

## CHIT-CHAT ON DRESS.

BY A PARIS CORRESPONDENT.



WHEN the Laureate wrote—

“Let never maiden think,  
however fair,  
She is not fairer in new  
clothes than old,”

he had reason on his side, as well as rhythm; and certainly feminine conviction in this matter goes with the poet.

Dress with women has become a business—to many *the* business of life; and flounces and furbelows, the length of a skirt and the height of a bodice, are in many ladies' minds of far weightier

moment than the rise or fall of an empire.

Shakespeare says—

“Fashion wears out more apparel than the man;”

and if such were the fact in the days of the Virgin Queen, it assuredly is so now, when fashions change at least once a month, and we copy the most costly modes of our ancestors, forgetting that their embroidered and brocaded gowns descended as heirlooms from mother to daughter, and that ours scarcely last a season.

The adage is, *Il faut souffrir pour être belle*. At all events, nothing can be well done, not even dressing, without trouble; and just at present a wonderfully wide field is open to such of the fair sex as care to be industrious with their needle, the result being singularly profitable. Never was there so much beading and silk embroidery used, costly to buy, but rapidly accomplished by deft fingers. The most *recherché* style of ball-dress now worn is a long and voluminous tulle skirt, made with many pleatings and bouillonées, dotted about with flowers, and a cuirass tunic, also of tulle, bordered with a wreath to correspond with the rest of the flowers, but embroidered in coloured silk. The effect in the light fabric is very charming. Moreover, it is not difficult to achieve, especially for such as are gifted with artistic talent. The pattern must be lightly traced, and the tulle carefully fastened in a frame, so as neither to mark, stretch, nor tear it. It is no longer good style to wear square or heart-shaped bodices at balls, except for elderly ladies. Low bodices, with basques and berthas, are the usual thing, having trails of flowers along the top. Cuirass bodices, fitting the figure like corsets, are the newest mode, but too trying to be generally adopted. You can, however, scarcely have too many flowers about full evening dresses nowadays.

A variety of delicate tints are worn in the evening,

and the combinations are strikingly effective and marked. For example: salmon-pink and grénat (viz., claret), maize and red, or maize and brown, or blue, crevette the exact shade of a boiled prawn, rose de Chine, very light reseda, and turquoise, are all fashionable, but nothing so much so as pure white, and more especially beaded white silk or satin.

Another suggestion for the industrious: white blonde worked with silver beads—indeed, entire tunics and bodices of this are worn, and the effect in a brilliant light is lovely. They shimmer like a sea of silver. Garnet, turquoise, and emerald beads are also called into play. The complaint known as the “bead eruption” is not on the decrease, but dress generally is becoming more theatrical daily.

Hats are a very prominent feature in the present style of dress. Formerly no one wore them in town; but now the best-dressed adopt them, even in the height of the London season, for morning wear. To be quite *à la mode*, you have only to consult the portraits of your ancestors—if you are fortunate enough to have any—then select the most becoming head-gear Sir Joshua Reynolds or Sir Peter Lely has handed down, and order a reproduction for yourself from a first-rate milliner. The Rubens and Lady Dorothy are the most becoming shapes now worn; and at Ryde and Brighton, the places where you have the best opportunity of judging of what the prevailing style will be, felt and velvet carry off the palm. These are made with very broad brims, turned up on one side, and display sweeping ostrich feathers of inordinate length, and, alas! commensurate expense. For travelling and less dressy occasions, felt seems to be universally adopted, with large, flat, low crowns, and the brims having raw untrimmed edges, sometimes turned up in front, with a large plump bird nestling upon them. Felt is made in a finer quality than heretofore, and in a greater variety of colours.

Felt bonnets are worn this winter as well as hats, and are trimmed with drooping undyed ostrich feathers, pins of moonstone being introduced wherever it is practicable. This moonstone is just now a mania in Paris, and is used wherever it is possible. It is not very unlike an opal, save that it is not so milky-looking. Indeed, it is more like milk-and-water, of what school-boys call the most “sky-blue” aspect.

The forms of fashionable bonnets are various. The summer plan still holds good of making them to match the dress—indeed, they are often made of the same piece. This mania for uniformity extends even to hats; and the best ladies' tailors send hats home with their cloth and serge suits, made likewise of the same materials, on a cork foundation, and trimmed with velvet and feathers.

In plain coloured silk, bonnets to match the dress look very well, especially if two shades are intermixed. The crowns in this case are mostly soft, the brim and

bandeau beneath being of velvet. Flat crowns, however, are the rule; and there is little left to distinguish hats and bonnets nowadays, save the bandeau over the face. The Reboux bonnet is the newest just now in Paris, where it owes its name to one of the best milliners. It is becoming, but peculiar, having a flat crown, and flowers beneath the brim. Another becoming shape resembles a sailor's hat, except of course that it is worn at the back of the head, and the brim, instead of being flat, turns upwards. Pamela bonnets and Marie Stuarts, with a point over the face, are also in vogue; and for generally useful wear nothing answers better than beaded chip or tulle, with a little ponceau (*viz.*, poppy), or the new "Cardinal," which is less vivid, by way of trimming.

Our fashionable fair ones, both married and single, still share with the maid-servants their hitherto unquestioned adoption of muslin caps. These are of various shapes—mob-caps, Charlotte Cordays, anything in fact that is large and not an absolute Dolly Varden; checked silk, or plain foulard, or *crêpe de Chine* scarves being now often used, by way of trimming, instead of ribbon.

Possibly, however, the days of caps are numbered, now that the style of hair-dressing known as the "Artois Bow" has become so universal, for it is essential that the Catogan should be tied with ribbon to match the dress, and a cap spoils the effect.

This new mode merits a more particular description. The front hair can be dressed as it best suits the wearer, but frizzed and crimped hair, little curls on the forehead, or the hair cut short and straight above it, are most in vogue. At the back it must be plaited in one long plait, either with three or four strands, the ends turned under and tied, but allowed to droop almost to the shoulder-blades; this is what is called the Catogan, and sometimes the hair is tied without being plaited, not unlike the old-fashioned pigtail. Soft curls rolled on the finger, and pinned down, fill any interstice which would otherwise be unsightly.

The Catogan ribbon bows are generally sold in pairs—one for the crown of the head, the other to confine the plait; they are made either of velvet or of ribbon to match the dress, are often beaded, and all kinds of buckles in mother-of-pearl, steel, blue steel, or jet are introduced with them. For evening wear, flowers are mixed with the ribbon.

Young and pretty women have much to be thankful for in this year of grace 1874, for never have they had a better opportunity of enhancing their charms by all the adjuncts of dress. Anything and everything is worn, from a graceful Spanish mantilla to the coquettish costume of a Watteau shepherdess—high heels, quilted skirt, square bodice, &c. Any woman, of fair position and looks, can set a fashion for herself that will find many followers. There is no end to the variety of beading now worn; black-jetted tunics and sleeveless jackets prove most useful over black for full dress, morning wear, and *demi-toilette*. To buy they cost from twelve to twenty pounds or guineas, but they can be made for almost as many shillings, by utilising lace,

and lace shawls. The present style of tunic, with a point in the front, especially favours the use of a half-shawl for such a purpose, the ends being pleated at the back, under a sash. The cut jet beads are very inexpensive, and you have only to follow the pattern in stitching them on.

Beaded cashmere, too, is more worn than perhaps anything else in the shape of a tunic and sleeveless jacket. At any Berlin wool shop you can get them prepared for working, and the introduction of a fine silk cord into the pattern with the beads is a great addition; sometimes these beads and cord merely form a trimming round, but much more frequently the pattern covers the whole of the tunic or jacket. Blue steel is the great novelty, and is used for beading dresses, bonnets, belts, buckles, and a variety of things. In Paris they are preparing tunics and low bodices, or high sleeveless jackets, of alternate rows of white or some light-coloured silk, or black velvet, and beaded lace. For black, Yak lace is inexpensive, and shows the beads to advantage.

All the hazy, undecided, clouded colours which have held sway so long, reign still, although "Cardinal," which is a deep maroon, inclining to scarlet; "Ponceau," bright poppy colour; and "Rouille," the French for rust, are exceptions. Rouille is wonderfully rich and pure in tone, but so decided that few people would have the courage to adopt it readily. It is, however, particularly suitable to brunes for evening wear, especially when toned down with a mixture of rich red-brown.

With our usual national weakness in such matters, we seem unable to adopt a nomenclature for ourselves, and, without attempting to translate them, are content with the French names for our new fashionable shades. So we find ourselves calling a grey, the tone of smoke-pearls, "Neigre;" claret—"Grénat," or "Jus de Bordeaux;" flesh-colour—"Chair;" sky-blue—"Bleu de ciel" and "Turquoise;" and for one of the most fashionable of all the shades—"Pochard"—we have no translation at all; it includes a variety of tones, among them "Fraise écrasée," which was so well worn during our London season, and is as much like strawberries and cream as it well can be. Dark metallic greens, dark browns, a variety of blues approaching navy-blue (*damson-blue* the newest) will be the most fashionable colours for morning silks.

These are being made up, generally in two shades or mixed with velvet, very long and very much trimmed. Sleeveless jackets, coat-sleeves, frills at the neck, deep basques at the waist, *froncé* (*viz.*, gathered) fronts and pleated backs, the front and back of the skirt being totally dissimilar—these are the main features, but the styles are infinitely varied.

The novelty of the season is "Matelassé," which is nothing more or less than silk with a satin-like face, woven to resemble quilting in either the ordinary diamond patterns or rich floriated designs. It is introduced into everything—petticoats, *polonaises*, and mantles.

It is a heavy material, and in no way suited for draping, and requires but little trimming. Some of

the skirts are made of alternate stripes of it and satin ; but as sleeveless jackets and long basqued polonaises it has a very good effect, and also as outdoor jackets edged with fur. Fur is much in demand, especially sable, skunk, silver fox, lusted beaver, and bear's fringe, the two last-named just as narrow edgings. These divide popular favour with ostrich-feather trimming, either black or undyed.

The variety of woollen materials worn this autumn and winter is legion, and it is quite useless to attempt to master the names which the manufacturers bestow upon them, the same article being issued by various firms with totally different nomenclature.

The term "homespun" has to do duty for an immense class, nearly all useful and well-wearing, the chief point to be considered in selecting being that they should be all wool, and then they are well-nigh everlasting. They are mostly of neutral tints—greys, brown, or heather mixture—brown being most in favour. Checks too are *en règle*, and the ladies seem to be anxious to rival their male friends, who of late have adopted such large double checks for their country suits. Whether the strong-minded women of the day have anything to do with it, or the present struggle for feminine independence, and the desire so often shown by the weaker sex to step into man's places, deponent knoweth not, but certainly in the matter of dress ladies are becoming decidedly more masculine. Nearly all the homespun suits fall to the lot of tailors to make, the skirts being plain, save rows of stitching or braiding ; the bodices made like habits, with pendent tabs and frog-buttons down the front. Where cost is no object, short-basqued, double-breasted, tight-fitting outdoor jackets, with a multitude of pockets, complete the suit. With many of these jackets, turned-down collars attached to a sort of shirt-front are worn, and a scarf just such as a man would wear, and collars and cuffs are made of coloured shirting. Women who hunt and drive to cover, and many who travel, have long patronised that hybrid garment, between a coat and a dressing-gown, in which men have found so much comfort—viz., an Ulster ; and now the novelty is the Kaiser, which boasts of a movable cape in addition, lined with waterproof. Who knows whether in time Miss Phelps and the American supporters of her theories may not find disciples here, and the rage for masculine habiliments find a wider field ?

The French use massive silver buttons and buckles on their "Roulier" and "Limousin" dresses—materials so called from their resemblance to workmen's blouses—but we content ourselves with elaborate silver belts and châtelaines, the latter comprising every imaginable appendage, from oyster-shells to beer-barrels—not forgetting umbrellas or "en-tous-cas," a necessity in our climate, where "the rain it raineth every day." These "en-tous-cas" are larger than parasols and smaller than the usual umbrellas, and are suspended by a chain, and bear the wearer's initials at the top of the handle ; for a marked weakness of the present day is this predilection for initials, monograms, and armorial bearings, which find their

way into most unexpected quarters. In this luxurious age, every one with any pretence to fashion boasts of a belt and châtelaine. Cost is, it seems, of little moment. The prices asked and given for every article of dress would a few years ago have been considered fabulous.

Perhaps it is the advent of a Russian princess among us that has inspired the present taste for fur cloaks and wraps of all kinds. Most of the mantles and jackets are trimmed with fur, and long, old-fashioned-looking, black silk cloaks, lined throughout with fur, and fastened with antique silver clasps, are now eagerly sought after.

To be *bien chaussé et bien ganté* are among the first duties and cares of the well-dressed. There is, however, nothing very specially new under either of these heads. Both boots and shoes are worn with toes as pointed as they very well can be, and the heels as high. Beading and embroidery are introduced on shoes as well as everywhere else, and, for evening wear at all events, there is the same disposition as in hats to return to the fashions of our ancestors, and the extravagances of Louis XIV. and his court have found an echo in our modern days. "High-lows"—viz., shoes coming up very high on the instep and laced—are worn out of doors, so the stockings match the dress, and display more or less elaborate chaussure.

The mania for having everything *en suite* shows itself especially in gloves, which are made in well-nigh every shade, with numberless buttons or no buttons at all, but long enough to reach to the elbow. White gloves are much superseded for evening wear by light shades. Spain is developing a new trade in the matter of gloves, and like Brussels, Paris, and Milan, sends a large supply to our English market.

Marrying and giving in marriage are affairs of everyday occurrence, so it is as well to know what are the fashions on those occasions.

For the guests, rich silks and velvets trimmed with fur, long and trailing and exceedingly costly, will be the rule.

Brides have quite given up *moirés*, and twenty out of thirty wear white satin on this the great day of their lives—the richest creamy Duchess satin (when they can afford it), which is of a yellowish white, and stands almost by itself. The other ten wear thick ribbed silk. Tulle veils, quite plain, simply cut and unhemmed, are more the fashion than any lace, however costly. The lace is reserved for trimming the dresses across the front and round the trains, trails of white flowers heading it. The front breadths are now much more bedizened than the back, which are mostly arranged with a wide box-pleat at the waist, and trimmed as a train. Some of the most perfect brides' dresses, however, worn of late, have been reproductions of the Henry III. style—a pointed bodice, with the skirt gathered and sewn round it, and no basque ; puffed sleeves, and a round stiff jockey above the armhole, with pearls or silver braid intermixed. Sometimes cuirass bodices are worn, but all are slightly open at the throat. A chaplet of flowers

on the crown of the head, and the Catogan fastened with a band of flowers, is the prevailing style.

Bridesmaids are once more permitted by the tyrant fashion to wear tulle veils and wreaths, if they are so pleased; though bonnets are equally in vogue, and the light, gossamer, stringless, airy nothings these head-coverings are, seem particularly suitable for such festive occasions. Then the mob-caps have found patrons, and many a fair and aristocratic damsel has been of late escorted to the altar by a bevy of demoiselles, who for the nonce had the appearance of serving-maids or French grisettes, while not a few *demoiselles de noce* have worn Rubens hats. The most fashionable bridesmaids' dresses are muslin—white more particularly, made up over white silk—and in this cold season velvet sleeveless jackets have been adopted at several aristocratic marriages.

Fancy balls will be the chief feature of our winter and autumn festivities; so that, besides other dainty attire, it will be necessary to study the most becoming characters; and the field is a wide one.

Though probably no one else could manage to present so perfect a pageant to their guests as did the Prince and Princess of Wales at their late fancy ball, there will doubtless be many attempts to follow so good a lead, and many family portraits and dusty volumes in ancestral libraries will be consulted.

Their Royal Highnesses broke a great deal of new ground. Hitherto the getting up of one fancy quadrille, or at most two, had been the utmost ambition of the promoters of such gay gatherings. Their Royal Highnesses, however, had six—viz., the Venetian, Vandyck, two Quadrilles of Cards, the Puritans and Cavaliers, and the Fairy Tales—all perfect, graced by the fairest women and most noted men of the day, dressed in the richest costumes history has bequeathed to us.

