrow they may be.

To be explicit on the question of lace, the most fashionable species used is our old friend of Valenciennes, while point de Flandre and a heavy linen thread imitation of Alencon is appearing on the more sumptuous concoctions from Paris. Very engaging effects are perfected with honiton beading, and in furthering the cause of beauty edging done inside of hemstitched border by drawn threads is considered in excellent taste.

Outside the immediate pale of lingerie, of course, we come to the peignoirs, combing jackets and bed-room draperies that are all in white this season. They partake of many of the main features of the underwear in that they cling, droop long about the feet and come in batiste, Persian lawn, silken Oriental muslin, with the inevitable lace interpolations and completions. They have, on the whole, rather more color than the underwear, and some are made of quite transparent malmaison muslin with needle worked posies or rings in tinted floss.

They lend themselves very graciously to ribbon accompaniments in pale tints of blue and pink and green, and a woman in mourning is almost gaily adorned with many infantile bows of black lutestring, that finish in a knot or series of knots after shutting through yards of ornamental Honiton head edgings on flounces, collars, &c.

A reaction in simplicity from these are flowered muslin and white lawn adaptations from the Japanese kimono shape that sweeten with comfort the lazy hours of the women whose purses are not equal to muslin and lace. From shawl yokes of blue and pink lawn depend full floating skirts of white, and the colored lawn appears again in wide inner facings for the broad sleeves of the admirable garment. A safety brooch set with a clear imitation cabochon stone, catches the fronts together, and in point of crisp daintiness and true becomingness these simple peignoirs are not outdone by their more furbelowed and expensive kind.

METHODS OF BICYCLE THIEVES.

Some Reasons why Dealers Have to be on Their Guard.

Whether bicycling in the long run is cheaper than riding in street cars, it is certain that some persons of unscrupulous tendencies make money by their cycling adventures. They are those who make a practice of stealing bicycles and selling them for what they can get. Four or five years ago, when the price of the cheapest wheels almost equalled that of the best in the market to-day, the business of bicycle stealing was really in its infancy. Men who had engaged in various lines of crookedness soon discovered that the demand for wheels at a low price furnished exceptional inducements for them to make bicycle stealing a regular occupation, and the tactics they employed in order to get possession of machines were numerous and often extremely clever.

During the last two years wheel-stealing has been carried on to a greater or less extent, but until this summer comparatively few complaints have been heard from dealers and individual riders since 1896. The thieves have lately started out again in great earnestness, and their modes of operation differ in many respects from those pursued formerly. Dealers tell some curious stories of the way they have been robbed by honest-looking and apparently respectable persons who have come to their shops ostensibly to buy or rent to wheels.

'Last week,' said a dealer on the west side, 'a young man came into my store and asked to see a new, man's bicycle, with a 24-inch frame. He said that his own wheel did not run smoothly and that he desired to get another one. He inquired my cash price for one of the best

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machines in the store and then decided that he would like to exchange his old wheel for the one we were examining. 'Where is your wheel?' I asked. 'Of course I must see it before I can tell how much I will be able to allow you for it.' 'It's five or six doors up from here, in a repair shop,' said my visitor. 'The repairer had one of the wheels off about five minutes ago and was straightening the front fork, which I bent a little in an accident. If you will just step in there for a moment, you can see it.'

'The man's apparent honesty and uncommon frank expression of countenance made me less suspicious than I would be generally; but I had already had some experience with smooth-talking individuals, and made up my mind I would not be taken in by them again. I was alone in the shop at the time, but resolved, nevertheless to see if there was anything in the man's game. So I agreed to step over to the other place with him and take a look at his wheel. When we arrived there, instead of walking to the back of the shop, where the repair department was, I stopped purposefully about six or eight feet from the front door to look at a machine which, I remarked, had a very odd appearance. A few seconds later I walked out of the shop and as I did so saw a man rush into my store. When I got there he was just coming out with a new \$75 bicycle, and seemed embarrassed when he met me face to face.

