

Frills of Fashion.

Dress begins already to show many indications of the summer styles and of what we may expect to see three months hence. If there were no variations in fashion there would be no business for the fashion makers so it is pretty certain that they will look to their laurels and interests to such an extent that there never will be anything thrown on the market so ideal perfect and beautiful that it can become a permanent fashion. There always will be some involved suggestion of improvement, some unsatisfactory feature in every design, to keep their occupation alive.

It seems to be one of woman's pet prerogatives to deplore the frequent changes in fashion from time to time, but, this she affects as a sort of palliation of her frivolity, when in reality there is nothing else quite so interesting or exciting to the average woman as what is coming next in fashion. Her mission in life would be crippled indeed if there were no fluctuations in the market of modes in dress. She thrives on them, providing her purse is a long one and there are no stumbling blocks in her way. Rapid changes in fashion do not phase her; she is educated up to high ideals of dress and fully appreciates all of its advantages. She applies the same intelligence to the subject of artistic dressing that she gives to the seemingly more important questions of life, and the result is obvious; while other women who have as much money and equal opportunities for seeing and knowing the best of all that fashion and good taste can offer, promptly illustrate the difference between failure and success.

Every revolution of the wheel is sure to bring new modifications, even though some old time fashion is revived, but as yet there is an air of uncertainty about the coming modes which later importations will no doubt remove. Meanwhile rumors which may, or may not be verified weeks hence, are rife. One which women should hope may never be confirmed is that there is a tendency toward larger sleeves. The expansion is below not above the elbow and spreads out bell shape into a deep flounce. The sleeve is quite close-fitting from the shoulder to the elbow and is evidently some variation of the old-time flowing sleeve. Its use at present is confined to tea gowns, and jackets which sometimes have a close sleeve of tucked chiffon and a long bell-shaped sleeve falling over this. However such an extreme in sleeves need not be anticipated for the immediate future the close fitting variety being almost certain to endure through the coming season. Mousetaire cuffs are a feature of some of the new sleeves. They extend quite up to the elbow and are cut to flare a little over the hand.

As for the new skirts, we are informed that they are to be fuller, but not in the sense which adds any superfluous material around the hips. Slenderness of figure is still the leading feature of success if you would be a convincing exponent of the real beauty of present modes. While the skirts are plaited and tucked in every conceivable manner, they are so artistically cut and made that the plaits accentuate the slenderness of the figure rather than add to its apparent size. There is more fullness, but it is all around the feet in added flare and plaitings, which make the outline especially graceful. Another feature which we can rely on, if reports are true, is that the length will not be shortened, that there will be no deviation from the rule of long skirts which has prevailed for some time, except for special gowns made for outdoor sports. One design, which is popular just at the moment, has five shallow box plaits, one directly in front, one at either side, and two larger ones meeting at the back. These, like all the plaits, are stitched down half way and carefully pressed.

The kind of material employed determines the treatment to a great extent, and the plaits only in the back are not always stitched down; sometimes the pressing is sufficient, or they may be secured not more than five inches. A skirt with two double box plaits in the centre of the

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back and two single box plaits at either side of a plain front breadth is another model which has the promise of popularity. Box-plaits narrow at the waist line and widening toward the hem help to give a slender appearance to the figure.

However the skirts are plaited, there is a special art in making any of them, and a dressmaker must be an expert needle woman as well as an artist to give the full measure of perfection to each model. The first consideration is for the shape, which must give all the flare fashion requires at the hem, and then the plaits and tucks must be arranged with reference to the effect they have on the figure, so there is every opportunity for the display of artistic taste.

FRILLS OF FASHION.