Some ball-givers, intent on novelty, may follow the example of a Parisian hostess not long since, and propose to their guests to dress their heads only in masquerade, with ordinary evening dress; but the possibility and probability is that more will be required, as a few hints may be acceptable.

First of all, when the difficult task of selection falls to our lot, there are the various national costumes—European, Oriental, or American. These are not difficult, and can be best arranged from a print, and as they generally necessitate short dresses, are better suited to young people. Among these, "a Russian skater" is pretty and becoming, and not difficult to arrange, merely requiring a bright underskirt, long fur-trimmed pelisse, boots edged with fur, and bells, and a round fur-edged cap. The north of Europe finds, as a rule, few representatives; so an Icelandic bride is worthy of consideration. She will require a black cloth dress, square at the throat, with long sleeves, gold-embroidered all round, and in the form of a stomacher on the front of the bodice; a high white cap, long tulle veil, and gold filagree

belt complete the dress. Roman scarves, and other treasures acquired abroad, help wonderfully in the arranging of Italian peasant dresses; and a Normandy peasant, or a Boulogne or Newhaven fish-girl, requires most inexpensive materials, and merely a little ingenuity in the putting together.

Novelists and poets, to say nothing of historians, supply us with an endless choice, and any one who remembers the Waverley Ball, given some few years back in London, will be ready to admit that few writers have done more for us in that way than Sir Walter Scott. For example, the White Lady of Avenel, Catherine Seyton, Jeanie Deans, Annot Lyle, the Maid of Lorne, the Lady of the Lake, Flora M'Ivor, Rose Bradwardine, Di Vernon, the Fair Maid of Perth, and Monna and Brenda—all good characters. Then, again, Shakespeare. One scarcely ever hears of a fancy ball with no Portia, no Juliet, or no Katherine of Aragon. Or the poetic heroines—Medora, Lalla Rookh, or Nourmahal. Historical costumes and regal ones are best suited to long purses and matronhood, some being peculiarly fitted for matrons whose youth is over.

The elements, too, stand us in good stead in the matter of fancy costumes. Air, Earth, Fire, and Water are represented without much trouble: Air in gossamer tulle, with satin butterflies; Earth with a white silk skirt, black velvet open bodice laced over a stomacher, and red silk tunic—a basket with insects, flowers, and fruit on the head, a garland of fruit round the neck, and a tiny globe slung from the waist; Fire in black, with red and gold tinsel about it; and Water as Undine, or any other water-nymph. Day and night, moon and stars, twilight and dawn, are all easy too.

Poudré and Watteau costumes, common as they are, are more costly.

La Fille de Madame Angot, La Grand Duchesse, and other characters made celebrated on operatic and theatrical boards, can be generally seen, copied, or represented from hearsay.

In our rage for novelty, we are apt to rush into bad taste; and at some of the fancy balls last winter, such monstrosities as the octopus, Argus with his hundred eyes, the Brighton Aquarium, and similar follies put in an appearance.

Descriptions of course help very much in the arranging of these dresses; but they are twice as valuable if accompanied by a drawing or sketch of some kind. These can be produced very easily in England; but if you have the good fortune to come across any French ones, they are more useful as a rule, and more uncommon. During the Empire, so many of these entertainments were given that our neighbours made it a speciality, and their mode of printing and sketching masquerade costumes was infinitely superior to our own. We are improving as a nation in so many arts, there is hope that even in this we may ere long assert our superiority—at all events, we like to flatter ourselves so.

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WHAT to wear? Acknowledged to be one of the most, if not the most important question which occupies the feminine mind. Much money, much thought, much time are expended on it, and with what result? According to the opinion of some women of sterner nature, the present style of dress is suggestive of bad taste, bad hygiene, and bad morals. "Grace of outline, propriety of

adjustment, personal peculiarities, delicacy in selection of colour, simplicity in choice of ornament, fitness to uses, and regard for the relations of quantity and quality, are each and all outraged."

The pretty well-dressed women of the day have not all the world on their side, and perhaps it is with the fear of new doctrines and opinions gaining ground—a very sword of Damocles hanging over their heads—that the milliners and dressmakers have been making such superhuman efforts of late, calling all the glories of such past ages of splendour to their aid as Louis XIV., Henri II., Henri III., and Louis XIII.

The beauties of the present day appear resplendent in the velvet and satin robes of Margaret of Valois, and the rich brocades, with velvet-appliqués and veinings of gold, which Madame de Montespan wore while she reigned supreme over the fickle heart of the Grand Monarque, ere Madame de Maintenon superseded her. They borrow the cape of the Incroyable, the waistcoat of Louis XIV., and the cap of Charlotte Corday. Dress is no respecter of politics. A beautiful woman aims only at being beautiful, and calls to her aid any adjunct she can.

The doggerel lines in which the belle of two hundred years ago boasts of—

"My damask gown,  
My laced shoes of Spanish leather,  
A silver bodkin in my hair,  
And dainty plume of feather,"

are as appropriate now, only it is gloves that we import from Spain in the present day, and jet daggers and arrows would replace the silver bodkin; for the furore for jet grows rather than diminishes.

Fancy balls are the fashionable mania in the way of entertainments, and many of the dresses now worn by the *élégantes* in Paris would be quite suitable. It is only among the upper ten in England that these fashions find supporters as yet; they are too costly for the world in general.

But it is possible that women as a class will hesitate ere they abandon all this alluring splendour in

favour of changes such as the strong-minded of the sex suggest; albeit in their opinion the higher life—moral, intellectual, political, social, or domestic—can never begin for women till they have been effected.

Alas for the would-be reformers! those halcyon days are far removed; for nine women out of ten would think the remedy a thousand times worse than the disease—supposing they admit the existence or disease at all. Listen! Stays are to be superseded by suspenders (*Anglicè*, braces) such as men wear, to which the skirts must be fastened; and as an inducement to such a fundamental change, the writer announces that a waist of twenty-two inches would ere long become thirty, or even forty; and this at a time when, to be *à la mode*, the waist can hardly be too slim, and dresses fit without a wrinkle, as though almost sewn on. In order to bring this about, in the cuirass or Joan of Arc bodices (the best-worn style for full dress), which come down to the hips without any join, the Parisian corset-makers have even introduced stays at least four inches longer than they have been before, and much tighter and firmer below the waist.

It will scarcely be necessary to give the address where the patterns of hygiene "under-wear" are to be obtained. It would be more to the purpose to tell how the so-called "under-wear" is made and trimmed in Paris. Here, as elsewhere in the great kingdom of dress, *le luxe effrené des femmes* shows itself. Flannel petticoats must be either pink or light blue, and trimmed with Valenciennes lace and insertion; wide frillings of cambric, with similar lace six inches deep, are now considered correct, at the edge of the most invisible of under-garments. Skirts for wearing under evening dresses are made very long, with one deep flounce richly trimmed; and in place of crinolines, the *tournures* are more sloping, and in consequence far more elegant. The better arrangement of dresses is further brought about by petticoats made of stiff muslin, plain in front, with flounces up the back, the upper ones having double runners beneath, by which they are drawn together; and in addition they have a detached crossway pouf of muslin (saturated with unboiled starch, and not subsequently ironed), which is buttoned on.

Besides modern prejudices, our would-be reformer have many other powerful opponents. The Moslem prophet Aysha, according to his teaching, permitted no woman who spun to pray for the forgiveness of her sins until she had clothed not only herself, but all the angels in the seventh heaven. Yet the strong-minded women urge, as a special instance of the oppression of the sex, the labour entailed by the making and repairing of wearing apparel. Perhaps the task set by this prophet of old has had its effect on their minds, and they are appalled by the prospect suggested. Their crusade in

this respect, however, meets with no success now. Women are devoting more time than ever to the fine art of needlework, which the present style of dress necessitates.

But on one side of their arguments the agitators will enlist the sterner sex—viz., the deplorable costliness of the present fashions. Opposition, however, is generally of no avail, and in nine cases out of ten acts as an impetus. Still, what with voluminous drapery, silk and satin, fur and feather trimmings, embroideries of all kinds, and the introduction of beads wherever it is possible, we seem to have arrived at the maximum of extravagance in the matter of dress.

Mantles and dresses alike are trimmed with fur—skunk, marmot, and silver fox being most in favour; but feather trimmings are almost, if not quite, as well worn. Ostrich and cocks' feathers—the latter mostly undyed—are the more general kinds, but they are not by any means the only ones used. During the late brilliant visit of the Prince of Wales to France, one of the *grandes dames* received him in a dress trimmed with robings of canary-birds' feathers, and another hostess wore a bordering formed of the blue feathers from the wing of an equally tiny songster.

The bead mania is as rife as ever, and jet tunics and cuirasses cost fabulous prices—a mere bodice, six to sixteen pounds. Beads glitter alike on morning and evening dresses, and the newest kind of veils are spotted with the tiny blue steel beads, which have of late become the fashion. Broad throatlets of velvet, studded with beads and hooked at the back beneath a bow, are one of the trifling etceteras of dress which give so much style. *Châtelaines* can hardly be called trifles, seeing that the best cost often a hundred pounds; and the fashionable women of the day jingle as they walk, almost as heavily weighted as is a milkmaid with her yoke and pails, what with pocket-books, scent-bottles, scissors, thimbles, stamp-cases, card-cases, and hosts of other things, which are now worn on both sides of the waist, suspended by chains.

With all our cleverness we seem unable, in these modern days, to originate much. The *châtelaines* which our grandmothers wore are now worth twice as large a sum in the market as almost any modern ones, and most people would consider themselves lucky if, among family heirlooms, they discovered a large silver bag-clasp, with a hook attached. The addition of a new velvet bag would make this a very valuable, and moreover useful, addition to feminine personal possessions, and likely to awaken not a little envy in friendly breasts. These *châtelaine*-bags are now very fashionable, and hold letters, keys, and other articles which are likely to weigh down the pocket of a dress, a thing much to be avoided in the present style of skirt.

With regard to the make of morning dresses now, "froncé," viz., gathered fronts, are as much in vogue as during the summer, and a novelty from Paris is silk which is froncéed in the making. It will soon get out of condition, but, like other novelties, will

doubtless have its day. The tunics rounded in front, and diminishing to a mere nothing at the back, are very generally worn, sometimes being made in the form of a triple tunic. In France, the pouf at the back of the skirt has been abandoned in favour of a triple box-pleat, which by means of strings underneath extends to the edge of the skirt, being ornamented with large flat bows. Most of the winter dresses in England, however, seem to have the pouf; but its size is diminished by some three straps, with bows in the centre, coming from the side of the tunic, and dividing it in two.

For seaside wear, the tailor-made cloth suits seem to hold their own, few having any other trimming save horn buttons and rows of stitching, though fur has a very softening effect. This style of dress is particularly suitable for the wheel-skating, which seems to form the principal amusement in the day time at Cheltenham, Brighton, and elsewhere, where pleasure-seekers kill time.

In London, rinks under cover are, it is said, being built, both at fashionable and exclusive resorts, and at the Horticultural Gardens; so a skating-dress ought certainly to be considered in providing for the winter. This should be of a hard, tough, serviceable material; the best skaters fall sometimes, the novices very often, and neither boards prepared with a compound of wax and similar ingredients, nor Portland cement, are calculated to improve either velvet or silk. No crinoline should be thought of; the drapery should be as clinging as possible, and, there is no doubt about it, bright-coloured petticoats are the best. At Brighton the costumes at the rinks have been very varied, but for effect, petticoats of striped red and stone-coloured cloth, or serge, worn with tunics and double-breasted jackets of stone-coloured cloth, a hat of the same shade with a red feather, and a red scarf round the neck, have carried off the palm. Hats are, it seems considered, *de rigueur* for skating, just as they are when ladies handle the reins.

Cashmere and silk, and homespun and silk, are the most fashionable mixtures for ordinary winter wear. All dresses must, to be *en règle*, be a mixture of two colours, or of two materials.

All bodices are basqued, and sleeves as a rule fit the arm. For demi-toilette, heart-shaped bodices are worn, but they are so elaborately made in the Medici styles, that there is no mistaking them for morning dresses; and nothing is more thoroughly *distingué* than white—white velvet and white cashmere, white silk and white Indian cashmere.

By no means the least graceful of the many styles in vogue is the Marguerite bodice, a reproduction of that which Faust's heroine affects on the stage. *Maté-lasse* has been a success, especially white, which has found patrons among many brides. It does not show to the best advantage by itself, but gains by a mixture with velvet or silk. Many of the new mantles are made of it.

In England, velvet and sealskin jackets, tight-fitting and semi-tight-fitting, with double-breasted jackets,

are the general style; but in France, Dolmahs and shapes adapted from them are worn. The long black silk cloaks, lined with fur, are very generally adopted there, and will be here, there is no doubt; they are so comfortable, more especially for driving. They are not intended to be worn in the house, when paying visits, but are left in the carriage. So many dresses now are made to wear without any additional out-door covering, and spoil so, when tight-fitting jackets are put over them, that nothing can be more useful than these cloaks, which are delightfully warm out of doors, and admit of brilliant toilettes for formal visits and afternoon parties. They are equally useful for evening wear.

Opera-cloaks are elaborately embroidered and braided. Among the newest are black cloth which have broad gold braidings down the front, like a Hussar jacket.

Those delightfully comfortable things, the Basche-likes, are being adopted from Germany. The hood is thrown over the head; the two long ends wrap round the throat, and float on the shoulders. Braided cloth and embroidered cashmere are most used for them.

Bonnets are larger, but are quite as much like hats. They have feathers drooping over the large flat crowns, and bandeaux and bows of coloured silk below the brim, turning up a great deal at the side.

On the Rubens, Rabagas, and Dorothy hats, the latest novelty is the introduction of a brooch in the form of a claw, which often holds a ball. These are either jet or silver.

Shoes are worn in Paris out-doors and in, but they

do not know there what English mud both in streets and roads means, and our nation remains faithful to boots for out-door wear. Indoors, most elaborate stockings accompany the dainty high-heeled shoes, which might have won the heart of the Grand Monarque himself, in the second and most magnificent period of his reign.

Pocket-handkerchiefs are no exceptions to the general rule of extravagance, and the last fashion is for them to have pleated frills of washing-silk to match the dress, edged with narrow Valenciennes.

Evening dresses are chiefly remarkable for the profusion of flowers with which they are trimmed. Châtelaines of flowers are the newest introduction, and fringes formed of daisies or violets. Matrons adopt such costly materials as velvet, woven with silk stripes, bearing shaded flowerets, which are perfect works of art.

At present, slim and slender figures have much to be thankful for, and stout ones are certainly at a disadvantage; but we cannot all, like royalty, make fashions adapt themselves to our personal peculiarities. Even grave defects, we know, among queens and princesses have been the cause and origin of certain fashions, which all the world copied. Still, the sex never seems to have been better aware of the power of beauty, or more anxious to secure it. Unlike sturdy Cromwell, who bade Lely paint him as he was, with every defect and wrinkle, they are not too proud to paint out the defects and wrinkles which Time and Nature bestow, and the vendors of cosmetics and other beautifiers must find their trade a good one, judging from what one sees in the fashionable gatherings of this nineteenth century of ours.

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### NOT ALL BAD: A SKIPPER'S YARN.



I'VE been a good deal about the world in my time (said Captain W—, stroking his grey beard with his big brown hand), and I've seed a lot o' rough customers; but it's my opinion that the very worst of 'em all's got some good in 'em, if you'll only take the trouble to look for it; and that, let a fellow be ever so black, he's not all bad. You don't agree with me? Well, I'll just tell you a story.

It's about eight or nine years ago now—atore ever this Suez Canal, as we cum through yesterday, was made—that I was first mate of a steamer plying from Suez to Djeddah (the port of Mecca, you know) carryin' Gov'ment stores and fighting tackle for the Turks; for, of course, there was a row going on among the Arabs of the Hedjaz, as it seems to me there always is. I'd a precious rough lot for a crew that voyage—all odds and ends, like an Irish stew—Greeks, Maltese, Dalmatians, niggers, and what not.