'I was just seeing how easily this wheel runs,' he exclaimed when I confronted him. 'If I can dispose of my own bike, I'll come back in a day or so and buy this one. It is a daisy.'

'Oh, yes,' said I, 'it's a beautiful machine, but if you had got it outside of this door when I saw you, you bet I would have your picture in the Rogues' Gallery. His explanations were profuse but they didn't convince me of his honest intention. The fact is that he was watching for me to go into the other shop, and the moment I did so he improved his opportunity.'

'We do not fear the men thieves nearly so much as we do the women,' said another dealer. 'If for example, a man comes in here to rent a bicycle and we have any doubt as to his honesty, we flatly refuse to let him have it is different. A woman may come in all rigged out for a spin and with her face covered with smiles. She has been told that our wheels are better than those in other places and she wished to hire one for a couple of hours. When we inquire her address she gives one that is a mile or so away—too far, of course, for us to send around there to see if it is genuine—adds that she is so and so and expresses great surprise that we should for a moment doubt her sincerity. We tell her that it is against our rules to let a wheel to anybody we don't know, and that we can scarcely make an exception in her case. Then she tosses her head, snaps her eyes and declares that the whole thing is absurd and that she is to be deprived of a whole afternoon's pleasure on account of our abominable system of red tape. Under such circumstances it is mighty hard to deny the request, but we have to do so. If we didn't, it would be only a short time before our shop would be in the hands of a receiver.'

Double Gift.

A charming little story is told of an encounter between the Emperor Alexander of Russia and a quick-witted young girl.

During the occupation of Paris, the Emperor Alexander was present at the anniversary of one of the hospitals. Plates or contributions were passed by the patronesses of the institution to the visitors of the day, and a particularly pretty girl presented her plate for royalty's attention.

The emperor dropped a handful of gold on the plate, saying to the young girl as he did so, 'This is for beautiful bright eyes.'

The pretty maid courtesied low, and again presented her plate to the generous donor.

'What, more?' asked the emperor, with a smile.

HIS SHARE OF THE LOAD.

He Took the Heaviest Burden and got Pretty Tired of it.

The Archduke Albrecht of Austria was fond of hunting, and spent a month or two every summer in the Tyrol and Upper Austria, in pursuit of the chamois. On these occasions he wore a hunter's uniform, which was chronically in a shabby condition. One day he wandered away from his party, and finding that night was coming on, began hastily to descend the mountain toward Ischl. Soon he overtook a young girl of nineteen or twenty, who was carrying an enormous load of firewood, on the top of which was perched a chubby child about two years old.

The archduke hailed her, and the girl greeted him with anything but a friendly look.

'What do you want?' asked she.

'Can you tell me the shortest road down to Ischl?'

'I am going there. You can follow me,' she retorted, curtly.

The archduke went on beside her, but it made him uneasy to see her bearing so great a load.

'This is far too heavy for you my girl,' said he. 'Give me that child. I will carry him.'

'Much you know about carrying children, old fool!' she exclaimed. 'No; you take the firewood, and I will keep the youngster. You may well do that, for it you hadn't met me, you'd have run a good chance of spending the night on the mountain.'

The archduke undid the scarf and transferred the tagots to his own shoulders; so that, with his gun and game-bag, he was pretty heavily laden. Then the girl left to chaffing him about his ridiculous appearance, and as he trudged on for an hour he began to be a little tired of his bargain.

Suddenly, at a cross path, he came upon his suite, and their greeting at once betrayed his identity to the girl. She fell on her knees before him, and tears sprang to her eyes when she saw two of his hunters removing the tagots from his bruised shoulders.

'Don't cry! there's a good girl!' pleaded the archduke, distressed. Then he pressed a purse into the baby's hands. 'Here is something to buy your mother a donkey,' he said, with kindly smile. 'She might not always find an old fool to help her carry her firewood!'

'Wasn't it sad about old Jobley's failure?'

'What I has he failed?'

'Yes, gone clean smash.'

'That's too bad; he promised me something yesterday, but now, in his trouble, I will not hold him to it.'

'That's generous of you. What was it?'

'His daughter's hand in marriage.'

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