

Exquisite Handsome Creations Still Favored---Collars Are Extremely High, Sleeves Are Strikingly Novel in Design---Some Girdles Built on the Waist.

The separate blouse of lingerie persuasion has made such a niche for itself in the estimation of fashionable and unfashionable alike that it has come to be accepted as a wardrobe necessity, as indispensable as a corset cover or nightgown.

From the plain and machine-made article that sells over the department-store counter for 98 cents or thereabouts up to the hand-embroidered affair, decorated with not one, but several, kinds of real laces, there is place and occasion for each and everyone of them.

It must be confessed, however, that, apart from the matter of sleeves—which shall be treated of fully later on in this article—there is but little to record of novelty in the very newest thing that France has to send. The lines of the blouse have been so definitely determined, its limitations so clearly set, that there really is but little scope for the ingenuity of the designer except in the mater of trimming schemes—and the sleeves.

One point, though, calls for observance, and that is the clever way in which the yoke is made to do duty in securing a flat effect over the chest, and to broaden the shoulder line at the one and the same time. It is the broad shoulder which, however, is not expected to drop for even the tiniest fraction of an inch beyond the shoulder joint; that is the one insisted upon just now by all smart makers. And rightly, too; since the broader the shoulder the narrower and more slender-looking the waist becomes. An effect that cannot fail to prove flattering to any size, style or type of figure.

Square, round, pointed, escaliered and tab yokes are among the variations that the designer plays upon this old-time effect. Then to the yoke the full blouse is applied, and the position of the fulness is readily regulated to the size and a better outline thus secured.

In the more expensive of the ready-made blouses there is evident a lining of either chiffon cloth, if the material be of the washable order, or of mousseline de soie, if it be of such character as to demand the more skilled attention of the dry cleanser. This is really more in the nature of an underslip than of a lining, since there is never the slightest attempt made to converting this into a fitted lining. It is supposed to follow the lines of the blouse rather than of the body, and to soften the effect of the filmy and transparent laces that are used so lavishly and to such good effects upon the more expensive examples.

But in spite of the non-fitting character of the linings—when such are used—there are quite a number of modes shown, with a girdle built up on the blouse. This is accomplished with a featherbone sewn into the side seam, another in the center front and back, respectively, and with this for a foundation a shirred girdle is tacked on, lacing underneath in front and the material then lapped over.

For the raw days of spring, when the damp is really more penetrating than cold, the shops are offering well-cut slips of china silk in all of the delicate tintings, and the exclusive specialty shops have added slips in chiffon cloth as well.

Collars on the models for spring are all of them high, and some of them excessively so. It is necessary that those be well boned, and the notion counter of any well-equipped shop will offer any number of clever devices to this end, and all of them possessing the merit of successful laundering.

The little French lace buttons are now to be had over here in a good variety of styles and sizes, and they are far more attractive than the usual pearl button that fastens the blouse. Added to this, they never break off or split in the laundry, and their use is a dainty little fad that is bound to increase. For the collar and for the cuff a worked thread loop to pass around the bottom makes the best fastening, while the usual buttonhole is used elsewhere.

It is in the matter of sleeves that the chief novelties present themselves. Sleeves are always changing, and by the sleeves one can always determine the date of the gown, if the product of the good maker. They are always growing larger or smaller, longer or shorter, fuller or scantier, and they are either tight and plain or else full and trimmed to the uttermost.

This season there is the added problem as to whether one shall order long sleeves or short ones. The majority, doubtless, will be in favor of the longer pattern, since the average of pretty arms seems to be by no means high, and the short sleeve was oftentimes woefully unflattering in its revelations.

Full and easy in the armhole, the very latest pattern continues the fullness to the elbow, and then narrows it down until, at the hand, it is as tight and close as will permit the passage of the hand. In many instances this long cuff is provided with tops and buttons, so that it may be the more tightly fastened when in wear.

The deeply indented cuff that falls over the knuckles is a recent revival, and one that is vastly becoming to a large hand, while it makes a small one seem positively fairy-like.

But in the matter of sleeves it seems to be largely a matter of choice. That the long ones are considered newer will bring many adherents to their vogue; while the superior comfort and grace of the short sleeve will serve to keep it well up among the modish effects through this season at least.