Most of these men o' mine was too thick-headed to be up to much mischief, and I managed to get 'em along pretty well on the whole. Preachin' at 'em

warn't much good, but when I talked to 'em with a handspike or a bit o' two-inch rope, they understood that well enough. But the worst of the whole lot was a Dalmatian, name of Spiro. To give him his due, he was a fust-chop sailor, like most o' his sort; for Dalmatia's a kind o' nursery of seamen for Austria, just like Finland for Russia. But that was all the good there was to be said for him, for a more vicious, blood-thirsty dog never breathed. In the parts where he cum from, they take to blood as natterally as a sailor to grog; and he was just like all the rest of 'em—never happy unless he was in a row with somebody.

Now, I may say without bragging that I've a pretty sharp eye for the cut of a man's jib—specially when he's a-going to sail with me; and this fellow Spiro hadn't been aboard two days afore I'd picked him out as an ugly customer. He was pretty smart in picking me out too, as a chap what wouldn't stand no nonsense; and so it warn't long afore we got to eyeing each other, him and me, like two strange dogs making up for a fight. 'Bout a week a'ter we'd sailed on our first cruise, as we was a-lyin' in Djeddah harbour, this

the volunteers, that it is believed there would be little difficulty in manning the vessel altogether with officers!

The plans of the expedition are not yet settled, but they will most likely be something as follows:—It will leave in June, and after crossing the Atlantic, and coasting along the western shores of Greenland, calling most probably at some of the little Danish settlements, the vessels will cross Melville Bay—a dangerous locality, where numerous whalers have been crushed by the ice—and then push for Smith's Sound. Near the mouth of this strait a depôt of stores will be formed, to fall back upon in case of accident. One of the vessels will be left at a certain point to retreat to in case of disaster, and the other will push as far north as she can. Communication will be kept up between them; and in the spring sledge parties will be sent out to explore as far north as possible—to the Pole if they can. The expedition in any case will return by the autumn of 1876. What can be accomplished must always be purely problematical. The best-found ship, the most skillful command, and the most experienced crew can do nothing in the face of the ice. An ice-floe of a few miles lying in front may frustrate all their plans. On the other hand, if the sea is open, there seems no reason to prevent their sailing as far north as Hall

did, and then, by parties dragging sledges with provisions, &c., after them, traversing the eight degrees which separate them from the Pole. Here, however, the reader should guard against the idea that the empty braggadocio of "reaching the North Pole" is the sole incentive to the expedition. This may be the idea of those who are infected with the Alpine Clubbish vanity of climbing up a mountain, only, like the King of France in the story-book, to come down again and "set the newspapers talking!" But wise men have other things in view: the exploration of some of that 1,131,000 square miles of the world yet unknown, with the hundred problems in its geology, zoology, botany, and meteorology yet unsolved, ought to be the main objects—all others are subsidiary; and it is to be trusted that the Government will make due provision in the equipment of naturalists and other scientific men for accomplishing this. It can only be hoped that before 1876 our gallant countrymen, who are now about to take away our reproach in the eyes of foreign nations—that with all our ships, and all our money, we have let poorer nations cut us out in Arctic discovery—will accomplish the hope of the Matchless Parry, and will, *mutatis mutandis*, perform what Martin Frobisher declared to Queen Elizabeth was "the only thing left in the world whereby a notable mind may be made famous and fortunate."

## CHIT-CHAT ON DRESS.

BY OUR PARIS CORRESPONDENT.



WHATEVER else may remain stationary, fashion certainly does not, and in any prophecy concerning it, one can only be sure that it will show no diminution in the matter of costliness. France, notwithstanding all her misfortunes, seems to have plenty to spend on luxury; and French milliners and dress-makers find such liberal patrons among Americans, who care little what they pay, that prices are likely to go up rather than down—a state of things hus-

bands and fathers may not hear with their proverbial equanimity.

February is a month of hope. We have passed through the worst rigours of winter, and are looking forward to spring; but it has this drawback, that winter clothes begin to look shabby in more brilliant sunshine; so that it behoves one to look about for novelties. Prudent womenkind will have turned the recent sales with which most of the best drapers celebrate the advent of the New Year to profitable account, and so have laid in a stock of good things, at a fair price. Bargains are sweet to the feminine mind, tradition sayeth, and the struggles in the early days of such sales, at the Regent Street and similar

establishments, are better imagined than described. Costly dresses lie in heaps on the floors of some of the upper rooms, while eager purchasers ransack the store with unthinking haste. The counters where ribbons and remnants are to be had, below cost price, are as much besieged, with two and sometimes three rows of well-dressed women, as the Bank of England with both sexes about the time the half-yearly dividends are paid. Perhaps if the drapers followed the same plan as the governors of that highly respectable institution, and classed their customers according to initials, making those bearing the same letter be served together, a little less confusion might ensue. Good things at reduced prices are wise economy and benefit everybody. The shopkeeper is glad to realise his stock, and so prevent loss by deterioration; and customers to whom the very latest novelty is not a necessity are sure to make some desirable purchases. Cheap things, however, are to be avoided. They wear badly, and are a poor investment; but worse than all, in nine cases out of ten, the low price is achieved by grinding down the abject poor, whose absolute want makes them work at the very lowest figure. Tom Hood's "Song of the Shirt" was no myth. His warnings apply to many other overtaxed and hungry mortals besides needlewomen, and in the memorable lines—

"It is not linen you're wearing out,  
But human creatures' lives,"

many other words might be substituted for "linen"



with equal truth. There are beings in London who will be content to pocket a shilling profit on the making of a thousand wooden skewers, and trousers are made by hundreds for three shillings a pair, and even less.

How to dress is, however, the subject now under discussion.

The most fashionable materials for every-day wear are epingline, bazin-de-laine, armure, bege, and vigogne; cashmere and silk mixed holding its own still, for composite dresses, as they are called—that is, dresses made of two materials—continue to be *à la mode*. Gimp is much worn by way of trimming, and a novelty in the mode of making are large, deep, round aprons reaching almost to the hem of the skirt. These are cut in a single piece, and terminate beneath the sash at the back, or rather beneath a large bow formed of two long loops and a piece across.

Polonaises, notwithstanding dire prognostications to the contrary, are very general. They are made without any waistband, the front cut in one with the tunic, and a basque at the back. Sometimes they are joined down the front with bows, and have a succession of bows down the back also, and tortoise-shell buttons are introduced very often upon them. Large pockets placed outside on the hips are a feature of pretty well all dresses now, both for evening and morning wear, and there is a decided tendency in the present style of draping skirts and tunics to develop the figure, and not hide it.

Double-breasted jackets, edged with fur, are in Paris sent home with most of this class of useful dresses.

The Boyard mantles are the newest ones in Paris. These are made in coloured cloth, bound with fur, having large cloth sleeves, also edged with fur. Coffee-colour, iron-grey, and marine-blue are the shades in which they are seen most.

Opera-cloaks are more studied across the Channel than in England, for a Parisian *élégante* buys them to accord with the rest of her toilette, and Englishwomen rarely indulge in more than one or two, which they wear indiscriminately with all shades of colour. Indian cashmere is the favourite material. It can be bought by the yard now, in a variety of delicate tints, and is almost as effective as China crape, and far cheaper.

In the recent very cold weather, a few "Sorti du Bal" were made in cloth, and covered all over with silver braiding, being edged with the now universal feather trimming.

"Tricot Neige" was another new thing born in winter. It is made of wool with a silk foundation, the pattern being somewhat open, so that the silk lining is seen through. A year or a year and a half hence ladies will begin to patronise it in England—it generally takes *perfide Albion* about that time to accustom itself to new ideas in the matter of toilette.

From opera-cloaks, as a matter of course, one turns to evening dress generally, and under this head there is much to chronicle. The taste displayed in these dresses is certainly great, and it is here that the exceeding extravagance of dress in the present day

shows itself most. Some of the more *ravissantes* evening toilettes—the favourite adjective of a French dressmaker—are either white tulle, made with a diversity of quilles, and gossamer puffings, over blue silk, and worn with a blue silk cuirass bodice—for the bodices are often quite different from the rest of the dress—or white tulle with velvet bows dotted about the surrounding flounces, and accompanied by a black velvet tunic, trimmed with white and silver. There is a great deal that is new in the form of the bouillonnés, &c., of which tulle dresses are composed. They are most generally arranged in diagonal gatherings across the front, with quilles down the side, edged with narrow mossy fringe, which is being re-introduced. Then again a most effective design is a series of diamonds, with a small velvet bow at each intersection, and large bouquets thrown carelessly on the skirt at the back.

Lace is a very favourite trimming on velvets and brocades, and the point de France of Louis XVI.'s time is the latest mode. It is somewhat lighter than Honiton. The finer the lace, the more fashionable in this nineteenth century of ours. It is used as trimming in a cascade down the centre of the front, and interspersed with rosettes *à la Louis XIII.*, made of silk or satin lined with a contrasting colour, and having a button in the centre; or merely crossing the front in straight rows, headed by trails of leaves or flowers; or it is laid plain round the train, without any fulness.

*A propos* of trains: February is the month in which Her Majesty generally begins to announce her Drawing-rooms; and though a sort of quasi-official announcement was given some time since that these Court receptions were to be held later in the season of 1875, in order to accommodate loyal subjects the better, there is sure to be at least one early Drawing-room; and Court-dress ought to occupy an important place in a gossip on dress.

From time immemorial we English people have considered it a *sine quâ non* that, in order to pay homage to our Sovereign on such occasions, we should assume a certain dress, and in this we have only followed suit with other European nations. In America, however, the sterner sex decline to conform to any such established rule; and the diplomatic representatives of the United States appear before Victoria in ordinary full dress. A most amusing scene took place in the House of Representatives when this was decided on, Mr. Sumner introducing the subject. The Lower Chamber became very facetious, one honourable member (for doubtless American representatives are "honourable," in Parliamentary language, as with us) prescribing "a cocked hat looped up with an American Eagle, a swallow-tailed coat with stars and stripes on the tails, butternut pantaloons, closely-fitting yellow stockings, with gaiters, and a buckskin vest, one side black and the other side white within, as an appropriate dress for an American *diplomat* on all occasions;" while another "honourable" friend moved "that diplomatic agents shall not be permitted to wear any Court-dress except such as shall be prescribed and pattern-drawn by the chief tailor of the nation, who is now presiding over its destinies."

This in allusion to the then President, Mr. Johnson, erewhile a tailor.

The hints given above as to the making of evening dresses will apply equally well to Court-petticoats, which are, in fact, nothing but full evening dresses. Very strict rules are laid down as to what may or may not be worn by ladies attending Courts and Drawing-rooms. Plumes and lappets are a necessity; but there is much variety in both. In old days only white feathers were worn; but they are far more generally of the colour or colours of the rest of the toilette, and are often mere tips, instead of the long plume touching the shoulder. Lappets used to be veritable lappets of lace or blonde; now long tulle streamers or veils, such as bridesmaids wear, are quite as general, and these are either of white or coloured tulle, according to the fancy of the wearer. Low dresses *must* be worn, unless the Queen's special permission to the contrary is obtained through the Lord Chamberlain; and the other necessary adjunct is a train, which can either come from the waist or from the shoulder; the body and train must be alike, the skirt or petticoat being of a contrasting shade, or of tulle of the same colour. *Débutantes* invariably wear white—all white; so do brides, if they are presented within a year of their marriage; but a married woman presented for the first time need not wear white as a matter of course.

So many dresses now are made with independent trains, both for evening and morning wear, that a Court-dress differs but little from them, except that the train is much longer—at least three yards long, and oftener four. The favourite materials for trains will be matelassé, striped and figured velvet, satins, costly brocades of various kinds—among them the newly-introduced Anne of Austria brocade, which is a black ground with the pattern in silver—and the Genoa velvets and brocades, which cost in Paris 100 francs a mètre, and it takes a dozen mètres for a train. As a trimming for trains, flounces *à la coup de vent* are the last thing. They are so called because they are caught down carelessly, just as the wind might blow them.

A word as to dinner toilette. People having plain

square-bodied velvet dresses (and who has not?) may rest content that they are never so fashionable as when quite plain.

White silk petticoats are much more worn than cambric for evening wear—not as a skirt beneath tulle or tarletan, but as a veritable petticoat. Edged with lace, they make the dress stand out better.

Bonnets are still much more like hats than anything else, and the most general shape is turned up in front. White felt trimmed with “syringa,” a name given to a thick sort of white silk, is considered full dress; and a scarf of this syringa ravelled at the edge,  $\frac{1}{8}$  wide and a yard long, is pinned under the chin, as tulle used to be; and white plush finds favour once again for millinery trimmings. The newest Parisian bonnet shapes are the “Marechale” and “Restoration.”

The following items may prove tempting to such of the fair sex as desire to be “beautiful for ever:”—

#### “A CARD TO THE LADIES.

Mr. Gibson's Innocent Composition, so greatly admired for its wonderful effects, in removing by the roots, in half a minute, the most strong hair growing in any part of the head or face, without the least hurt to the finest skin of ladies or children. He sells this useful Composition at 5s. an ounce, with such full directions that any persons may use it themselves. Also his curious Preparation for coaxing hair to grow on bald parts, when worn off by illness, it being allowed by many who have tried many approved remedies to fully answer the desired purpose. Likewise his Beautifying Paste for the face, neck, and hands, so well known to the ladies for giving a true enamel to the skin, in pots, at ros. 6d.”

Or maybe this:—

#### “GLOVES FOR LADIES.

The true prepared French Chicken and Dogskin Gloves, for clearing and whitening the hands and arms, perfumed and plain. As some ladies have had but small confidence in these Gloves till they have been prevailed upon to wear one Glove for eight or ten nights, when they have evidently seen to their agreeable satisfaction that hand and arm brought to such a superior degree of whiteness over the other, as though they did not belong to the same person,” &c.

There is, however, a drawback to the obtaining of the full benefits of all herein offered; for the first of the two advertisements appeared in the *Chronicle* of April 5-7, 1764, the latter in the *Chronicle* of April 19-21, 1760; but it tends to show that our ancestors were much as we are, and that neither all the female vanity, nor all the puffery of which one hears so often, originated in this much-abused century of ours.

## FEBRUARY.

“RING out a passing knell—  
Dead is the Winter-King!  
Over his grave let snowdrops wave  
And the golden crocus spring.”  
The sun with kisses warm  
Hath lulled him into rest,  
And unchained streams in waking dreams  
A new-crowned Queen have blest.  
Winter's fair youngest-born  
Stands doubting where to tread,  
The violet dyes are in her eyes,  
And the breaking clouds o'erhead.

The wild winds toss about  
The maiden's shining hair;  
The birds sweet sing, the flowers up-spring,  
And the founts make music rare.  
The merry joy-bells peal;  
Bright shines the sun above—  
Checks redder glow, for lovers know  
Hers is the reign of love.  
“Strew snowdrops o'er his grave,  
O maiden fair to see!  
A King lies low under the snow,  
And has left his crown to thee.”

JULIA GODDARD.

## CHIT-CHAT ON DRESS.

BY OUR PARIS CORRESPONDENT.



**A**MONG the pretty pictorial almanacs with which the shops abound at Christmas time, it is the fashion to depict the month of March as a trembling figure wrapping his robes closely round him; and perhaps no month in the year is more treacherous in the matter of weather. Woe be to the sanguine wight who, misled by some fleeting sunshine, discards warm wraps!

It is by no means a bad plan to buy a handsome winter dress now; it shows to advantage in the bright noon-tides of early spring, and will not be out of date when winter and dark days come round again, always provided it be made in the last Parisian fashion, which people in England generally follow for a year.

Velvet mantles should certainly be purchased at this season, for so changeable is our climate that they can very often be worn many days in May, and even in June, and nothing looks more shabby than winter-worn garments in bright sunshine. Velvet jackets as now made in Paris fit the figure closely, and are considerably longer in front than at the back.

Large wide hanging sleeves, such as were worn in Louis XV. and XVI.'s reigns, are coming in for out-of-door wear, and are lined with a contrasting colour. For weddings, and such full-dress occasions, the grey cashmere Dolmans, with these pendant sleeves lined with light blue, would be particularly suitable; either fur or feathers form the inevitable trimmings.

