The New Treatment of Blouse-Backs

ALL the prettiest and costliest of the French blouses have the trimming of the front repeated, in a smaller form, of course, upon the back, in place of the almost universal trimming of tucks, or, at most, of tucks with a little lace set in.

Last year the embroidery of the upper part of the sleeves was one of the most marked features of the prettiest blouses, and, as if there couldn't be enough embroidery lavished on a single blouse, the new treatment of the backs this year provides one more place for it without giving up any of those it already has.

The prettiest treatment of all is when the flower design of the front spreads up in little sprays which outline the neck, and blossom out in a profusion of flowers on the back.

Sometimes the tiny motif which is intended for collar (and perhaps for cuffs) is applied, half in and half out of tiny panels formed by narrow lace, which runs from the shoulders down about a third of the way to the waist and back again, the corners of the little oblong neatly mitred.

With most blouses opening, as they do, in the back, the design is necessarily kept very small and reversed for the other side. Or the involved combination of lace and embroidery—insertion describing deep points and circles, and the embroidery winding in and out at its own sweet will, which trims the front—may be repeated in a more shallow way upon the back, the whole thing spaced carefully so that the middle of the point marks the dividing line down the back, where the blouse fastens.

Occasionally, when the design is a great flower—chrysanthemums done in the pretty flat Japanese fashion, or those odd conventionalized blossoms, which might be anything from tiger lillies to daisies—a single blossom is set on each side of the back, high on each shoulder, the stem of the flower starting either at the shoulder seam, or coming out from the sleeve seam, or omitted entirely. In a case like this the motif is made far more effective by being outlined with lace, and squares are more liked this year than circles.

When the blouse is made, as some exquisite ones are, with a yoke of embroidery edged with the small, stereotyped scallop characteristic of French work, the yoke either runs all the way around, cut in a single piece, or is made in two pieces, joined by beading upon the shoulders, the yoke in the back more shallow, of course, than the one in front.

Under the yoke—both front and back—the blouse is set, tiny tucks, set as close together as possible, running down a couple of inches below the yoke and giving the blouse a pretty fulness. If too much fullness is the result of the tucks, the excess may be eased away to the under-arm seam and there disposed of.

However it is worked out, this treatment of making the trimming of the backs a feature is this year's hallmark upon blouses. But your last year's ones may be quite simply brought up to date if you trace off the prettiest part of the design of the front and work it upon the back. Even if your sleeves are long, it need make no difference, for Paris is promising long sleeves again at no very far distant date.

Collar Motifs Applied to the Back

A Pretty Arrangement of Lace

Sleeves and Back Match the Front

A Waving Design

Keeping Shoes Well Groomed

NO WELL-DRESSED woman is ever careless about the appearance of her shoes. This, at least, in theory, for oddly enough many a woman who is otherwise perfectly groomed wears footgear that is disgracefully shabby and ill-kept.

Strange to say, it is those who can least afford to buy new pairs who are most neglectful to preserve the life of their old ones.

Nor is this hard to explain. The wealthy woman has enough shoes to change them frequently—and occasional rests are as healthy for shoes as for their wearers. Then she is well supplied with trees, which are put into use the instant one pair of shoes is exchanged for another—than which habit there is no greater preservative to both shape and leather. Moreover, she can probably control the services of a maid who sees to it that her mistress' shoes are kept constantly dusted and blackened, with a sharp eye for stray buttons, rents or run-down heels.

But for the woman in moderate circumstances to keep her shoes in good condition requires work, and plenty of it.

Now that there are bootblacking establishments especially for women in connection with many stores, the problem of blacking is not so hopeless as formerly. However, there are many times when these are not accessible, and, then, the average woman would do well to invest in one of the adjustable patent shoeholders that may be fastened to the wall. This will prove a strong incentive to shiny, highly polished leather, as well as do away with risks of apoplexy to the stout amateur bootblack, who stoops not easily.

Most women are over-generous with their pastes and blackings in polishing their own shoes, and under-generous in the matter of that vulgarism, "elbow grease." Black shoes, when not too far gone in shabbiness, can be kept in good condition for a week after a thorough polishing, by being given daily a good rubbing with a soft cloth or brush.

A useful homemade bootbrush can be improvised from a piece of carpet nailed to a piece of board.

An excellent renovator for black shoes may be made from the yolk of an egg, one ounce of castor oil, one dram of turpentine, two drams of gum arabic and three ounces of black ink.

Strange as it seems, the white and light-colored shoes are not the senseless luxuries they may seem to the woman who is unaware of their cleaning qualities.

The new calfskins in grays, lavender blue and other light colors are kept in perfect condition by a mixture one-half milk and one-half water. This should be applied with a sponge or soft rag. Wash off all soil thoroughly and allow the shoe to dry. Be careful not to soak it in the liquid.