Irish Crochet and Hand Embroideries

The sheerest of fine French linen batiste is the groundwork of the most fascinating and filmy embroideries that find their way across the water. This is the material used in the dainty blouse of the picture, one of those that are really worth their weight in gold, since they weigh but a few ounces at most. The embroideries are the form of stripes, a passion flower motif with petit pois raised in bold relief. To those are applied stripes of Irish crochet insertion, one of the characteristically small and fine patterns being used. The crochet hook is employed to join the lace and embroidery together, this being a new fad among the best makers in Europe. Of course, one sees this on expensive hand-made waists only; but it is a good hint for those who prefer to fashion their own dainty belongings in this line. There is a pointed yoke at the top, into which a trifle of real Cluny is deftly introduced, and the sleeve is simply a plain puff of the lace and embroidery joined together, as in the body of the blouse.

The only good that really is good for any is that which works good for all.

Some Late Fripperies.

Little Things That Mean Much to the Fashionable

METAL CLASPS AND TAG ENDS appear once more at the trimming counters—those to decorate the many ends of ribbon and velvet that go to form the cravats, lacings and other dangling ornaments that accompany the latest modes. Many of them are designed that they can be fastened in a moment, just a pinch of the pliers holding them in place securely. Others have claw ends that are worked like a paper fastener, while still others have to be stitched fast with strong buttonhole twist.

FRINGED PARASOLS are among the recent arrivals. Some display several rows of elaborately knotted silken strands, while the single row along the edge of the sunshade makes a very pretty finish indeed. They are all made with even longer handles than what prevailed last season.

THE HEMS ON many of the new imported models are managed most ingeniously. The vogue of soft and sheer materials is on the increase, it would seem, judging by the frocks that the best makers of Paris are sending over; and the latest fancy is to lay a deep empiecement of the goods on the outer side of the skirt, cut this into as fanciful an outline as can be arranged at the top and pipe it with silk or satin of a contrasting shade, so that its appearance is emphasized. Tabs—square, round pointed and oval — are among some of the devices used at this point; and a very simple skirt can be made to take on quite a complicated and fussified appearance when this idea is well carried out.

DRAPED BELTS of gold and silver gauze, with designs, chiefly floral, in delicate colorings are mounted upon those clever little featherbone frames that lace in front. Many of the most attractive of these have the lacing repeated on the outside of the belt, a gold or silver cord with tasseled ends being used for this purpose.

SUN PLEATED SKIRTS are still being made up for wear at the present at southern resorts, and those will doubtless appear as spring frocks in the north and elsewhere when the southern season is over. Some pretty ones are made up in cashmere and landsdowns, with three deep tucks above the hem—the skirts are all in walking length—and the bodice in accordeon pleating, strapped with some fancy passementerie. The sleeve is usually three plisse frills at the top, and the rest is shirred mousquetaire effect that reaches to the hand.

BUTTONS ARE to be used more than ever in trimming the charming gowns that are to usher in the spring. Velvet-covered moulds are to be had in almost all the staple colorings in the shops, and there are springing up little shops on every hand, equipped with button machines, where moulds of every conceivable size and shape are kept in stock to be covered with the customer's material and delivered in a very short time.

DOUBLE, TRIPLE AND tunic skirts are threatened in the immediate future, and already there are models in sheer summer goods made up after this very fussy—and, so far as the laundress is concerned, at any rate—somewhat impracticable style. Some slight stiffening is usually introduced in the underskirt, so that the flottant line of the silhouette is preserved.

SHORT WAISTED EMPIRE EFFECTS are in high favor for the little wraps with which the spring toilette is completed. Shortened pony coats, little cape boleros and some other little garments to which the French name of vetements seems the only one applicable are among the devices whereby a home or house frock is made suitable for street wear. That those fetching little toilettes will be a big success there is no doubt, and already some of the big and expensive shops are making up those effective and quaint-looking little three-piece costumes for exigent clients.

In the new voiles, crepes, henriettas, pongees and such they are most successful, and velvet ribbons are largely drawn upon for their adornment.