Scarves with hoods, and ends that cross in front, fastening together at the back, are very useful and just the sort of carriage wrap everybody wants, especially with dresses not intended to require any out-door covering, as they do not crush ruchings or trimmings of any kind. Besides, they have other advantages—they are inexpensive, and can be made at home, of cashmere, llama, or Connemara cloth; they should be surrounded by a knotted worsted fringe, which can be accomplished by threading several strands of Berlin wool the required length through the edge of the material, and tying them together tasselfashion a little below the border. This is a very useful style also for little girls.

A word or two as to a very indispensable adjunct of every wardrobe in this "merric England" of ours—viz., waterproofs. They are now made in many fantastic shapes, such as dresses and cloaks combined, but in nine cases out of ten these are failures. Nothing is

so really useful as a long cloak, with a cape having a slit beneath it for the hands to pass through, the said cape protecting the arm just as well as a sleeve. It can be slipped off and on very quickly, and, should it be required, instead of a broad braid edge, it may be made with a plaiting of the material, having an interwoven fringe. The Connemara shape always holds its own; it has a cape which is caught up in the centre of the back with two rosettes.

The newest style of opera-cloaks have long pendant sleeves, and are of plush, trimmed with a contrasting shade—for feathers are invariably added at the edge. Oriental stuffs and Delhi embroidery, however, are still in fashion, and young girls cling to the white gossamer knitted shawls, which are so cheap, and so becoming when gracefully wound round lithe figures and slim throats.

All the winter, for the theatres, ermine and white fur jackets have been the rage in London, and people for whom ermine is too costly are not above the innocent deception of white rabbit-skins, ornamented with ermine-tails.

As to head-dresses, birds—real birds stuffed—butterflies, and jewels attached to flexible wire, are worn for dinner; feathers, flowers, and jewels for full dress.

Many of the demi-toilette head-dresses worn in England are bizarre—flowered scarves either white or coloured, mingled with velvet, or surrounded with tulle or crape lisse, finding much favour; and as Englishwomen as a rule have not acquired the art of putting their things on with the grace of a Frenchwoman, these often have a very absurd effect. They were never intended for full dress, but even at the best county balls people now adopt such a head-dress as a small crape lisse cap, surrounded by a pink foulard scarf, with a pink flower at the side, and this with a dress profusely trimmed with lace.

The late season has been a particularly gay winter all over England, and some pretty toilettes have been worn. The delicate colours now chosen are more positive than the faded shades of last year, and silvery blue and crystal green will be very much adopted during the forthcoming London season. There is quite a furore here in Paris about old lace, and old square veils, such as brides wore at the time of the Restoration, are bought up eagerly, and arranged as pointed tunics in front, and draped at the back beneath bows and sashes. It is almost impossible now to have too many flowers on evening dresses; heavy wreaths along the top of the low bodice often replace the berthe entirely. Some very elegant ball-dresses have been made of white tulle, with wreaths of leaves between the bouillonées and round the tunic, a large softening veil of tulle falling over the whole.

Much care is being expended just now in the preparation of trimmings. Marabout feathers are found to be most suited to the revival of sixteenth-century dresses; silver gimp is also largely introduced, and

the bead-embroidery is more costly than ever, the stamens and pistils of the various flowers being represented by pendant beads, which have a very rich effect, especially on China crape and velvet.

Trains are the usual accompaniment of evening dresses, and they are often drawn at the back of the waist, just as old-fashioned bonnets used to be, or arranged with tapes underneath, in a series of pleats which represent goffering. Many evening dresses are laced at the back, which most people will be sorry to hear; the late fashion was so much more convenient; and they are often quite distinct from the dress—viz., of a different colour or material—but then these are generally of the cuirass form, coming low on the hips.

So elaborate are the peignoirs, dressing-gowns, morning-gowns, or whatever we may choose to call them, that we might be returning to the fashions of long ago, when the beauties of the day received their friends while their toilettes were completing.

“A heav'nly image in the glass appears,  
To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears;  
Th' infirm priestess at her altar's side  
Trembling begins the sacred rites of pride.  
Unnumbered treasures ope at once, and here  
The various off'rings of the world appear.  
From each she nicely culls with curious toil,  
And decks the goddess with the glitt'ring spoil:  
This casket India's glowing gems unlocks,  
And all Arabia breathes from yonder box;  
The tortoise here and elephant unite,  
Transformed to combs, the speckled and the white;  
Here files of pins extend their shining rows,  
Puffs, powders, patches, Bibles, billet-doux.”

Poets and painters alike have combined to bring these scenes before us, whether it was a French monarch, at whose levée obsequious courtiers elbowed each other, or some fair Belinda, whose beauty was the toast of the day. But though the scenes so represented had much that was amusing, it would require a greater change in our modern manners to reintroduce these customs than we seem prepared to make. Whether or not, however, these wonderful dressing-gowns are ready prepared, and the newest of all are what are called in Paris the “robe de chambre satchet.” They are made in delicate shades of foulard, wadded throughout, and are lined with flannel, iris powder being introduced between, so that they emit a most delicious fragrance. They are loose in front, and fit the figure at the back, and are elaborately trimmed with Valenciennes lace. Other peignoirs are made of the more costly crêpe de Chine and quilted satin.

Tournures are going out; they are quite small, and are worn only at the back, the skirts over them being cut so as to flow out gracefully like a peacock's tail. The bodices of dresses are longer and more whaleboned. Sometimes the front of the bodice and skirt are cut in one, and ornamented with a heavily-beaded plastron. Flounces in the skirt are narrower in the front than the back, many of the trimmings across the front breadth being arranged diagonally. Silk dinner-dresses are trimmed with English embroidery, worked on the silk itself, with filoselle instead of, as we have hitherto seen it, with white cotton. Gimp is made in every shade, and is used more than ever.

No chit-chat on dress would be complete without a word or two about shoes and stockings; and *à propos* of “shoes,” as Paddy would say, they have introduced leather boots, with gaiters attached, and lined with fur, for strong-minded, able-bodied, healthy women, who venture to walk in the Highlands, or across turnip fields, and similar rough places. For full dress, embroidered shoes are coming in—white, embroidered with white jet, black with white silk—and a strap across the instep is now added. Shoes have very pointed toes now-a-days, and, happily for those who are proud of their feet, square toes are things of the past. Stockings should match the dress, except that with black dresses blue or red silk are now worn. A curious caprice of the fickle goddess, this. It was always considered very bad form to wear coloured stockings in the evening.

A word or two as to jewellery. In Paris the designs now in vogue are very *outré*—hearts *à la Régence* of diamonds and turquoise, earrings of dominoes, chandeliers with candles, blue china plates, parrots, bottles of Vichy water.

Turquoise and black pearls are the mania of the moment, and the last new present for a bride is a smelling-bottle set with pearls, and all white enamel.

Last year a gentleman appeared at a fancy ball in the dress of 1900, which consisted of a dress-coat with brass buttons, light blue facings, lace ruffles, a fan, smelling-bottle, and straw-coloured gloves.

If any of the fair sex had been equally brave, what eccentricity would they have decided on as the feature of the future? Shall we, in another fifteen years, have become disciples of Bloomer, or have appropriated the “breeks” only in the Turkish mode? or shall we have got back to the short waists of George IV.'s time, the hoops of Queen Bess, or the quaint head-dresses of Edward IV.'s reign, after the fashion of rolls of linen pointed like steeples, with wings on either side resembling butterflies? or others of the same period not unlike crescents, the points going upwards above the ears, the old writers of the period likening them to asses' ears? It is not unsafe to prophesy that we shall not have become much wiser, however distant the time may be, for there is little fear that dress will ever be our servant instead of our master. It never has been suited to our requirements, and possibly, ay, most probably, never will. If you wish to understand to the full how guilty we are in the matter of inappropriateness, and how much we transgress the laws of hygiene, talk the matter over with an unprejudiced physician, and he will tell you how many lives have been sacrificed by catching fire, through crinoline; how much neuralgia is caused now by small bonnets, and how much lameness by high heels. Happily, one of the numerous ills complained of by the faculty can now be obviated—viz., the undue weight of many long skirts on the hips—and that by a simple invention, “the ladies' garment suspender”—strips of webbing with hooks attached. The hooks are hooked to the skirts back and front, so that the weight is supported by the shoulders, the only part of the human body on which a load can be comfortably and safely carried.

## CHIT-CHAT ON DRESS.

BY OUR PARIS CORRESPONDENT.



APRIL is a season when the French dressmakers and modistes have prepared all their novelties; but which of these will find favour generally, remains hidden in the future for awhile; and perhaps at no other time of year is it so difficult to prognosticate with any certainty what will be worn. You may study the fashion-plates with the most assiduous care, and visit all the dress *ateliers*, if one may so term them, in turn, and yet arrive at no certain conclusions. Some chance may turn the current in a totally unexpected direction; and, in London especially, a fashion often crops up in the middle of the Metropolitan season, without any distinct setting or cause, and is fairly done to death—*vide* the blue-and-white striped camlets, Dolly Varden cambrics, and many others—which certainly did not originate in Paris.

Next month we shall know much better what this season's fashions are to be; now we can chronicle that the furore for entire costumes in white is as great as ever, and likely to continue. At some of the most fashionable weddings, many of the guests might be mistaken for the bride, thanks to swansdown, lilies of the valley, and white washing-silk; and in Paris, as in London, some of the best-dressed women of the day have appeared, and are appearing, at fêtes, in pure white, silver trimmings being much introduced upon it; indeed, the *specialité* just now is a sort of tawdry tone, that is creeping into our evening dresses. A very fashionable style of making tulle and tarlatans is with plissé flounces and bouillonnées, and then, simulating a tablier, two rows of some four or five crossway bands of tarlatan of a contrasting shade, having lines of silver interwoven, are laid across the front, and the pouf at the back; for example, grey and silver on black, and blue and silver on blue. The skirts are all cut straight in the front and the sides, where they are very much tied together, the back having almost the appearance of being distinct, and resembling in shape a peacock's tail far more closely than anything else; but they are graceful.

If you are preparing dresses beforehand for the season, you may very safely adopt plissé trimmings, either for morning or evening wear, whether the material be plain or figured; and for full dress, either gold or silver trimmings will render them more thoroughly *à la mode*. The newest lace has gold and silver threads running through it; and some of the lace now used in Paris is gemmed with small rubies, diamonds, and emeralds.

A new material for wear on dressy occasions is called "Gaze Matelassé"—a transparent fabric with satin stripes, all alike indented in the form of diamonds. Ecreu muslin of a very open-work make, called "Spider Muslin," is a novelty as trimmings on grenadines, Japanese silks, and similar materials.

The make of such skirts is too complicated for minute descriptions—two large crossway puffings extending from the hem to the waist, and other puffings and plissés running at right angles and otherwise.

According to fashion-plates and the dictum of dressmakers, low bodices must *de rigueur* be worn at balls and dances; but experience shows that at every entertainment of the kind at least half the people are not *decolletée*.

Notable among the spring dresses are all kinds of embroideries in straw—muslin, tarlatan, and silk alike displaying them. Woollen materials such as cashmere and fine zephyr cloth in conjunction with silk will be worn; and the probability is that the shade of brown known as "cigar" will be more adopted than any other. Feather trimming will hold its own throughout the season; as will a style of goffered silk, imitating feather trimming. There are many new varieties in gimps being introduced, and, as gimps are made for each particular silk costume, this does not at all tend to diminish their costliness.

As possibly most people will be having dresses made either now or soon, a word or two as to the general style of arranging them will not be amiss.

Long tabliers, with wide voluminous sashes at the back, are still worn; and young ladies are adopting light delicate shades of cashmere over black velvet petticoats, the probability being that velvet skirts and trimmings will, as last year, be as much worn on sultry July days as they were in the frosts of January; violin-backs of velvet are often introduced into the over-dresses, which, by-the-by, are calculated to show off to advantage the silver belts and gold châtelaines that, costly as they are, once possessed are not likely soon to be discarded. Velvet intended for the wear of married women is most elaborately embroidered with all kinds of beads and coloured silks.

The trimmings which last year were all on the back of the skirt, are now all on the front, the back being very nearly untrimmed, unless large bows are carried down the fashionable box-plaited skirts; but the fronts are either perpendicularly froncé, or made with a series of horizontal plaits, turning down in the centre of the front, and up at the sides, plissé trimmings being introduced down the sides and along the edge of the skirt. The bodices all have basques, while some have waistcoats, and the sleeves are tight and reach to the wrist, the Henri II. style still keeping in favour. The plissé flouncing is not really a difficult matter to manage. It should be hemmed with the hand, plaited in small folds all one way, and sewed down to keep it in its place. For low dresses, cuirass bodices are still fashionable, but are being superseded by points back and front, which are more generally becoming. Velvet bodices with light skirts will be, and are, much worn in Paris; and this is just a useful fashion which English people will be pretty certain to follow, as the

same bodice can be worn with many skirts, and we like an article of dress to be of general service.

We are still falling back on old paintings for head-gear; and the Rembrandt and Velasquez bonnets are becoming, and well worn, recalling the beauties of long ago, as they have been handed down to us on canvas. Strings will once more be universally adopted, though as yet they are only of tulle, and come from the back of the bonnet, showing the ears.

The Dolman will be the kind of shape on which many of the spring mantles will be based. Among the newest Paris mantles, there is a form which is short at the back, and has the front much longer, forming a sort of waistcoat, and having long hanging sleeves over tight-fitting under ones, recalling Venetian costumes of years ago. Diagonal bands of braid will be much worn on mantles, and they form a becoming style of trimming. For dresses generally very little trimming, except silk matelassé velvet, gimp, and beads, is used, though a new variety of floss silk daisy fringe, and a fringe with clusters of tassels, have been introduced.

Bége is a material which for the coming *demi-saison* is most useful. An excellent way of making it is to select two shades, and use them alternately on the skirt, in crossway flounces, with the fulness merely piped. These come to the hips, where the tunic takes the form of a plaited scarf, fastening on one side, and edged with knitted woollen fringe. The two shades should be deftly blended on the body, which should be made with a basque; but for additional warmth, when required, there is a sleeveless jacket of the darker shade (the sleeves being of the lighter) made with long basques and pockets, both on the back and front breadths, and as many as can conveniently find place in the skirt; tailors always gore for a pocket each side—a convenient plan, especially now, when it is impossible to put much more without spoiling the hang of the skirt. *Châtelaine* bags suspended on the left side are in high favour.

Swedish gloves are beginning to be as much worn for evening as for day wear, especially black ones, which several of our ladies of fashion have taken to wear with white dresses, the result being more peculiar than pretty.

We run into very curious extremes in the matter of dress. Nothing now seems too heavy for evening wear, and velvet trains over tulle skirts may be counted by dozens in every ball-room.

In the mania for novelty, any uncommon flower is selected as a garniture for ball-dresses, and the result is often more unique than pretty. However, one fact is well established—you cannot have too many flowers about an evening dress. Heavy garlands are carried across the bodice to the back, and so spread like the tendrils of a vine over the back of the train.

Thin people, who do not fall back upon square-bodied dresses, cling still to the fashion of wearing tulle across the shoulders, either over or under the bodice, and terminating at the waist.