Certainly tea gowns have a new mission in life now that it has been suggested that one which is new and becoming is an effulgent tonic for a prey convalescent. They are, indeed, beyond compare this season, and such dreams of beauty we have never had before owing greatly to the soft clinging effects in the materials. Classic grace is one great secret of their success and not so much the varying moods of fashion as in other departments of dress. Crepe de chine, panne and liberty silk, are the popular materials, but an occasional variation is seen in the beaded nets and mousselines used for this purpose. Pale green mousseline embroidered with jet and made over green silk and the clasps which join it at the sides are of silver and turquoise. The sleeves are transparent and the bolero is solid jet. Another pretty idea for a black combination is a gown of pink liberty silk draped with black lace fichu stole ends in front and trimmed with black velvet ribbon and narrow ruffles of lace. Other gowns of liberty silk have a plaited chiffon front, and elaborate trimming of lace. Something gorgeous in pale blue panne has the popular Watteau plait in the back hanging away from the figure to show the outline of the waist, and the plait starts from a transparent yoke of handsome lace. The open front is filled in with lace over white silk and the sides are faced back with white silk and fastened across at the waist with three narrow straps of black velvet drawn through diamond buckles. It is needless to add that all the tea gowns have a train, as they are never of walking length, but it is a very important part, adding a special grace to the costume. Some of the latest models show the gathered skirt shirred down a few inches below the waist, one in mauve crepe de chine being especially pretty, with a heart-shaped decolleté neck filled in with a dainty chemisette of lace. The bodice is bloused a little in front, the fullness drawn well down below the waist line and confined by a belt of silver filigree. The fichu plays a very important part among the tea gowns, and sometimes the bodice is belted in with a lace scarf knotted at one side. Cream lace buttons fastens one pretty model down the side of the skirt. Anything which can furnish fluff, ends and a draped effect is worthy of consideration in this sort of gown. An underskirt of fine embroidered muslin, with a princess tunic of glaze silk, makes an very effective house gown.

Cotton and silk grenadines are another novelty, and the French challies with satin stripes are more charming than ever.

'Ideal' is the name of a new tulle which is as strong as net and yet retains the soft film of the old material.

Mousselines part silk and part cotton are interesting features of the new dress materials as they are especially recommended for wear at the seashore. They are entirely without dressing, and their special beauty is said not to be affected at all by the sea air. This in itself is enough to commend them to every woman's judgment, but they have so many charms of coloring and design that the practical side is of minor importance in comparison.

So beautiful are the new ribbons that all the old fancies which once seemed so faultless pale beside them. As in everything else this season the colors are as soft and shadowy as possible and in texture almost like gauze, but finely and closely woven like silk. They are really Liberty silk and the wide widths are the fashion for sashes and neck wear, nine inches wide, being easily tied around the neck twice. In fact narrow widths are not the thing at all. There is everything in fancy ribbon, striped, dotted, shaded, and plaid galore, but the lovely sheen on these new plain fine things is more tempting than any other variety.

Among the new trimmings is a silk netting about four inches wide which has one scalloped edge finished with a narrow fringe, and midway between this and the upper edge is another row of the same fringe following the same outline. This comes in colors as well as black.

One of the latest novelties in note paper of varying shades of blue, gray and violet, shows a narrow white edge which is very effective.

The Directoire scarf of taffeta, Indian silk, crepe de chine, and silk mousseline, is promised as one of the features of spring wraps. It is trimmed with silk fringe and draped about the shoulders like a fichu tied in a knot at the bust. The ends vary in length, reaching just below the hem of the skirt. We may get tired of fringed scarf ends and fringed sash ends but they are very much in evidence among the few new things which have been sent over as forerunners of the spring fashions.

'Velours foulard' very soft and glossy in finish is one of the many novelties in materials.

The valentines of this year are an attractive array, and while the lace paper ones which used to be popular are not much seen, the mechanical processes by which separate sections were made to stand out from one another are always in vogue for valentine tokens, and any kind of a contrivance if it is only to pull the ribbon attached to a 4 leaved clover, and detach from there an eloquent rhyme.

Cut paper and crepe paper contrivances are sometimes elaborate, and every kind of a design with a heart and an arrow or a cherub. The tiny figure of Cupid in bisque makes a choice valentine gift, and so does the design of the merry little lovegod on a cameo plaque.

That a golf-score in a dainty red box should be a favorite valentine is significant. An appropriate sentiment is enclosed.

'Is the observance of St. Valentine's dying out?' That is a question which is asked each year. Is it getting too serious? If it is, that is too bad, for it is an annual occasion for great merrymaking of a simple sort.

Explanation of a War-Time Coincidence.