The results are much better if all light shoes are cleaned on trees, which are allowed to remain in them until the leather is thoroughly dry.

In freshening white shoes, either canvas or buckskin, different preparations of pipeclay are invaluable. The yellowness that comes with this cleaning is usually caused by using too much of the preparation, which leaves a thick, cakey deposit. Always set the shoes in the sun to bleach while they dry.

Russet shoes, when the ordinary polishes are not available, can be given a fine shine by rubbing with the inside of a banana skin and polishing off with a soft cloth. If tan or russet shoes are polished before being worn the first time, they will not spot.

If one cannot afford to own several pairs of trees, shoes, especially patent leathers, should be kept stuffed with tissue paper or soft muslin, to prevent cracking or wearing into unsightly creases.

PAPER HANDKERCHIEFS

THE devotion of the people of Japan to hygienic living is shown in no way more clearly than in their customs in regard to handkerchiefs.

The elaborate linen, lace and embroidered handkerchiefs of Eastern peoples would be regarded by the Japanese as unhealthy and unsuitable. In fact, they are rarely carried even by the more progressive of the younger generation who have adopted Western dress.

"Are the Japanese so uncivilized as not ever to use handkerchiefs?" some one asks.

How the little Japs would smile at that application of civilization. They claim, not without wisdom, that a handkerchief once used a refined person or one who understands the rules of health can have no further need for.

"Well, it is not pleasant," is acknowledged, "but how can one help it? You cannot be burdened carrying around a dozen or more handkerchiefs—especially now that pockets are a bygone luxury. Think how they would bulge one's shirt-waist!"

Yes, you can, if those handkerchiefs happen to be Japanese ones, which are nothing more nor less than very fine paper, so soft in texture that they are as pleasant as the sheerest linen.

A Japanese always carries slipped inside the fold of his kimono a dozen or more little pieces of white paper about six inches square, which he uses but once and then throws away.

"But," says the skeptic, "what do they do with them? It is certainly not hygienic to throw them into the streets."

Probably not on American streets, but the Japanese keep theirs so scrupulously clean that all debris is removed immediately.

This idea of the paper handkerchief has been widely adopted in this country in cases of sickness. For consumptives especially their use is becoming general, and they are sold by the thousands to sanitariums, hospitals, and even to private families where there is a patient with tuberculosis.

The handkerchiefs made in this country are larger than those of the Japanese (about the size of the linen ones) and come in a fine crinkled tissue paper, entirely free from harshness. They cost but a few cents a thousand.

The advantages over the linen or muslin rags formerly advocated for the use of the consumptive is manifest. The paper handkerchiefs are cheaper, more attractive in appearance, much more easily carried around and can be burned in a moment, without any danger of clogging traps, as so often is the case with heavier materials.

While the average Occidental, unless he is germ crazy, will hardly forsake the handkerchief of linen for ordinary use, certainly the use of paper may be strongly recommended from a sanitary standpoint to the man or woman afflicted with a cold, influenza, hay fever or sore throat.

Stockings for Euchre Prizes

IT HAS become rather "the thing" this past winter to give stockings for euchre or bridge prizes. Certainly nothing could make stronger appeal to the average woman who revels in the possession of sheer silk or lisle thread stockings, especially when they are a luxury beyond her own purse.

This season, when stockings are more distracting than ever, the hostess should never be at a loss to get a showy acceptable prize.

Though resedas, emerald greens, Alice blue, royal purple and lilac, oyster gray or the lovely silvery Agincourt will all be worn with self-colored shoes, on the whole it is safer to stick to whites and blacks in making a choice.

This, however, should prove no disadvantage, as both are seen in infinite variety of sheer plainness, lace openwork or gay colored embroidery.

Stockings are designed, by the way, especially for use as prizes. They are sheer lisle thread in black or white, with silk embroidered clubs and openwork hearts scattered over the surface.

Equally popular would be those with fine eyelet embroidery.

"Though they can really only be called 'stockings' by courtesy and should delight a Kneippist, or that advocate of bare feet, Isadora Duncan, the cobwebby chiffon silk stockings are amazingly in favor.

Remember in purchasing such a prize to have it exchangeable, as the winner might not wear the chosen number.

A MAN'S CLOTHES

A Difficult Task—Pressing Trousers

Sewing a Button on as a Tailor Does it

MOST women have to know something of the care of a man's clothes, be he father, husband or brother. For man himself, although he rates his ability far above that of mere woman, quails when it comes to handling a needle or pressing an obstinate pair of trousers—thoroughly "kneed"—so that the bulging knees are made to shrink and the trousers given that trig little crease that makes them look next to new.