Amid this chronicling of present fashions, it may not be uninteresting to turn back a little, and see what

our mothers and grandmothers wore some forty or fifty years ago, within the memory of some of us; though memory is sometimes a treacherous friend, and, like other friends, requires a good deal of attention to keep it always at our service. In a few trifles we are returning to the modes then in vogue, but not, we trust, in all. In those days nothing but short dresses were seen, showing the shoe or boot. So many familiar terms occur in the descriptions of what was worn then, that it is necessary to turn to the fashion-plates to note how differently the *rouleaux* and bias folds were applied, and how wide apart were the *canezous* and *pélerines* of then and now. Hats were the outrageous mania of the hour, twice as large as the largest flop-hats seen now, and dress-hats after the same model were adopted with evening toilette, made of white or coloured satin, and trimmed with broad gauze lappets floating on the shoulders, enormous plumes of marabout or ostrich-feathers completing them, together with wreaths of flowers round the crowns, sometimes birds of Paradise inside and out, and rosettes and clusters of bows coming on to the forehead. They were placed far back on the head, and slightly on one side. Conceive the effect of a hat of bird of Paradise in yellow satin, lined with crimson velvet, trimmed with wide puffings of yellow ribbon, figured with black, and two white feathers surmounting the crown, while another was placed on the left side, curling on to the face—a *demi-veil*, as they were called, of white blonde falling from the forehead! However much ridicule the present stringless bonnets of small size may give rise to, they are certainly an improvement on these. Silk and satin *pelisses*, too, were all the rage, not unlike the short dresses worn a little time back, cut in the princess form. They were very much gored, and fitted the figure closely; a cape or *pélerine* was worn with them, and *gigot* sleeves kept out with buckram. *Pelisses* cut low at the neck, and open in front to display a white satin skirt, were worn for evening. The dresses for balls look very scanty and meagre to our eyes, and were mostly made of areophane or crape. Here are descriptions of two worn at court balls:—A striped blue-and-white *painted* satin, with spots of various colours between the stripes; round the skirt were festoons of marabout feathers, fastened together with blue bows. The bodice was made with folds of the same, crossing each other in front, and coming down to the waistband. The hair was worn enormously high, little frizzed curls touching the face, and coming scarcely below the temples; a bow of hair, or plait or diadem of pearls and bows, intermixed with marabouts, towering above them at the back, completed the coiffure. The other costume was of white areophane, with two *bouillonnées* of the same at the hem, on which were wreaths of flowers placed crossways. The body was very long-waisted; the hair arranged in two enormous puffs, with flowers intermixed, standing quite a quarter of a yard above the head. Surely, whatever our fashions may be, we do not make ourselves as ridiculous as did our grandmothers and great-grandmothers. *Qu'en pensez-vous?*

## CHIT-CHAT ON DRESS.

BY OUR PARIS CORRESPONDENT.



**T**HE merry month of May, about which poets write, all brightness, warmth, and sunshine, exists only in their imaginations, in this nineteenth century of ours; and the probability is that we wrap our warm fur mantles quite as closely round us, in the early part of May, as we did in March. Still by this time, if we do not wear them, we either have, or are about to invest in, our demi-saison and season dresses, and in no month of the year does dress occupy the feminine mind more.

Black and white still hold their own—that is, black velvet intermixed with white washing-silk, crêpe de Chine, white matelassé, and other such materials, which find as much favour as ever; and the probability is that in England, as here in Paris, gold and silver braids will be much introduced on these for full dress occasions. Few mixtures are more becoming, and moreover durable; and just now there are few better investments in the matter of dress than a black velvet skirt, which comes in usefully all the year round, and for all occasions.

We are imitating the magpie in our choice of colours, the peacock in the arrangement of our skirts. No evening dress is in good style, now, unless it is cut in a fashion that resembles a peacock's tail; this floats very gracefully, and is by no means the worst mode of the hour.

The spring bonnets still retain the hat-like form, and match the dress exactly; but the newest have strings which come from the back, and not from immediately above the ear. Spring flowers are most in favour where flowers are used, but the prevailing notion of getting money's worth for money shows itself in the heavy buckles, feathers, and bead trimmings so generally introduced.

There is a chance that the long pre-Raphaelite figures we have been wont to admire on canvas will now be seen in every-day life. Tournures of any size are going out, and the skirts, tightly tied back, float a good half-yard on the ground.

The latest way of arranging them at the back is in a series of gatherings, just as the old-fashioned drawn

bonnets used to be made, quite a quarter of a yard deep, and beginning where the basque of the bodice leaves off.

Another mode, too, is a series of platings extending from the waist to the edge of the skirt; but for ordinary every-day wear there is more simplicity than a year ago, and the trimmings which so profusely adorned the back of dresses have now been relegated in a less degree to the front, bows and long ends at the back sufficing.

Beads and beaded gimp will continue the rage, but of course the manufacturers are introducing novelties. It is always to be hoped that the vagaries of fashion do some one good, and when luxuries become blameably numerous, there is the consolation left us, that some of the hard-worked part of the population are reaping a golden harvest. Several of the new dresses are liberally embroidered with beads, and many gimps are composed entirely of long bugles. Braidings of all kinds, diagonal bands of plain braids, silk braids edged with beads, are all much used, and gold and silver braids are largely introduced in Paris on evening dresses, and cloaks, and many gimps are outlined with gold braid. White jet and blue steel are to be as much worn as last year, so that some past investments need not be discarded.

Tulle, crêpe lisse, and muslin edged with lace are all used for ruffs. Mechlin is the most fashionable lace just now for these sort of adjuncts to dress; and the white muslin neckties, so unbecoming to most faces that have lost the first bloom and freshness, promise to be worn throughout the London season; but black lace on white muslin and crêpe de Chine handkerchiefs is newer than white lace.

Mantles and jackets of some kind will be more generally adopted than they have been, and the economical plan of the bodice of the dress serving without any addition for out-door wear is a thing of the past. Triple capes are the last new thing in Paris, and they remind you not a little of the prints of the old watchmen's capes which have been handed down to us. Fancy Parisian élégantes taking an idea from the weather-worn Charlies of fifty years ago! Semi-fitting jackets, having long basques in front and short at the back, are to be well worn also.

Satins will dispute the first place in popular favour with silk, and possibly win the day; while in silk, what are known as shot silks will be the newest. The designs in matelassé become more floriated. In fact, though Parisians, with their customary good taste, keep to simple styles, and only indulge in extravagant vagaries on occasions, Parisian fashions become more ornate and, to say the truth, "smarter" and more vulgar each month; but it is the Americans, and perhaps the English, who patronise such modes, not the true Frenchwoman.

There is more poetry and more individuality in

dress than most women understand, and which, sad to say, half of them miss by a slavish adherence to fashion. As a golden rule, abjure the fashion-plates, and the ultra-fashions of the day, and with a small store of good old lace, and a few simple toilettes made well, you will be better dressed than your neighbours who spend twice as much.

I often wonder what persons take the trouble to wade through the long, wearisome descriptions of bouillonnées and flounces in which ladies' papers abound. It must be a mind of a peculiar kind that can realise the descriptions and bring, moreover, the said descriptions in actuality before its vision. To the majority this reading is as insipid as the faces of the fashion-plates, to which sometimes for our sins we are compelled to have recourse. Women should strive to display themselves to advantage, and not their clothes—in fact, to make dress their servant, and not themselves be a servant to dress. All possess an individuality, which should in some way creep out.

A word or two as to the spring materials. Armure de Lyon is a novelty, but Cashmere will be possibly more general than anything else, and plaids will be the latest fashion, the plaid and the plain material being mixed in the same dresses invariably. Worth's introductions are a mixture of silk and wool—viz., wool as the groundwork, with the check in silk. These will be made as rédingotes, in new forms of polonaises, and as basqued bodices, with the long skirts trimmed in front, and box-plaited at the back, in the "pli bulgare," as it is called. Indeed, the rounded tunics worn only in front, either single or triple, are becoming wearisome by their constant repetition. Mossy fringe and goffered silk, imitating bands of feathers, will be much used as trimmings. Shoes will be more ornamental, more embroidered, and more costly than ever, and should, as well as the stockings, match the dress exactly.

A few hints as to the knickknacks of dress will doubtless be acceptable. Veils should be put on before the bonnets; and, indeed, many of the tulle strings worn with the new bonnets are pinned on first also. In the evening you can hardly wear too much round the neck for the present fashion. Most necklaces are mounted on broad velvet, edged with tulle on either side; or, besides the necklace, a ribbon to match the dress is tied tightly round the throat. Notwithstanding the length of the gloves (as many as eight buttons are often worn), some half-dozen bracelets are fastened over them, and "porte-bonheurs" are never omitted. These are small, slight bands of metal, with or without a motto; and the custom of wearing them has come to us from the East. Let us hope they bring happiness to the wearers. Evening dresses look like flower-gardens, for the floral trimmings are carried up to the front much in the manner that trailing plants are trained up a wall; and the very bouffant back-breadths are dotted over with bouquets to match. Everybody now carries a small bag at the side, in imitation of the early English aumoniers, and these are made of silk to match the dress, and always profusely beaded. Châtelaines, too, are as much a part of evening

as morning dress, and hold the fan. The most convenient kind have a hook, on which the fan, suspended from a long chain, is fastened when not in use. In Paris many of these châtelaines are jewelled, and the introducing of such gems as emeralds and rubies into the embroideries which bedizen the robes of the fashionable women of the day is the latest vagary of the hour; some of the dresses jingle with a profusion of chains, metal fringe, &c.; coins and scales being intermixed with the embroideries. Plush will play a prominent part in the dresses of the season, as will woollen matelassés; and plastrons will be worn on bodices, or they will be trimmed to imitate plastrons, the real meaning of a plastron being a piece of material applied or put over another, and it always reminds one of the patch of red on the front of a Lancer uniform.

The Swiss embroidery covering the entire material will be fashionable again this year in silk, Indian silk, and washing materials; and some of the very prettiest scarves for the neck have the ends embroidered in this way, with lace beyond.

I think, after all these technicalities, you will have a pretty fair idea of the kind of costumes fashionable fair ones will appear in, at exclusive Prince's, Rotten Row, Hurlingham, Polo, and the host of morning and evening entertainments with which half the world strive to kill the time, that the other half find so difficult to economise sufficiently to do all they wish.

With regard to skirts, the right cut is a gored front width, gored widths on either side, and a plain back width, all the fulness being thrown to the back, and the back plait, or "pli bulgare," measuring some three or four inches at the waist. The favourite shades of colour will be brown, the new green, violet, and blue, Suédoise, Sphinx, Ashantee, Coomassie, and "tempête" grey, creamy white, and almond being the latest tints for evening wear.

Many people will regret that the comfortable short skirts are no longer worn, and for travelling they must have recourse to hooks and strings to make the long ones really wearable. Tailors certainly understand utility better than dressmakers, and their travelling suits invariably carry off the palm, with an abundance of pockets and firm, substantial sewing. Some of the best of these suits are arranged so that they will loop up over a petticoat to match, bound with leather, and let down when required sufficiently long to serve for a habit for riding on mules or mountain ponies. It is early, however, to talk of this, though those who love travelling for travelling's sake know that no time is perhaps more enjoyable than late spring and early summer, not the least of its charms being that the mass of tourists, who mar so much pleasure and comfort, are otherwise engaged. Still, nine out of every ten travel for the sake of meeting acquaintances, or at all events consider it enhances the pleasure of the tour; and the same crowd who have flocked to all the fashionable rendezvous in England to see and be seen, repeat the process on foreign soil with much the same result.



## CHIT-CHAT ON DRESS.

BY OUR PARIS CORRESPONDENT.



**J**UNE is the season when, as far as London is concerned, all the preparations made in the matter of dress for months past have an opportunity of being fully displayed, when what some people are pleased to call

“everybody” is in town, joining in all the gaiety—entertainments, parties, theatres, operas, and such-like—which becomes a mere hurried rush from one scene of pleasure-seeking to another. And very wonderful are some of the toilettes now to be seen.

We have gone verily mad on the subject of checks, which appear alike on dresses, bonnets, and parasols. It is true that only neutral tints are worn, but the addition of large-patterned checks by way of trimming makes even these very striking, not to say often “loud.”

The best dresses this season seem all to be a mixture of gros-grain and soft silk, such as Surah and Teheran. The checks are either black and white, or a groundwork of cream-colour, with green, brown, or red lines upon them, and the variety in these seems endless. Natté, and some other new silks of the class, have a large interwoven check on the surface, a sort of basket-work weaving, which makes them very strong and rich-looking. But the Teheran and Surah silks, with broché designs, carry off the palm for grace, beauty, and richness. The fine full crimson shades they take give a very Oriental tone to them, aided often by Oriental patterns.

These peculiarly soft silks are largely used as tunics and trimmings, draping well, and being particularly adapted to the present style of arranging the bodices, with a sort of half-handkerchief tied loosely in front.

There is but little doubt that those who lead the fashions find no small difficulty in devising novelties, and this difficulty accounts for many of the vagaries which from time to time hold good among us. The latest introduction in the make of bodices is that the backs, instead of having side pieces, are cut in four divisions from the neck. This gives a very patchy appearance, especially in check silks, where the pattern does not match exactly, and it has apparently no particular object in view. Basqued bodices and

nothing else are worn, but there is much variety in these. On some, folds of the softer silk are laid along the edge, attaching it to the skirt, and so giving the appearance of the cuirass, while others are cut up into many tabs and pieces, often much longer in the front than the back, and *vice versa*. They invariably have pockets somewhere, either at the back or, with more reason and better effect, one square one, below the right basque, finished off with bows.

Fringe is the trimming of the season, and there are many kinds, a preference being given to the knotted class, and to a new introduction, or rather adaptation—namely, the crimped braid fringe, now to be had in all colours, and of the same class as the mourning fringes which have been worn for some time.

In nothing is there such a marked difference between London and Paris as in the matter of trimmings. In the gay Parisian capital there is no end to the variety of garnitures which have been introduced this season, but few are patronised in England; maybe they are too costly. We English accepted jet with great avidity, and plenty of it is now worn; but we do not come across any of the new *dispositions*, as the French call them, on which they have lavished so much skill and taste. They consist of silk gimps richly beaded, heavy knotted and twisted fringes with many beads introduced, and several kinds of trimming with a net foundation, on which the beads are thickly studded; and as a novelty there are many black jet spangles attached with beads, and having a most rich effect. The newest feature, however, in these trimmings is the introduction of mother-of-pearl and gold and silver. It is very difficult to realise what this mother-of-pearl trimming is without seeing it. One of the most beautiful specimens I have come across had a net foundation, and thin lozenge-shaped veneers of the mother-of-pearl laid on, one in the centre of each diamond lattice-work formed by green chenille; below this was a deep pendent fringe, that matched exactly one of the many varying hues of the pearl; it consisted of tufted silk and crystal beads. The gold and silver trimmings are of a broad, thick galloon make, with gold and silver threads introduced, and will be much used on some of the many beautiful dresses now preparing for Ascot.

On the Heath, in the long range of private boxes, and in the royal stand, the vagaries of fashion are to be seen better than anywhere else; and some of the dresses now preparing are *bizarre* in the extreme. There will however, no doubt, be a preponderance of cream-colour, used as trimmings on other silks, but very often with no mixture at all, save the introduction of a delicate blush-rose in the head-gear, which will be more a *hat* than a bonnet, though possibly rejoicing in the name of the latter. By way of trimming, these thick bands of cream galloon, with the gold or silver thread, will be the acme of fashion. For morning wear, these

cream dresses will be of the soft make of silk, but the shade—which is exactly that of thick, rich cream—is equally fashionable, in the best make of silks and satins, for evening wear; and nothing we have had of late shows off fine old lace to such perfection.

The eccentricities which prevailed in the matter of dress in the days of the Empire have always been a topic for surprise, but the fickle deity does not seem to have mended her ways much of late; and though the Parisians never appear themselves to adopt what is *outré* or *bizarre*, the fashions they start are reproduced elsewhere with very striking results.

The present mania for what is called "Madras mixture" comes under this head; and most of the checks in silks and cotton display the curious combination of red, yellow, and brown, which is supposed to have derived its name from the Madras handkerchiefs to be seen wound about an ayah's head.

The English manufacturers do a very good trade with France in cotton fabrics; and the Parisians have bought up with much alacrity the new style of cotton dresses, sold for the first time this year in any quantities—viz., those with white and buff grounds, on what is an interwoven—not printed—check. They will wash for ever, and, until they become common, have a *distingué* style about them. They are made up with pointed tunics in the front, and basque bodices, plissés or flounces going round the skirt; but, in good truth, no new mode of making has been introduced, and the tabliers worn in Paris last year, which are simply tied at the back when on, have not been surpassed for either comfort or appearance.