THERE IS LITTLE or no demand whatsoever for hosiery in the strong and lasting kind that we used to buy. While we are still in winter weather the best shops report that the steady demand has been for the sheer gauze variety in both silk and lisle. Even in cotton stockings a sheerer quality is demanded, and as a consequence there are countless looms, both here and in Germany, standing idle, there being no demand whatsoever for the stout quality of hose that such turn out. On the other hand, the looms that make the gauze kinds are working overtime, and importers say that they are many hundred dozens behind in the delivery of their orders.

Of course, this is all tremendously good for trade in general, for a gauze stocking does not begin to give the same amount of wear as a stouter weave, and where a half a dozen of stockings would see one fairly well through the season, now a dozen such must be purchased.

A BIG SEASON IS expected in lisle and cotton gloves once more, and even now the shops are displaying selections in those. One thing is obvious at even the most casual glance, and that is the prevalence of colorings. In the cotton gloves those are not so attractive, but in fine lisle they are at once soft and beautiful. Four, eight, and twelve button lengths are what are most heavily stocked, so it would seem as though importers expected the very short sleeves of last summer to descend a trifle or two.

SAILOR SHAPES are very conspicuous in the first batches of spring millinery. The little turned up saucer brim is back again in countless attractive guises, and the bandeau is now at the side somewhat towards the front.

French thrift and French savings permeate the nation to such an extent that home government bonds are held by the French people, principally the industrial classes, to the extent of over five billion dollars.

Eloquence has a tendency to act as an evaporator for religion.

Concerning the Separate Wrap.

Some Charming and Becoming Devices---Short and Loosely Fitted Effects Are Favored---The Three-Piece Costume Succeeds the Tailor-Made Coat and Skirt Suit.

The Riviera season in the south of France, where the elegantes of Europe assemble to pass the dreary winter months, has brought out a number of charming devices in the shape of separate wraps that are sure of an immediate acceptance, once they are displayed on this side of the ocean.

That those are all of the short and loose variety will be good news to the tall and slender women; but it takes a remarkably graceful and erect bearing to carry off those abbreviated little garments successfully, else the result is dowdy in the extreme.

The French models that have found their way hither in advance of the season are mostly done in taffetas—of which fashion never seems to tire—in poplins, moires and failles. There are a few of them done in cloth and lace; that is, in little cloth and much lace, chiefly of a coarse and heavy make. In truth, one should better describe them as little lace vetements trimmed in broadcloth.

Short-waisted empire effects are rife in most of them. Others have the short-waisted back, a becoming slope to the natural waistline in front, being somehow or other effected chiefly, one imagines, in the disposal of the trimming. Few of them have the sleeve stitched into the shoulder seam of the coat; it is rather on the lining that the sleeve is hung, and the coat proper built out into a very broad line at the top of the arm. Cape effects are what the best makers lean to in this matter of arm covering, and it is sufficient that those, while full almost to excess, are invariably short as to length decided upon, and the sleeve of the gown is supposed to fill out the line from there.

The charming part of those novel little wraps is that they are not supposed to match the gown either in coloring or material. That is when silks are used. The idea is too good, however, to be confined to separate wraps, and already there are being fashioned the most delightfully quaint modish little costumes in which the separate wrap is made of the matreial of the gown.

But since the separate wrap will undoubtedly be far and away the more universal in application, it is to those that attention is especially directed. The fact that there is not any especial matching in color necessitated in wrap and gown will make for much with the economical woman, while at the same time opening up a field of new extravagance for the woman whose dress allowance is of the most liberal.

Where one wrap must do duty for many occasions there could hardly be a better selection than a heavy Irish crochet, or, failing that, a good and heavy Venetian lace. The Florentine laces are copied in machine weavings to a marvel; while the square meshed filet laces were never more modish. Any of those posed over a pale green—and green is decidedly gaining in fashionable appreciation—a delicate pink or one of the new hydrangea shades of sedo, or some other silk with some body to it will fit in for so many uses that its ordering is really a master stroke of economy.

Directoire effects are beginning to make themselves more felt in the modes to come than they have in those current all winter. Really, the novelty of the empire modes and the many modifications that the clever couturiere rings on this style, took up so much attention and made so much discussion that the more alluring charm of the Directoire modes were in danger of being overlooked altogether. Now, however, in the incessant demand for novelty, those are coming into recognigition. And none too soon either; for, unlike their rivals of a slightly later date of inception, the Directoire styles are almost as becoming to the stout as to the slender sisterhood.