Traditions are responsible for the fact that everything done to a man's clothes differs, though possibly only a little, from the corresponding thing done to a woman's—a fact that few women take into account at the start. Tailors have spoiled the lords of creation, no doubt; still tailors have simplified things, and their methods are worth copying.

Take that one troublesome detail—pressing trousers. Turn them inside out and press—not the way you should to make that all-important crease come in just the right place, but the opposite way, pressing through a muslin cloth, and dampening again and again, until the steam heat has shrunk the bulging cloth flat again.

Then turn them right side out and press again, folding them so that the crease runs perfectly true down front and back (you can do this best by laying the seams at the sides together at the hems and matching them all the way along) and pressing through a dampened piece of muslin.

Never put the iron next the cloth.

Duck and linen crash trousers are washed and ironed just as anything else is, the only care needed being to see that the crease is in the right place.

For cloth trousers come ingenious presses, upon which the trousers are stretched and left to press themselves.

Some still more ingenious arrangements are the result of home manufacture—odd contrivances which open out to make room for coat, vest and trousers (each to be properly set upon its hanger), and close to keep them in perfect trim.

Cloth that has grown shiny may be treated in several ways—sponging with ammonia, diluted, of course, with water; or by rubbing carefully and lightly, with a bit of emery paper, or by steaming—passing a hot iron, over which a wet cloth is laid, close to (though not touching) the surface.

Every little while pockets should be emptied and thoroughly brushed out—it's astonishing how they manage to collect dust, actual rolls of it. While they are turned inside out is a good time to look for holes—and to mend them, too!

To sew buttons on tailor fashion the thread must pass through the cloth and the canvas which lines it, but not through the thickness of cloth facing it. To do this, pull the facing out, away from the canvas, and take the stitches through the canvas and out again upon the upper surface, passing the needle through the eye of the button as a separate stitch. Place a pin on top of the button and let the stitches pass over that, then pull the pin out and wrap the thread around the stitches between button and cloth.

Tears are best sent to a tailor to mend, but, if they must be done at home, try raveling a thread from a hem or raw edge somewhere and darn with that, or with hair, which makes the most perfect darn. Then press through a damp rag, and your tear should have disappeared.

Spots of grease may be removed by rubbing French chalk well into them—as much as will stick on—letting it stand for a day, then brushing out thoroughly, repeating the whole process unless the spot is entirely gone. Sponging with equal parts of alcohol and ether will remove most other spots.

If he's an extravagant mortal who objects to wearing darned stockings, try darning them with darning silk, instead of the more usual cotton. The darn is softer and much less noticeable.

Extra collar bands come to replace those which have been maltreated in laundering until the edge resembles a finely ground saw. Rip the old band off carefully, soaking every bit of starch out first, to make the process of ripping easier, and stitch the new band in place. Collars (if they are attached) of neglige shirts may be turned when they wear shabby on the right side.

Underclothes should be well looked to in the matter of buttons and tapes replaced and thin places lightly darned—there's nothing else which so adequately proves the old theory that a stitch in time saves nine.

These are the main things, but a thousand and one little details come up as you work—the rip in a glove (which should be sewed with silk, unlike a woman's glove, which is better mended with glove cotton), the looking after ties and belts and handkerchiefs—all of which may need a stitch occasionally.

The Dust That Accumulates in Pockets

Solid Comfort in Traveling

AS women begin to realize more and more the benefit, as well as pleasure, of short trips away from home, week-end parties at country homes, or a frequent Sunday at the seashore or mountains, have become quite a usual way to pass the summer.

How to dispose of one's belongings on these flying trips has always been something of a problem. To take a trunk for a day's visit seems ridiculous, indeed puts the hostess to unnecessary inconvenience, yet in summer, especially, one needs a plentiful supply of fresh waists and gowns.

The dress suit case, which has street car propensities when it comes to packing, would seem a happy solution of the difficulty, but for one thing—its extreme weight when filled.

"Porters can carry them," say you? Alas, porters, or the small boy, either, have an unhappy faculty of absence at the crucial moment, as most us have discovered to our sorrow. Who has not struggled along many a time under the back-breaking load of a bulging dress suit case, when she would willingly have paid a small fortune for an urchin to lug it?

But if leather suit cases are unhealthily heavy for a woman, and trunks too inconvenient, must she then be home-bound?

Not at all, since some ingenious person has thought of a wicker substitute.

"Oh, but wicker bags are so cheap looking! I'd be ashamed to carry one," says Madame Finicky, which is proof positive she never did carry one, or the comfort of it would absolutely outweigh appearances.

In point of fact, though, the modern wicker suit case is rather attractive looking than otherwise, and, what is more, has become distinctively the fashion.