Bonnets—*bonâ fide* bonnets—are of the past. You never see such a thing now. What are worn are round hats perched quite at the back of the head, and loaded with flowers—utterly useless, as far as any head-covering goes. It was reported in the spring that strings were coming in once more, and hopes were entertained that all the neuralgia and ill-health which the fashions of the few past years are said to have brought about were to come to an end; but the present style of strings will certainly bring no such reformation, though they possibly will much diminish the amount in our purses; for what can be more costly than some two yards of tulle or crêpe lisse, only wearable twice or thrice—in London, at all events—just fastened to the back hair or bonnet, and loosely tied in a bow under the chin?

With regard to parasols, we are becoming more sensible; and the new ones this season are all larger, and look as if they really were intended to ward off the sun's rays. Dainty lace-covered trifles, which would scarcely shade a fly, are still seen in carriages, where the larger kinds do on occasions get in our companion's way; but at the various resorts of fashion,

where walking or sitting in the open air is practised, the *élégantes* patronise large embroidered parasols, and for dressy occasions black silk ones bordered with ostrich feathers. There is creeping in among us a decided tendency to adopt Oriental designs, in which we show, by-the-by, a wise discretion, for the natives of the East have ever distinguished themselves in decorative art. Many of this year's fabrics are interwoven with Oriental designs; and in parasols especially the East asserts itself. Most of the new handles come, or affect to come, from Japan; and the embroideries introduced upon the accompanying materials affect to be Oriental handiwork, in self or chintz colours also.

The higher rate of living which now seems imperative with regard to people of a certain position in life, shows itself more in dress than in any other way, and the prices asked and obtained for those articles that form a necessary part of a lady's wardrobe are fabulous.

Less under-clothing is worn this season than of yore, for the dresses, tied back as they are, cannot be too plain in front; and, in lieu of the multiplicity of petticoats in which we used to indulge, an excellent plan is beginning to hold good, of attaching a deep flounce to the inside of the dress, with frillings and lace. This has the advantage of hanging perfectly, and I have seen a piece of muslin attached to the entire back of the dress, and so sewn that it keeps the fulness in its place, with the addition of only a few strings instead of a multiplicity.

The mantlets are certainly graceful this summer, and many are made of the same material as the dress; the most fashionable shape appears to be a scarf rounded at the back, and tying loosely in front. For matrons who would scarcely consider these sufficient, there are many good shapes, differing from, and yet not unlike, the Dolman. In France they are made of Sicilienne, a rich material, which English people seem to find too costly, so they give the preference to cashmere; and the new silk trimming, in imitation of feather bordering, is a very favourite addition; but lace and beads are, if we may judge by surroundings, just as much in favour as they were last year, though the shops tell you differently.

One fact is undeniable, dress is quite as much a study this season as during any previous years, and the present styles certainly admit of much artistic taste and skill. Moreover, they are peculiarly becoming, and I think that any one who has put in an appearance at some of the many fancy balls which have been going on during the spring and winter, will agree that few of the fashions which prevailed in days gone by were calculated to display feminine charms to greater advantage than do the modes of to-day.



or aromatic flavouring herbs! It is in the proper blending of these strong flavours that one can detect the hand of the *artiste*.

There are many worse things to eat in hot weather than cold roast beef and salad. Now, it will often be said that if you want a good salad you must go to Paris; certainly you *do* get a good salad there invariably, but it is equally easy to have one at home, by simply doing what they do. One principal reason why English people so often have bad salads is that they have an absurd prejudice against oil. Very often too, when they use oil, the oil is bad. Of course it is as impossible to mix a good salad with bad oil as to cook a good dinner with high meat. The oil must be clear, bright, and of a pale yellow colour; if it looks at all green it is probably bad. Bearing, therefore, this in mind, I will now tell you how to mix a salad, simply repeating the recipe or custom used in ninety-nine out of a hundred French restaurants. First get two or three small French cabbage lettuces. Wash them if necessary in a little cold water, but do not dry them on a cloth, as you will thereby probably bruise and spoil them. Shake them dry in a little wire basket, or put them in a cloth and take the cloth by the four corners, and make the lettuce leaves jump inside. Then put them lightly into a salad-bowl; next chop up enough parsley to cover a threepenny-piece, and also chop three fresh mint leaves, and sprinkle this over the lettuce. Next take a table-spoon and

place in it about half a salt-spoonful of salt, and a quarter of pepper; fill the table-spoon with oil. Mix up the pepper and salt with the oil, and pour it over the lettuce—I am supposing enough for about four persons—add half a table-spoonful more oil, and toss the lettuce lightly together for two or three minutes. Next add not quite half a table-spoonful of French white vinegar, mix it for a minute or two more, and it is finished.

Now, the difficulty in many households is to overcome the prejudice against oil. Perhaps some one, when they have read this, will do as follows:—First take care to have a *fresh* bottle of *good* oil. Then mix a salad as I have directed, without telling anybody how it is done. Let it be handed round at dinner time, and wait and see what people say. If you tell them that there is nearly two table-spoonfuls of oil, they probably will make up their minds beforehand that it is nasty; but say nothing, and give the recipe a fair chance.

There are two additions to a salad which many think an advantage: one is to chop up with the parsley and mint one fresh taragon leaf; another is to rub a crust of bread with a piece of garlic, and then put the crust into the salad-bowl and toss it about with the salad. This is quite sufficient to give it a decided flavour of garlic, and, where garlic is not disliked, will be found to be a decided improvement.

## CHIT-CHAT ON DRESS.

BY OUR PARIS CORRESPONDENT.



WE have arrived at July, the beginning of the end of our London season, when, however, the goddess Fashion still reigns supreme in the metropolis of England. Unlike the

rose and the lily, which are content with one aspect of loveliness, and are beautiful at once and for ever, we change our fashions, with a persistency worthy of a better cause, almost week by week.

the lily, which are content with one aspect of loveliness, and are beautiful at once and for ever, we change our fashions, with a persistency worthy of a better cause, almost week by week.

In Paris the shapes which have found most favour, in the matter of bonnets, are the Directoire, Bretonne, Couronne, Capote, and Chloe, while some few women of distinguished fashion have adopted designs of their

own, copied from old pictures, like the Countess de Pourtales, who looked vastly pretty at the races, in the Chapeau Merveilleuse, copied from a head-dress in Louis XVI.'s time, with a wide brim turned up in front, and a long ostrich feather drooping at the back. In England we give the preference to two forms—a sort of oval like the cottage hats, such as Pamela, "the country girl," and other heroines were represented in, worn quite at the back of the head, and a flat stiff shape with a coronet over the face. We affect drooping floral trimmings more than any other, and a superabundance of flowers are worn both in London and Paris, some of the Parisian bonnets having the entire crown formed of flowers. Such artificial blooms are often scented, and sometimes mounted on stems of real lavender, which emit a very pleasant odour.

The newest shape is the Dorothy, which bends a little downwards to the ears, and is, at the same time, a good shade and becoming: another re-introduction of bygone days. It is, as all these hats are, picturesque—no other term applies as well. A constant patron of Rotten Row will recognise the Dorothy as a marked feature of the matutinal gatherings there, together with all the incongruous rubbish people carry jingling from their waists. There is an affectation of usefulness in these appendages, which take the form of note-books, keys, small lanterns, and scent bottles.

The last-named, scandalmongers say, sometimes contain something more palatable than scent; and in Paris they are selling silver eggs containing rice-powder and other aids to beauty, for *châtelaine* appendages. If you would be in the fashion, you must, as a matter of course, carry also a bag or pocket at the side, the pocket being often of the same material as the dress, froncé and ornamented with bows in a dainty manner.

It is only by degrees that we can make up our minds to give up the becoming ruffles for the throat. The Medicis collars, which are worn in France, come up so high that they almost have the same effect, and there is also a good design of a long, narrow muslin embroidered collar, edged with a plaited *ruche*. A becoming addition to linen collars, giving a dressy finish to a high bodice, is merely lace, about two inches wide, sewn on slightly full to inch-wide coloured ribbon; it describes a box-plait in front, the ribbon being sewn in a peak there; a bow is added at the peak, and there is another bow at the side, the ends tying at the back. Linen collars are more worn than any other, but where lace is used the preference is given to Mechlin. People are wearing tight bands of velvet round the throat, now that collars are worn so open, and a sort of narrow brooch is attached, or an enamelled fly; but there is a decided preference for broad band necklets of gold or silver, sewn to velvet, and put on round the neck outside the dress.

Shoes are adopted out of doors for full dress occasions, and black silk stockings, the latter often studded all over with coloured embroidered flowerets, or open work. Among other follies, they have introduced in Paris stockings with the foot and leg dissimilar, the latter of a plain colour, the former striped with white. The shoes have still very pointed toes, and are beautifully embroidered in coloured or black silks. A sort of shoe-boot finds many patrons just now; it comes high above the ankle at the back, but laces in front, where it is quite open and cut in points, so that the stocking is seen beneath the lacing, which is arranged in double diamonds, that are becoming to the foot. Heels are worn still very high, a fashion that can be traced back to ancient days, for St. Chrysostom urged upon the women of his day the expediency of relinquishing them. It was after the Restoration that they gained ground in England; but in Venice, in the seventeenth century, not content with heels, the women adopted soles a yard and a half high, which went by the name of *chopines*, or *chapneys*.

As the actual dress is the *pièce de résistance* of a toilette, it behoves us to give it ample scope, and consideration. Cashmere and *bège* dresses mixed with silk have been considered full dress this year, and there has been one style that has been generally adopted, viz., a square *tablier* gathered on the hips, and leaving an upstanding frill on either side, united at the back by bows. The skirts are long, much tied back, and have deep *frouces* with froncé headings. The sleeves are all narrow, with trimmings at the wrist. Shades of steel and brown are most general, and among the newest and most *distingué* French

colours are *bois de rose* (a pinky brown), *acajou* or mahogany, dark navy blue, and sea-green.

Violin backs are much seen, viz., a contrasting piece introduced down the centre of the back of the bodice, and frequently plissé; but the newest feature is the make of the *basques*, which are nearly all cuirass, viz., cut in one, describing a point back and front. These bodices fit the figure so closely, they seem plastered on, and it was rumoured that kid bodices were to be worn, more thoroughly to produce that effect.

Damask brocade has found special favour both for dresses and ribbons. Some of the toilettes worn now at Hurlingham and elsewhere for full dress occasions in this soft silk, which drapes so gracefully, are charming. The fashionable cream shade blends well with light blue, and light peach, with which it is much worn; indeed, self-colours and all soft colours find favour.

Three of the costumes worn at the Court Drawing-room, it may be worth while to describe:—

A petticoat (the dress skirt is always so named at a Drawing-room) of the faintest pink, covered with puffings of crape of the same shade; a very deep tunic of Brussels lace falling over it, caught up with bunches of gold grapes; the train and bodice of brown velvet, trimmed with the lace and gold grapes. The bodice had the cuirass *basque*, a slight *souffçon* of pink beneath the tucker at the neck. Emerald ornaments were worn, and an emerald butterfly in the hair quivered at every movement of the wearer.

The second was worn by a young lady. A white tulle petticoat over silk, very much puffed; a triple tunic in front, each edged with a fringe of daisies, headed by buttercups. The train was silk, bordered with tulle; a tulle scarf falling below the waist, caught up with a trail of buttercups and daisies. A heavy wreath was worn across the forehead—for the old-fashioned high wreaths are coming in again, and it may be mentioned in passing that brides nearly always wear them.

The last Court dress consists of a delicate maize silk bodice and petticoat, covered with lace, headed with bands of silk embroidery. The body is a cuirass, with merely a band of lace at the neck; the train is of *eau de Nil* silk, with lace and embroidery, and fastened here and there with diamond stars.

The belles wore their hair pretty well all cut across the forehead, or very much frizzed, or rolled in tiny curls; the plumes were smaller, the lappets shorter, and made oftener of real lace than of tulle. Until you approach the Presence Chamber, the train is carried on the left arm, so that the under part is much seen, and this now is nearly as heavily trimmed as the outside. Special permission has to be obtained for wearing high dresses, but many seem to have procured it, and Her Majesty herself this season has relinquished low bodices. Few styles of dress are more becoming than Court costume, more especially the plumes and lappets—gold and silver gauze, *matelassé*, Surah, diamonds and costly lace, were all worn, and by women who knew how to display them with stately grace.

## CHIT-CHAT ON DRESS.

BY OUR PARIS CORRESPONDENT.



“UTTERLY bewildering” is the verdict which the stronger sex pronounce on the ladies’ dresses of the present day; and, glancing round at any large and fashionable assemblage, the majority of us are forced to

acknowledge that it is not very wide of the mark.

Bodices and sleeves dissimilar; velvet skirts trailing, on the hottest summer days, in summer dust; a long train floating at the back, apparently quite an ornamental but useless addition to the rest of the garment, in which the figure is swathed as though in a vice: bonnets perched at the back of the head, keeping in their place only by a sort of miracle, and shoes with heels so high that a graceful gait is impossible. These are some features of the fashions which the beauties of the day are patronising in this year of grace 1875.

Dress ought to develop the charms of, if it does not add additional ones to, the female form divine. It should give full play to the limbs, conduce to health, and not undermine it, and moreover it should be useful and appropriate to the occasion on which it is adopted. In every one of these particulars the present modes are found to be wanting.

Of all the follies of the day, the present mania for tying the skirts back is the most absurd. One might almost use a stronger term for this swathing of the figure, and the Joan of Arc bodices (for all the world like corsets) give rise to disparagements which few young women would care to hear.

As an example of this style, we give the following description of a fashionable ball-dress:—A white satin *froncé* front, with two plaitings of satin and tulle at the edge, made rather short, so that exceedingly high-heeled satin shoes are clearly seen. To all appearance there is no fulness whatever, and the skirt looks as if it were pinned together, with a safety-pin at the back. A train-like trimming of tulle floats behind, with three large satin bows upon it. This is long, and well cut; but, in good truth, it is a graceful addition, not a part of the dress. The white satin bodice is made exactly like a corset, fitting the hips tightly, and quite untrimmed, save for a slight drapery of tulle over the bust. Nothing could

be prettier than the soft tulle and shimmering satin, but the mode of making defines the figure in a manner that a few years back would have horrified us.

The art of tying these skirts back, indeed, has arrived at such a pitch that tapes and elastics inside the dresses have not been found strong enough, and recourse has of late been had to leather straps and buckles; and as petticoats are supposed to prevent the dresses from falling in the requisite folds, some of the *élégantes* of the day are abandoning them altogether in favour of the same under-garments as adopted in riding, and made of chamois leather.

The satirist is frequently the best exponent of the fashions and follies of past days, and when our descendants turn back to the pages of *Punch*, who comes to the rescue with a specially-designed high, stool-like chair, seeing the exceeding difficulty the fair ones have in sitting down with all these tapes and straps, being in fact reduced to resting on the side of an ordinary chair, they will hardly realise that we, as a nation, boasted of our exceeding civilisation, wisdom, and refinement, and the clear judgment, good sense, and ability of our women. They will surely hear with wonder that some of the fair ones were even struggling for a higher education, extended rights, and equality with men in many walks of life. Maybe they will argue, as some of our philosophers do, that dress is a woman’s peculiar province, and that if she shows herself wanting in common sense and judgment with regard to it, she cannot wonder that there may be some hesitation in according to her a wider sphere.

The constant changes of fashion, and the slavish devotion which so many pay to the dictates of the fickle goddess, seem to point to the fact that it is because we have so little in ourselves we fly to her for relaxation. Still simplicity carries the day in the long run. The higher class of women, both in London and Paris, rarely adopt the latest vagaries, but favour a perfect fit, rich materials, old lace, and jewellery, which bespeak artistic taste.

This is the favourite month in the country for croquet, Badminton, and lawn tennis parties. The weather is generally bright and fine, and, unless the gentlemen have flown to Scotland, shooting has not as yet begun to monopolise their every spare moment, and so they are the more likely to put in an appearance—a point of no little importance, as the givers of such parties know; for what success can be expected if the male sex are in the minority?

What to wear on these occasions is one of the questions to be answered. For young ladies hats will be most adopted, with pretty washing dresses. Tunics and bodices of Hamburg net over coloured or black velvet skirts will be much worn. A black velvet skirt and a light blue silk skirt are both very useful additions to a wardrobe, for with various tunics they insure many changes. Hamburg net is a name

given to a woven imitation of the Swiss embroidered cambrics, covered all over, with the wheel and compass pattern, in white and *écru*.