The law of coincidence works wonders. During the blockade of Santiago, Admiral Sampson and his officers were sitting, one more than sultry day, upon the deck of the flagship New York. It was too hot for conversation, and almost for thought. The fighters simply blinked and glared. The silence was broken by one who said: 'Next to having a brush with the Spaniards I'd like to have a Georgia watermelon.'

The suggestion brought a smile to every face, which widened when the admiral echoed, 'A watermelon? I want two to myself.'

A moment afterward the quartermaster announced the arrival of a boat from a supply ship which had just come in from New York city and added 'the boat is full of Georgia watermelons off the ice.'

Red tape was disregarded, and soon all on board, from admiral down, were having one of the most enjoyable feasts of the

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entire war. When it was over the officers tried to find how it was that their wives were so promptly answered, but although they came near the truth they never learned the true story of the coincidence.

Mrs. Van Brunt, a New York artist and a member of many of the patriotic organizations which were brought into being by the Spanish American War, heard one day of the excitement produced on the Texas by the arrival of a large but somewhat dilapidated watermelon from home. The story touched her, and the same day she secured several barrels of the choicest fruit and shipped them by the first supply ship going to Santiago. The captain of the vessel was courteous and obliging, and when told of the consignment put every one of the melons on ice and agreed to send them to the Texas the moment she arrived at her destination, and in the event of the Texas not being there to present them to the Admiral in charge.

But the voyage was swift, and as luck would have it, the supply-ship passed the Texas on the Cuban coast.

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A Tree Like a Grocery Store.

Admiral Von Diederichs, the new executive of the Imperial German navy, is not the cold, calculating personage depicted by the American press when he annoyed Admiral Dewey in the summer of 1898 at Manila. Those who know him well describe him as a highly educated, high-bred officer with a large fund of good nature. At Ceylon, while eating bread fruit for the first time, one of his staff who was a naturalist said:

'The tree, besides supplying breadfruit, also produce a nutritious oil or vegetable grease.'

The admiral looked up. 'Why not call it the bread-and-butter fruit tree?'

A Joke the Boston Ancients Tell.

The visit to the United States next June of the Honorable Artillery Company of London will be an event of more than ordinary importance. The man upon whom the task of doing the honors will fall is Colonel Sidney M. Hedges, of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company of Boston, whose guest the London visitors will be during their stay.

When the Boston Ancients were in England in 1896 as guests of the London Artillery the members were entertained every moment. It happened one afternoon that Colonel Hedges and a large company of friends were invited to the Marlborough House by the Prince of Wales. Now the Princess and her daughters had never met

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Colonel Hedges, but they thought more highly than ever of the Massachusetts society that claimed as one of its members an ex-President. They had taken the Colonel for Grover Cleveland.

The story leaked out through Lord Denbigh at a dinner at the Prince of Wales Club just at the time when all good stories come to the surface. The joke tickled Colonel Hedges immensely and by his friends who were in the secret he has been slyly called Grover ever since.

Chinese Inquest.

Coroner's inquests are well known among the Chinese. One of the chief difference between their system and ours is that the Chinese doctors never dissect. In fact, Chinamen have a perfect horror of dissection.

There are few things more absurd than the code of rules laid down for the Chinese coroner. In the first place he is bidden to make sure that he has a dead body before he begins his inquest. That, however, is less ridiculous than it sounds, for the heathen Chinese is tricky and may demand an inquest on a sham deceased with a view of extorting money from some person who may be denounced as having caused the death.

The preposterous part of the code comes in with regard to the alleged signs which show the cause of death. If the deceased is supposed to have been poisoned rice is put in his mouth and then taken out and given to a chicken. Its effect on the fowl decides the question. Most of the other methods adopted are even more fanciful and as a result inquests in China do very little to prevent crime.

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The Value of Song Birds.

There is a complete failure of the olive crop in southern Italy and Sicily this season, owing to the ravages of the oil fly, which appeared in unusual numbers owing to the prolonged drought of last summer and fall. The loss to the province of Bari and Lecce alone is estimated at 60,000,000 lire, or \$12,000,000. There will be a corresponding scarcity of oil, of course. The country people are having their eyes opened to the consequences of their wholesale destruction of insect devouring song birds.

Friend—'And are you now out of danger?' Convalescent—'No; the doctor says he will pay me two or three more visits.'

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