A lace cap fashioned after this mode, or made in that of the later Louis Seize, cannot fail to prove becoming, and to make what might be a very plain toilette a very modish one.

A clever girl who expects to spend the spring season in Washington society, where the social pas is a swift one and the standard of dress elaborate, is having a plain skirt of circular cut fashioned in black moire silk. This, of course, is cut en train, and finished with a velvet fold at the foot that entirely masks the utilitarian velveteen binding with which the hem is faced. For wear with this there are any number of dainty blouses in chiffon, in mull and in lace, to carry her through the many luncheons with which the social season in Washington is so liberally puntuated.

Since afternoon calls are a species of social science in themselves in Washington, she has had made four different coats to be worn with this one skirt. One is a coleen poplin in a heavenly shade of apple green, with some exquisite cobwebby silver thread lace for trimmings. This is after the Louis Seize style, with a vest of silver tissue overlaid with lace, and deep cavalier cuffs and flat collar in velvet.

Another is a shortwaisted Empire affair in Cluny lace over a quaint and old-fashioned shade of snuff brown silk, with funny little rosettes of the silk centered with enameled buttons dotting either side of the loose front, and quaint looking Cluny lappets hanging from either side of the high velvet Napoleon collar.

Then there is a dinner jacket in Irish crochet, square decolletage and short sleeves, and mounted over white satin with a layer of mousseline between. The forth coat is in Rose du Barry pink chiffon velvet, with panels of Maltese lace filling in the slashed sides and back, and a swathed ceinture of satin heading the tight and scant basquines that hang well nigh to the knees.

Some charming little devices in separate fichus are on view in crepe de chine, in silks of various genre, and even in soft and fine cloths. A deep swathed ceinture is a feature of all these; for the round and slender waistline which the corseliere is at such pains to produce is not to be hidden under a loose and enshrouding wrap. The back and fronts are caught to this ceinture; while the arm covering is usually managed in a series of circular ruffles that present a cape effect.

A Novel Sleeve Effect.

So well has the blouse been established, and so emphatically have its lines been laid down, there is but little scope for the ingenuity of the designer to display itself, except in the matter of the trimming scheme and the sleeve. Indeed, it is in this latter feature that the best ideas now present themselves. Sleeves, anyway, are always in a transition state; they are either growing larger or smaller all the time, and seldom do they seem to stand still. Now the problem is enhanced by the question of length as well as of fulness; and a very long sleeve is beginning to be recognized as being more modish and a trifle newer than a very short one. A charming example that presents the additional merit of novelty as well is presented herewith; and the line from elbow to wrist is an especially good one. Hand-embroidered handkerchief linen and Valenciennes lace are the materials employed, and the fastening is in the back.

SEVERAL LACES AND EMBROIDERIES.

So far from the fad for the intermingling of many laces and embroideries being on the wane, each new model presented seems to utilize the fad in some new and novel way. Valenciennes, Cluny, Venetian and Irish laces are all cleverly combined, and then the skill of the embroideress is called upon to add something more to the extravagance of effect.

The pretty blouse pictured has a little chemisette of narrow Valenciennes, joined with a Cluny beading. Curving from the shoulder and meeting this is a band of broad Valenciennes, on which are posed embroidered medallions, centered with Venetian lace. Insertions of narrow Val. decorate the body of the blouse and are used in fancy effects on the sleeves. The high collar is built of this same narrow lace, supported by the usual little rods of silk-covered feather-bone, and the fastening is made in the back under a group of lengthwise tucks.

CHEMISETTE EFFECTS FIND FAVOR

Quite a clever play on the chemisette mode and the fancy for yoke tops to the blouses is made in this model, where a soft India linen is combined with a heavy but effective German Val. lace and some fine tucking. The shoulder line is exceptionally broad, thus making for a much more slender effect at the waist; and the sleeves, too, present a novel idea, both in cut and trimming. The deep V of lace is centered with some extremely fine and close tucking, and the shoulder lines defined with an epaulette suggestion in the same lace. The sleeve is full at the top, and this fullness is regulated below the elbow in the insertion of long oval medallions of German Val., while the sleeve ends in a close cuff of the lace edge that falls over the hand. The fastening is made in the back.

The heartless are spiritually homeless.