In Paris washing dresses are all made in the Watteau style, the so-called "soubrette" carrying off the palm. This is made in pink-and-black striped cotton, the upper skirt edged with black silk plaitings and Valenciennes, dainty pockets at the sides, and a cascade of lace down the back of the bodice. It requires to be well made, but is eminently stylish, and for country garden parties these sort of cotton dresses are to be highly commended; for ours is a variable climate, and the grass is apt to be wet, which ruins a good silk and an equally costly lace-trimmed white muslin. The Parisians are introducing a variety of washing materials of Louis XVI. design, and cream-coloured grounds with vermicelli patterns in mignonne and blue have been much seen both in the English and French capitals. In Rotten Row during the season many pink-and-white and blue-and-white linen dresses were worn, which had a good effect, and were trimmed with thick white embroidery, introduced alike on silk and other materials nowadays. Some of the new styles of this kind of trimming are extremely costly, as, for example, on a soft brown brocaded silk, *écru* embroidery in satin stitch, enclosing Valenciennes medallions, and black silk embroidery. Blue cashmere, trimmed with cambric embroidery, has also found favour for tunics and bodices.

Soft brocaded silks will be much worn for country parties, as well as sashes of the same soft make of ribbon, these being among the features of this year's modes. Black is sure to be much worn, for it was never more generally adopted, both in London and Paris, whether it be black silk cashmere, or grenadine mixed with silk, and generally trimmed either with blue steel or bugles. The newest style of ornamentation consists of bands of black areophane, worked with long bugles, and this is laid on the material, whatever it may be, when used. It can easily be worked by a good needlewoman at a very little cost, though expensive to buy. Our readers cannot do better than procure a good design on thick white paper, tack the areophane well over it, and then work carefully, taking care not to draw the thread too tightly. On black dresses a variety is produced by wearing coloured sashes to match the bonnet. Foulards are greatly in favour in Paris, both black-and-white checks and cream grounds, with delicate bouquets of tiny flowers. These are exquisitely cool-looking, and are worn as tabliers and bodices over self-coloured silk skirts.

For demi-toilette, all sorts of soft silk are worn, together with *crêpe de laine* resembling China crape, white *barège*, and what is called Florentine, not unlike poplin made of soft wool.

The gay world, on pleasure bent, is now hastening away to fresh pleasure-grounds, especially on the Continent. Many useful dresses are being introduced for travelling. At this particular season a Chambertin is very useful; it is light, and, though it will wash,

keeps clean a long time; or one of those dark blue linen dresses, which a Frenchwoman thinks as necessary a part of her wardrobe as a cashmere. For good serviceable wear a light sort of serge is invaluable. A new style of Redingote dress has been introduced. The bodice is double-breasted, and fits to perfection; the skirt is long and plain, with a treble box-plait at the back. It buttons down the entire front, and can be made into a short skirt by means of loops and buttons as required. It is slipped on in a minute, and may be worn with or without a jacket; but for travelling it is advisable to have one for cold weather. The Ulster coats, both for ladies and gentlemen, seem to find favour for crossing the Channel, and for a rough wrap. A light *bège*, made as a costume, with a scarf-mantle to wear in emergencies, and a good black silk—which, with the addition of lace and muslin confection, can be made as dressy as occasion requires—two washing dresses and a waterproof suit, are a good outfit; or a serge, if you please, in place of the *bège*. If you are making only a tour, and do not contemplate a lengthy sojourn at any fashionable resort, this will be enough. Much luggage spoils enjoyment, and old clothes ought never to be thought of for travelling, where much wear-and-tear is entailed. The shady Dorothy hat and a small felt one, and Swedish gloves, dark grey or black, would be found useful.

In riding habits there is but little change. Some of them are made double-breasted, a few opening at the throat; but people are discarding braiding and every kind of ornamentation, in favour of extreme plainness. Neckties even are not worn now, only all-round collars and studs. The hats are rather lower, and for country wear they are introducing grey tweed habits, with hats made of the same material.

There have been fewer weddings during this past season than usual in London, but the dresses have been none the less costly and elaborate. Brides have shown a decided predilection for white satin, sometimes having trains of satin and skirts of silk, but more generally the front breadths are *froncé*, the back covered with lace and trails of flowers. One of the simplest and most elegant bridal dresses worn of late at a fashionable wedding was made with a bodice and train of satin cut in one, with no trimming; an upright collar of satin, such as the Princess of Wales affects so much, encircling the throat and enclosing a ruff. The skirt was of white silk, and across it were wreaths of orange-blossom, and a thick fringe of buds falling below and describing a triple tunic; the veil being of tulle, which has quite superseded lace.

Bridesmaids show a partiality for white—either all white, or white trimmed with a colour, such as claret. The white is generally muslin over silk. Next to this, light self-coloured muslins are in favour. They are all made with long skirts and plissé flounces, deep triple tunics in front, bows at the back, and folded fichús over the high bodices. Hats have quite superseded bonnets, and are mightily becoming and coquettish. At one or two fashionable weddings some of the gentlemen have discarded black coats in favour of light grey suits, the coats being of the long-coat form.

## CHIT-CHAT ON DRESS.

BY OUR PARIS CORRESPONDENT.



THE feast of St. Partridge is once more upon us, but dress is not to be forgotten, even if for a while *le Sport* is in the ascendant.

There are many changes

to chronicle. Among the most notable is the fashion, which is gaining ground, of lacing the dresses—morning gowns as well as evening—down the back; and when this is found to be too inconvenient, simulated lacings, or ornaments resembling buttons and loops, are adopted. The bodices are still made inordinately long, the basques whale-boned, and fitting the figure closely, just like corsets. The newest style of trimming these is with horizontal rows of braid, about half an inch apart; or, in lieu of braid, cross-cut bands of the material folded and stitched. Each of these rows terminates in a loop, thus forming a fringe at the edge. Navy blue or black Indian cashmere, with silver braid arranged in this manner, is extremely stylish.

Cream-colour, now so popular in all materials, threatens to be superseded by a new and equally delicate shade, "écume de mer," or sea-foam, a greenish-white hue, which looks best with black velvet trimmings. Pond-green is another favourite shade in Paris, a combination of prune and green, which looks particularly well with scarlet. Crêpon d'Asie is superseding crêpe de Chine, and, according to the present extravagant taste, is mostly worn covered with passementerie.

The skirts are cut much the same as last month, and elastic is now generally used for tying them back, instead of strings, which gives the wearer a better chance of moving a little without so much discomfort, heretofore a difficult task.

Another feature of the season is the introduction of a new bodice, not unlike the Louis XIV. hunting jacket, and very becoming to a good figure. It has long basques—almost as long as a short tunic—large pockets at the side, and a sash round the waist.

For early autumn wear, costumes of cashmere and silk, and soft check basket-woven woollen materials, are still the prevailing fashion in England; but in Paris white camel's hair serge, a somewhat costly investment, finds great favour. We are rather fond of black and white, too; so, in lieu of this more expensive fabric, we affect

white flannel and white serge over black velvet, and gold braid is introduced with good effect on many such costumes.

The so-called washing dresses are not as yet discarded for the season. Most of those now in wear last a long time without having recourse to the wash-tub, as after that process they are of little service. For *les eaux* the French are indulging in wonderful vagaries, which will be forgotten by them a month hence, and will never find favour here—the latest being dresses so short, they come barely below the ankle. A more reasonable French mode are pretty grey batistes, trimmed with either pink or blue cambric and with English embroidery—indeed, English embroidery is quite the rage on either side of the Channel, and dresses in both white and écru are greatly adopted, as well as trimmings of the same on silk.

That polonaises are no longer worn is not quite true to the letter, for some of the most charming Parisian dresses have the bodices and skirts cut in one in the front, more especially the Juive, which is very well worn over a skirt of a contrasting colour, and is generally embroidered, the tunic forming plaits at the side and a pouf at the back. Another similar design is in the form of a pinafore, the tunic and stomacher-bodice in one, so cut that without fitting the figure it defines it. It is generally made in the finest book-muslin, with a plastron of lace introduced for the front, and frills of lace round it. It drapes gracefully at the back, and has a scarf of muslin brought round to the front.

The favourite embroidery on all sorts of dresses is either worked with coloured silks, on silks the same shade as the material, or with beads. Frenchwomen have appeared in cream-coloured satins embroidered in pearls, and light blue crape embroidered in straw; and during our London season some of the best-dressed people at Hurlingham, and other fashionable resorts, wore white and black dresses embroidered in the tiniest steel beads, which shimmered most effectively as they walked.

Notwithstanding that a few strong-minded people have been writing on the subject of abolishing mourning as it exists now, there seems at present no chance of this time-honoured observance being done away with, and there are fashions in mourning as in other matters of dress. Deep mourning changes but slightly, crape and paramatta, with as little ornament of any kind as possible, being the rule. The crape should be merely put on in straight, deep flounces, with no fulness, or with bias bands, and no heading. In the next degree the crape is headed with a triple fold of crape, and subsequently with jet.

A variety of new and light materials, suitable for summer, have of late been introduced, such as "barège d'araignée," which is crape-like, but not transparent, though very thin; Byzantine, which is more silky-looking; and taffetas, slightly thicker. All three are made of wool and silk, and they each blend well with

crape. Most of the styles of making ordinary dresses are reproduced for mourning, such as double and treble tunics, with a series of runnings down the front, and a full frill forming coquillés at the back. Plissé trimmings are much worn, both in material and crape, but in the latter they get very soon out of order.

A useful travelling dress for mourning consists of a black serge skirt, tunic, and bodice, made with perpendicular bands of braid as a trimming all over them.

For evening wear tulle and jet are adopted, and grenadine for deeper mourning. Of course in very deep mourning full-dress toilettes cannot be required. A pretty make for a demi-toilette dress is a series of cross-cut flounces to the waist, at the back of the skirt, each bound with crape or satin, the front froncé, and separated by bands of black satin covered with blonde insertion, thickly beaded with cut jet.

Widows'-caps are each year more becoming, especially those made of tulle, with a point over the forehead, and long lappets at the back.

In bonnets, the introduction of a netted drapery, edged with fringe at the back, is the latest novelty. The Princess of Wales appeared in a brown one, on a white straw bonnet trimmed with brown, at Hurlingham one fête-day late in the London season.

Hats are almost superseding bonnets, and in the country the latter are never required, except for church. English people affect the Rubens shape of hat, the French the Cavalier—so it is said—but in good truth there are a great variety worn everywhere, and in England especially a hat-bonnet finds favour which has a diadem front turned up with black velvet—white muslin and a feather being the usual trimmings. Gauze veils of a long length are attached to many hats; they come from one side, crossing the face, and the end floats over the shoulder.

Felt hats, and even felt bonnets, are being largely prepared in Paris.

Caps are still worn, the newest shape being "La Normandie," a mere cross-cut piece of crape lisse, bordered with lace and ribbon, which just covers the coronet, and falls at the top of the plait at the back, or at the top of the *marteaux*, for hair-dressing just now is in a transition state. Nearly everybody wears the hair waved over the forehead, but at the back, except that most people have abjured false hair, everybody dresses it differently. In Paris a plait or cable of hair encloses a succession of carelessly arranged *marteaux*—viz., soft curls rolled on the finger, and pinned down to the head—and three short curls droop from it quite at the back. Nets, too, are coming in again. This will be comfortable for travelling; indeed, many of our present fashions are well adapted to the requirements of *mesdames les voyageuses*, more especially the soft brown woollen materials now so general, the dust-brown shades being the best; and the Swedish gloves, another fashionable mania, which has much increased since the Princess of Wales has appeared in them on all occasions. For evening wear they are made buttonless, and reaching to the elbow; for day wear three buttons are worn, or even five. For country wear, however, the French thread gloves with five buttons

are the most serviceable; they will wash over and over again.

White gloves are now only worn at weddings; cream has superseded them on ordinary dress occasions; the glove should match the dress exactly, so should the parasol, which is often made from the same piece as the dress. A Parisian novelty this season are black parasols edged with thread lace, small enough to attach to the *châtelaine* or suspend from the wrist by a chain, the handles being either ebony or bamboo.

During the warm weather people gave up wearing mantles for full dress, fichus having quite replaced them, either made of muslin or antique lace, which just passed over the shoulder, and were knotted in front. Now, however, they are necessities in every wardrobe, and cashmere is the favourite material, made short at the back and long in front, some having sleeves like an elephant's *patte*, but mostly merely rounded and finishing off in straight ends in front. An appliqué design in either merino or cashmere on a net foundation, the pattern marked out with braid, is also a favourite kind.

*A propos* of luxury, I don't know what *Monsieur Dupanloup* will have to say further on the subject of *le luxe effréné des femmes*, but Frenchwomen, among their other extravagances, are adopting garters which cost four pounds and five pounds the pair, made of costly lace and satin. On the other side of the argument, however, the summer dresses have been simpler than the spring ones, and it is to be hoped that the winter ones will follow the same good example.

Rotten Row lost its prestige of fashion this season, and Prince's, Hurlingham, and that part of Hyde Park in the rear of the Achilles Statue, on Sunday afternoons, Ascot, and Goodwood were the best resorts to judge.

Next to these resorts, the Opera concerts were a good criterion. The best singers are proverbial for their good dressing, so that some description of the toilettes they adopted on such an occasion may not be out of place.

A handsome brunette, who sang like a nightingale, appeared in a trailing blue silk, with cream-coloured Surah trimmings, the bodice opening in front with revers, having a little bouquet on one side. A Russian prima donna wore a light primrose silk trimmed with blue, and a mantle and bonnet of the same. The skirt was very long and clinging, with no attempt at crinoline or tournure, the foundation being primrose, with a scarf of blue tying back the skirt. The great Swedish artiste had a black silk, with a tunic and bodice of black and white brocade, a violin back of plain black being introduced; the bonnet was white chip, with a white ostrich-feather and black trimmings.

A silver-grey silk was made with crossway folds up the front breadth, describing a point in the centre; and a very charming and fresh-looking toilette, adopted by an Italian, was a pink silk covered with pink satin-striped gauze, made with little flounces edged with lace, and a tunic of the gauze, the bonnet matching exactly.



## CHIT-CHAT ON DRESS.

BY OUR PARIS CORRESPONDENT.



HOSE  
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the happy medium. Within the past few years we have passed from dresses preposterously distended by crinolines to clinging draperies; from infinitesimal bonnets to large hats; from very short skirts to very long ones, not to quote other extremes; so that now we surely have some little right to hope there is a good time coming when a fair-sized brougham need not be a solitary conveyance, nor narrow petticoats be an impediment to graceful motion; when our head-coverings shall be becoming protections, and our chausures comfortable.

Meanwhile we are not quite satisfied with the things that be; and in preparing for autumn it certainly is not an easy matter to be *bien mise* and avoid heavy bills. For summer and spring inexpensive materials will produce a pleasing result; and with a sewing-machine a good needlewoman can make tasteful toilettes at little cost, and with not overmuch labour, even in these days, when the trimmings are so elaborate; but autumn and winter fabrics require to be good in order to be durable, and it is difficult to combine this with cheapness.

Light home-spuns, serges, Scarboro' serge, Cheviot serge, and a new kind of serge, which is not (as most of them are) twilled, velvets, French merino, and more than all, cashmere and Vicuyna cloth, are preparing for the season, braid being the favourite trimming, and a dull silk gimp which supersedes jet. Checks are not to be quite discarded, and in Paris there is a special predilection shown for the Madras mixture—viz., red and black on a *pain bis* ground, the checks in these being as nearly allied to stripes as they can be, and more oblong than heretofore.

The usual way of making up the skirts of these kind of dresses—viz., where the check and plain material are blended—is either with three plaitings, or with gathered flounces headed by bias bands, or with a little

plissé at the edge touching the ground, and a gathered heading a quarter of a yard deep, rather full, with a frill at either edge.