No one could possibly object to these bags in point of looks, while the bliss to a woman of being able to pack her bag to its fullest capacity, and then carry it with absolute ease for miles, if needs be, makes the lucky owner of a wicker dress suit case feel she has a mission in life to proclaim its virtues to her unfortunate sisters who have not yet learned the bliss of being absolutely independent of porters when off for a few days' jaunt.

Colored Morning Dresses

HAVE a couple of morning dresses made of some dark or half-dark colored dimity or lawn or gingham.

Pretty little dresses of pink and white check, or of the cool figured grays and dark blues can be made (lightened up with embroidery or lace), which do wonders in the way of saving laundry work.

PORCH TABLE COVERS

NOWADAYS no one sits in the house in summer with half an opportunity to stay outside. Women practically live on their porches, and in consequence those porches must be made as habitable as possible.

Easy chairs there must be, with an occasional table to hold books, workbasket and a vase of flowers.

The coverings for these outdoor tables have a charm all their own. The dainty affairs of linen and lace, which must be kept immaculately white, are, of course, quite impracticable for a porch, and must be relegated to the living room or bedroom of the summer home. What something that will not soil, yet is showy and dainty, is chosen.

A really lovely table cover may be made of a square of cream-colored canvas or cotton etamine, with an eight or ten inch border of gay-colored flowered cretonne. Or a central square in rich, dark Egytian designs has a plain border in some harmonizing shade.

Another cover—somewhat daintier this—may be made of inexpensive pink ticking, with large roses cut from cretonne and appliqued around the outer edge for an irregular border. A tiny black wash galloon can be used in this applique to give a little more character to the design.

A very striking cover, indeed, is a square of the new English flowered chintz in a conventionalized design of brilliant red apples in different shades peeping from among green leaves. This has no other finish than a narrow cotton taffeta braid about two inches wide.

Even more serviceable are the so-called thread and thrum covers, woven the same as an old-fashioned rag carpet. These stand hard wear and can be thrown in the wash with perfect safety.

Equally washable, and costing almost nothing, are table covers made of unbleached muslin with a broad border of gay Scotch plaid gingham, navy blue chambray, or even of vivid turkey red.

Any of these little accessories make a porch wonderfully home-like and attractive, yet are so cheap, easily made and launder so well that the most careful housewife need not have them on her mind when the dust blows, or rains descend, or pilferers come nigh.

Flower Combinations Not Injurious

NOT long ago it was stated in several papers, on the authority of a well-known florist, that roses and mignonette had such a bad effect on one another that when combined in any floral piece they would wilt in less than an hour; that, in fact, there were many flowers which positively could not get along together.

To the great relief of the many women who think there can be no more beautiful arrangement of flowers than great pink or white roses interspersed with the thick heads of mignonette, this idea has been utterly exploded by a noted florist, whose experience during a long life has made him a recognized authority.

"There is absolutely nothing in this theory of flowers reacting on one another in certain combinations," he said. "So far as roses and mignonette are concerned, I have always used them together in my rarest decorations. It is an arrangement of which I am particularly fond.

"True, the forced foliage of mignonette will not last long when exposed to the air; this may be the secret of this amazing theory. The flowers, though, may be kept for weeks."

"How do you account," was asked, "for the following fact in regard to white lilacs? They were plucked at the same time from the same bush; part were kept in a vase with some double tulips, the rest alone, but all were in one room. The next morning the lilacs combined with the tulips were completely dead, while the others were still fresh. Does not that look as if there might be something in the other florist's idea, after all?"

"No, indeed," was the reply. "It was an odd coincidence, but probably the one set of lilacs was in a draught; that is sure to wilt them; or they may have been cut from older wood and the water could not rise so readily through their stems. Perhaps, too, their stems were broken or split across. One should always gather lilacs with a straight, clean knife cut across the stem, so as not to clog. Whatever the cause of the fading, it was not the tulips. You may take my word for that.

"There are many flowers that do not keep in the air. Lilies-of-the-valley, for instance, we always wrap in oiled paper until they are sent out. In fact, almost all flowers, unless hardy garden varieties, stay fresh longer when not allowed to stand in a draught.

"This combination idea is without foundation—utter nonsense! For forty years I've been putting every known kind of flower together, so I know."

A Protection to Pearl Buttons

THE big pearl buttons which decorate the front of so many shirt-waist suits—both skirt and waist—are anything but improved by being treated to the vigorous tubbing the dress is subjected to.

Ingenious little devices have been invented for attaching the buttons—devices which can be released so that the buttons may be removed before each washing.

When buttons are set on in pairs, it is often possible to fasten them together by a strong cord or by long stitches of cotton, buttonholed to make the connecting link strong.