Tunics and bodices over dissimilar skirts find great favour with French people, and of late these, in plaid flannel, have been extensively worn over black skirts. Embroidery still holds its own, and many of the dust-coloured dresses are embroidered in self-colour, while others are trimmed with frillings of blue cashmere, embroidered in brown silk, in exactly the same designs as were originally confined to jaconet and book-muslins. Navy blue also embroidered in a similar fashion with cream-colour is to be worn much this autumn.

Now, as to the style of making, the great novelty is bibs—viz., a piece of the material like the tunic, carried on to the front of the bodice, of exactly the same form as the bibs to aprons, and just simply bordered with trimming. Braiding, and especially old silver braid, will be a great feature in trimmings, and perpendicular close-set rows the rule, which is a becoming style to short people, tall people looking best when the ornamentation is arranged horizontally. The cuirass shape will be pretty well universally worn for bodices, and the violin-backs are still in favour, only instead of a plain piece of a contrasting colour and material being introduced, these now take the form of folds, each stitched down.

With regard to the skirts, the "Queue de Paon," or peacock's tail, is still the fashion; it should be cut as follows: the front breadth twenty-eight inches wide at the edge and twenty-three at the top, forty-two long; two gores go next the front, one twenty inches wide at the edge, the next twenty-six inches; the back breadth twenty-four inches wide and very long. The fulness is still all kept to the back, though the skirts are not tied quite so tightly. The back and front of skirts should be differently trimmed; sometimes, when there is a treble box-plait at the back, the dress is ornamented from the neck to the hem of the skirt alike. The Parisians are adopting the Abbess train, which is exceedingly narrow, and plaited the entire length; it is so called from its resemblance to the abbess's robe. Fashion, you see, like the bees, gathers honey where it can.

Cream-colour, or rather ivory, as it is more appropriately called now, will be extensively worn for evening dresses. Grenadine of this shade over silk, and trimmed with gold lace, is a very elegant mixture. Valenciennes and Mechlin lace are used in Paris as trimmings, and white muslin dresses become very costly, and quite suitable for full dress, in the hands of a French modiste.

Several of the new fabrics and trimmings resemble the scales of fish, whether it be the mother-of-pearl embroidery, or the China crêpe, which is now crinkled in a curious way, or the stuffs with which gold, silver, and steel are interwrought.

For ordinary dinner wear the canvas grenadines are good-looking and durable, or rather an improvement on these—the Mexicaine grenadines, which consist of open checks, or stripes and checks. These can be trimmed with lace or plaitings of the material and silk intermixed. A broad-striped velvet-barred grenadine is made specially to wear over velvet.

The dress of the present day is decidedly picturesque; and among other indications that we borrow not a little from the fashions of bygone ages, are the girdles intended to be worn round the hips, which are being introduced. They are mostly made of silver or gold rings, with velvet run through them. The sleeves, too, in which the beauties of Charles IX. disported themselves are in vogue now, with high round epaulettes above the shoulder; and the Medicis style of bodice, with the slightly pointed waist, surrounded with a puffing of the material and loops of ribbon, farther carries out the resemblance.

There has been a great deal of bathing along our coast this autumn, and the fair bathers have not profited as much as they might have done by a French novelty which has proved such a boon to Frenchwomen—viz., the large round cloaks made of Turkish towelling, and trimmed with similar fringe, which completely envelope the figure on leaving the water. They have a graceful effect, and moreover are sensible and serviceable.

A word or two as to waterproof cloaks. There seems a greater tendency than heretofore in women's autumn habiliments to adopt masculine fashions, and regular macintosh cloaks with check linings have been prepared for ladies. Tweed and cloth waterproofs are now made like Ulsters, confined or not at the waist by a band, as the wearer pleases, and with a movable hood in the form of a monk's cowl at the neck. Some have triple capes *à la cocher*, and they all have the advantage of being cosy and comfortable.

Most of the undyed cloth suits now so fashionable are made with knickerbockers to match; and, not content with this, women are adopting the sort of caps which cricketers wear, only instead of one flap they have two, one over the face and one over the hair at the back.

In tailor-made garments the English decidedly carry off the palm, but the French contrive to convert these somewhat ungraceful articles of apparel into graceful ones. "Le Conspireur," as it is called, for instance, is a dress invented for rainy weather, made of grey alpaca, with four capes corded with black silk, fastening in front with buttons; and the "Capote Soldat," for similar occasions, is a mantle made of chamois-grey Vicuyna cloth, cut like a man's coat, and the redingote made of a bluish-grey cloth which does not spot with the rain. Frenchwomen, however, show a preference for handsome mantles made of waterproofed cloth, trimmed with braid, having large pockets at the side.

This is the sort of under-linen being worn now in Paris: under-skirts of pink or blue cashmere trimmed with Valenciennes lace; beneath, cambric skirts flounced to the waist, with a small tournure just large enough to raise the basque of the dress. Foulard is

much used for dressing-gowns, and then it is often bedizened with costly lace; but more than that, foulard is called into play for knickerbockers, petticoats, and covers for the corsets made to match, and both trimmed with lace, Valenciennes having the preference. Petticoats are made with bands in the front, and only drawing-strings at the back, and no pluck-hole, the frill of lace being added to the hem. All under-linen is hand-made, and no money is spared in the embroidery and lace used in making.

Stockings are generally woven in three colours: the foot of one plain colour, with the instep striped, and the leg of another colour, the clocks being marvels of the embroideress's art. Stockings to match the dress are generally sent home by the dressmaker.

There is a little change in boots, insomuch that they are made far higher up the ankle, and dark green and drab cloth are the most fashionable materials.

There is quite a classic simplicity in the present style of hair-dressing, false tresses apparently being generally discarded. Parisians wear the hair quite low in the neck, and some of our English belles have appeared with the whole of the hair loosely twisted at the nape of the neck, a style which it will take some time to accustom ourselves to admire.

As a guide to what to wear, the following is an account of some exquisite toilettes worn at a recent gathering of the *beau monde* by some of the best-dressed Englishwomen of the day, by which you will be able to see how far our *élégantes* adopt *les modes parisiennes*.

A white woollen dress made with plaitings, and a tablier trimmed with yak lace, the colour of the material; cream-coloured gloves, and a black straw bonnet trimmed with black velvet and cherries. A white-striped grenadine, the bodice having stripes of narrow black velvet in a kind of V-shape over it, worn with a black bonnet and forget-me-nots. A white silk with plaitings of book-muslin and Valenciennes lace, the front breadth trimmed with froncé robings up the front. A silver band round the waist, from which depended a velvet bag with monogram. Chip bonnet and white ostrich feathers outside, a white poppy and daisies under the brim. Parasol with Dresden china handle. An Ophelia velvet flounced skirt and sleeves; the tunic of white cashmere, trimmed with Ophelia feathers; the bodice velvet, with a bib of cashmere, defined with feather trimming; the bonnet Ophelia velvet, feathers, and Valenciennes lace.

A pale coral silk skirt, with a box-plaited flounce round the edge, and *coulissé* (viz., drawn like the bonnets used to be) coral up the centre of the front, a band of pale blue *damassé* silk on either side; the cuirass was coral in the centre, and blue on either side.

A pale straw-coloured silk elaborately trimmed with brown velvet and steel. A brown straw hat worn on the side of the head, and steel necklet and ornaments. A pale shade of blue, the skirt cashmere with plaitings of silk, the tablier and bodices of cashmere striped all over with perpendicular rows of silver braid; a bunch of artificial buttercups in the belt at one side.

## CHIT-CHAT ON DRESS.

BY OUR PARIS CORRESPONDENT.



**I**N November preparations for winter-dresses have to be set about in earnest. London fogs and shortened days leave no doubt in our minds that the year is waning, and the leafless trees in the

country tell the same sad tale. Active measures have been taken both in Paris and London to meet the requirements of those many thousands of womankind whose preponderance, as far as numbers are concerned, is brought so forcibly forward by the public press. To judge however from what is whispered in Parisian *ateliers* and London shops, they are by no means all poor and needy, and as far as dress is concerned, a great capacity for spending money is developed among them.

The winter fashions are all costly and extravagant, more especially in the matter of silks.

Every dress is to be made either of two colours or of two manufactures of material, plain silk being principally used as a trimming or adjunct to the elaborate brocades and figured velvets, which have been revived from those periods of French history when the most costly fabrics were in vogue.

A novelty of the season is the introduction of a material having a woollen ground and a rich arabesque design all over in satin brocade. It requires previous knowledge and a pretty close scrutiny to tell that it is not all silk, and the effect is almost, if not quite, as rich; but it is not economical, half-a-guinea a yard being about its lowest price, only a few shillings cheaper than the heavy silk brocades, which are most *à la mode*.

These materials, rich and handsome as they are, much resemble the silk and woollen damasks hitherto used for furniture, curtains, and similar purposes. This more especially applies to the *velours frappé*, or embossed velvet, which closely resembles the Utrecht velvet principally used to cover chairs and sofas.

The fashionable materials of this expensive class for the winter and autumn of 1875 may be briefly described as follows:—

*Brocaded Velvets*—the groundwork satin, the bro-

cade velvet, generally of the same tone as the groundwork.

*Silk Brocades*, such as *Brocattelle*, which has a "brilliantine" ground—a term applied to a small interwoven figure, not unlike the cotton material of that name, and which literally translated from the French means "diamond-like." This has a satin brocade all over it, in a large design, and of a darker shade than the ground.

*Venetian Soutache*, another rich brocaded silk, the ground and brocade being of the same colours, while sometimes the brocade is bordered with a narrow line of a contrasting colour, like braid—hence its name.

*Broderie Laine*, and other woollen materials of the same class, covered with satin brocade; they are very thick and rich.

*Matelassé*, such as "armure matelassé" and "matelassé camieu," which are of the same nature as the matelassé so fashionable last year. They are, of course, too thick for draping, so are used with plain silks for trimming, and for plain tunics and cuirasses. The novelty in them this season is, that the groundwork in most of them is "armuré," so called on account of its resemblance to plates of armour; and the patterns, instead of being like quiltings, in diamonds and floriated designs, are decided brocades.

*Natté*, which is so called because the weaving resembles plaiting, is something of the nature of matelassé, only not so thick in texture. The surface exactly resembles a coarse plait, and in the new "natté laine" the mixture of silk and wool is as deftly carried out as in the "broderie laine." The foundation is wool, of a light neutral tint, and on this are interwoven lines of two other shades of the same colour and another contrasting colour.

Lastly, *Satin Japonais*, which closely resembles the Chinese figured satin imported from that country. It is very soft, and the brocaded pattern on it is of the same running design which is associated with the Oriental fabric.

Every year articles and patterns of Oriental make gain favour with us, and every year European trade with China, Japan, and India is being enlarged. Labour is so cheap in the East that they can produce there much of their merchandise at half the price we can. We see this more especially in embroideries. London and Paris shops are inundated with Chinese neckerchiefs and scarves, of white soft silk, richly embroidered, both sides alike. John Chinaman is mightily neat in his handiworks. He sits mostly in the open air, on a bamboo stool, with the frame set up before him, not alone, but with a compatriot on the other side of the frame, who receives the needle as he passes it through, and returns it, having made a stitch; and by means of very long needlefuls and hollow needles he is able to produce the two sides of his work equally neat and presentable.

All these Chinese embroideries will be worn this

winter; and another importation are plain white silk hem-stitched pocket-handkerchiefs, for ladies' use. They are only a little dearer than linen ones, and in the catch-cold climate of England are likely to be appreciated for their exceeding softness.

But to return to the materials. Striped silks are coming into fashion again, yet these are arranged in such a way that they might be of any other pattern, as the uniformity of the lines is quite done away with. A description of a fashionable Paris striped silk dress will best illustrate this. The skirt, which is plain "prune de Monsieur," or plum-colour, is bordered with a plaiting, joined horizontally across the centre, the lower half being of the striped silk, which has a prune ground, and blue, maize, and prune satin stripes (these plaitings joined in the centre are a novel feature in this year's fashions). It has a froncé or gathered heading and a row of netted prune fringe above. Across the front there is a draperie edged with similar fringe, with the stripes running horizontally; while at the sides are long quilles, with the stripes falling perpendicularly; these are also bordered with netted fringe, and they unite at the back in a point on the cross, so that there the stripes form chevrons, while a plissé sash, cut on the cross again, interrupts the uniformity of the stripes, as far as the back of the dress is concerned. The bodice has plain prune sleeves and striped cuffs, and the basque of the bodice, which is very deep at the back, is rounded in front, and instead of buttoning down the centre, it fastens with a hook on one side.

The mode of making silk dresses is certainly changing, but truth to tell, every great house in Paris appears to adopt a style of its own, which leads to an immense diversity in *les modes*. The skirts in Paris are demi-trains, too long for holding up with any comfort, more especially as they are narrower and even more tied back than a few months since. This is much to be deplored, for the ordinary run of English women reproduce all these fashions in an exaggerated form, burlesque them in fact, omitting just those delicate French touches which a Parisian understands so well, and which omitted mars the whole, just as some chef's *plat*, copied by unskilled hands, lacks some nicety of mixing or flavouring, which is its real charm.

Seeing then that we blindly but neither artistically nor faithfully follow French fashions, it is depressing to think what vagaries of diminished drapery may be seen in the London streets this winter. As it is, some of the Girls-of-the-period at fashionable watering-places during the autumn have effected a classical simplicity, which has led to a more liberal display of the human form divine than altogether accords with modern prejudices.

Sleeves are made so tight and narrow that the hand can scarcely pass through them; they form generally a contrast to the bodice, the cuff only matching it. One of the newest shapes, however, describes a bell to the elbow, with a bow at the bend of the arm, and tight to the wrist.

Waistbands, in silk to match the dress, in ribbon,

and also in metal and leather, are much worn with basque bodices. Cuirasses are still the rage in Paris, and for day wear they are made so very long, that in the front they seem half the length of the skirt. As a rule, none of the new basques are cut up under the arm, but are all in one, though the back is frequently longer than the front. Many of the bodices have no side-pieces at the back, but are cut in four straight pieces from the shoulder and neck, according to the fashion introduced this spring. Waistcoats forming a contrast to the rest of the bodice are worn, and are often made inordinately long in the basque. Straight collars round the throat, and pieces of silk of a contrasting shade or plain and brocade laid on the bodices, are another form of trimming. Violin backs—viz., contrasting pieces inserted—are still much worn.

Great attention is being paid to buttons, which appear on the front of bodices, and on the sleeveless jackets that are now made to match the dresses, for out-door wear. Such buttons are most of them copied from the antique, in crystal, steel, and gold.

Tunics are worn in all forms, some so long that no under-skirt is necessary, and in all cases they are draped; indeed, dresses now are made to have the appearance of swathing the figure in a mass of undefined folds, and Parisian dresses rarely if ever have any positive form of tunic which could be described at a glance; it disappears into the plait at the back, or opens in front over draperies, or as a mere scarf carried diagonally across the front. A French dress to be perfect must be indescribable, with fold over fold, plaiting over plaiting, drapery over drapery. As a rule, the trimmings are merely bias bands or plissés, the brocade and plain silk or the striped and plain silk blending throughout; but sometimes fringe is added, and this has invariably a netted heading, sometimes with Spanish balls attached. This Spanish fringe is a marked novelty in winter fashions, indeed some of the tunics covering the front of the dress are made entirely of netted silk, with silk tufts and balls at intervals.

Skirts are all made with a double box-plait at the back, and are often arranged with a narrow train, called the "Abbess," as it is supposed to be a reproduction of the make of the robe of a *religieuse*; bows and buttons are frequently carried down the centre of the box-plait. There should be seven breadths in the new dress skirts, the front breadth sewn on plain to the band, the sides in small plaits.

Felt and velvet bonnets of the "paysanne" or spoon form, trimmed with feathers, ribbon, and velvet, are the most generally adopted style for the winter.

Mantles will have either short basques, as in tight-fitting braided cloth jackets, or be loose and very long. Seal-skin jackets are being quite superseded by fur-lined black silk ones, either the shape introduced last year—viz., long circulars with silver clasps—or a revival of the old-fashioned double cape, reminding one of a common councilman's robe. Cloth cloaks are of a shape which combines the paletôt and Dolman, barely defining the figure, and very long, the arm coming through a cape-like trimming at the side; fur and braiding are both used upon them.