

## SOME HINTS ON ECONOMY IN DRESS.



ONE of the most difficult problems of the day, especially for ladies, is how to dress well without spending too much money: how to make the best appearance at the least cost. The necessary fabrics grow dearer instead of cheaper, and the style of dress has, until very recently, involved such a multiplicity of flouncings, kiltings, &c., that a vast quantity of material has been required, and an extraordinary number of hours have been consumed in the making. Time is money with those who earn their money by dress-making as well as by any other business, and of course this has added considerably to the cost. It is to be hoped, however, that with the advent of

“housemaid,” or, as we used to say, plain skirts, an era of comparatively modest expenditure has set in, as they can certainly be completed in far less time, and with half the labour required by their more ornate predecessors.

The maxim that in dress “the best is the cheapest” is so old as to be almost trite, but it is nevertheless quite true. Dark stuffs, however, need to be of better quality than light ones. A very good rule for those ladies who are obliged to study economy is to confine themselves to one or two colours, as, for instance, black or blue, or brown, and white, so that one set of ribbons, waistbands, &c., and one hat or bonnet, may be worn with two or more dresses. It is almost *de rigueur* for every one to possess a black costume, and for every young person to have a white one, which is always new and fresh after being washed or cleaned. Good taste and a few dainty etceteras will suggest a good many changes and combinations even with only these two dresses, and if to them can be added a dark and a light brown or blue, the semblance of a tolerably extensive wardrobe can be managed. A tailor-made navy blue serge, with jacket bodice and waistcoat, is the best possible dress that any lady can wear for walking during the greater part of the year, and may be varied with one or two different waistcoats. The three young Princesses of Wales have recently had such costumes made for them, and their royal mother frequently wears something similar.

A most important point in keeping an out-door dress presentable for a very long time is being careful not to wear it in-doors more than can possibly be helped. If each dress is kept ready to wear, with

frilling in neck and sleeves, or collar and cuffs, fastened in their right places, very few minutes need be occupied in changing; and though it may with many be necessary to put on a good walking-dress at breakfast-time and wear it till night-fall, the custom of exchanging it for something lighter for the evening is not only civilised, but economical. An old velvet or velveteen is most valuable for this purpose throughout the winter, as none of its imperfections, short of actual holes, are visible by gas or candle-light, and a lace fichu, and something of the same nature at the wrists, or, better still, the sleeves cut short at the elbow, and finished off with a deep piece of lace, always make it look elegant and dressy. And by way of a word to the wise, here is a suggestion for those who cannot afford velvet, and shun velveteen as being heavy and clinging. Save all remnants of silk dresses, and have the velveteen lined with them. It will look as good again, and will slip on and off with the greatest ease, and always feel lissome and pleasant in wearing. For a thinner dress there is nothing like a good black net bodice and tunic worn over an old silk or satin skirt. It can be freshened up by ribbons of various colours, and is wonderfully tough and serviceable. Grenadine wears so quickly under the arms that, though very pretty and soft, it has disadvantages well-nigh insuperable where the purse is not well furnished.

A great deal of economy may be practised in minor matters, though it sometimes involves some extra outlay in the first instance. The frilling that has long been so popular costs a great deal of money, and though it keeps clean for several days, is utterly useless when dirty. A few yards of real lace—Maltese, English pillow, Torchon, or Valenciennes—bears washing a great many times (always supposing that it is done at home by a careful hand), does not show the mending which at length becomes inevitable, and when quilled into the dress, with a strong white thread catching the pleats at the top to keep them in place, is more becoming, and in the long run cheaper than any frilling.

Out-door boots and shoes should never be worn in the house; nothing tends to make them rusty and shabby so rapidly as this bad practice, and the continual friction of the hem of the dress wears out the upper leather. Slippers are the prettiest and most economical for in-door wear, because they can be so easily renewed. For this purpose, satin or prunella slippers should be chosen in the first instance, and when the tops are worn out, any one with nimble fingers and a rather long needle can re-cover them with small pieces of black satin, velvet, or velveteen, fastening it down close to the sole with rather large hemming stitches, binding the opening with a bit of crossway silk or ribbon, and making all smart with a ribbon or satin bow on the instep. The number of times that a pair of slippers can be made to undergo this process before the soles are demolished would hardly be believed by any one who has not tried it, and

even the sole lasts as long again as it would otherwise do if a cork one is used inside it.

Gloves, again, are most expensive items, and yet the outlay for them may be considerably reduced by a little care. Good kid gloves must be sparingly used by the economically-minded, watched at the tips of the fingers, so that the first stitch that gives way may be repaired, and always pulled out when taken off, instead of being turned inside one another and made into a little ball. None but the best are worth buying, and light ones will clean once or twice, though it is next to impossible to perform this operation at home. With *Suède* gloves the case is quite different; the light undyed colours soil far sooner than they wear out, and it is advisable to have a pair of boxwood hands of the right size on which to wash and dry them. The mixture for the purpose should be made of white curd soap cut up small, and boiled in a little milk, and the dirty gloves should be well rubbed and cleaned with a little bit of flannel dipped in it. After being sponged over with warm—*not* hot—water, to remove this, they should be wiped with a towel, and left on the boxwood stretchers until quite dry.

The great trouble with silk gloves is the tendency of the finger-tips to wear rapidly into holes, and the very best way of avoiding it is to put a tiny bit of cotton wool or wadding into the extreme end of each finger. Some people, before beginning to wear them, tack a tiny bit of an old glove in, but the stitches, however carefully done, have an unpleasant trick of showing, and the wool is far preferable.

Those who wear silk handkerchiefs round the neck in cold weather will find pale pink the best colour,

because it will bear washing, and always look new and good afterwards. The same can hardly be said of any other tint, for though a light blue will sometimes stand soap and water, it is but rarely, and white handkerchiefs, turn yellow.

Winter coats, cloaks, and mantles are expensive articles, and it is true economy to buy them very good, but not of any striking pattern or colour. A plaid coat or Newmarket will soon look remarkable, but one of plain cloth may be worn year after year, and look well to the last. A cashmere or smooth cloth mantle, when shabby, may be taken to pieces, covered with a silk or broché, which, though thin by itself, looks good when it has so substantial a lining, put together again and re-trimmed, and will be to all appearance new and handsome at a very small outlay.

Though last, not least, the jersey bodices may be purchased with immense advantage by all women who are neither old nor stout. They are made now in many colours and varieties, and with a well-hung plain skirt to match, a costume is complete without much expense in dressmaking, or if the wearer be clever enough to make her own *jupe*, without any.

The foregoing are only a few hints on economy in dress, but most people who are obliged to practise it, and wish to do so with a good grace, will call to their aid "Messrs. Hook, Crook & Co."—as a clever woman once called her domestic devices—and will have reason to rejoice over numerous pence and shillings saved, and pounds either laid by for rainy days, or spent on objects of more intrinsic importance than those which our French neighbours call by the generic name of *chiffons*.

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## A NEW ORDER OF ODDFELLOWS.

### II.—THAT VERY INTELLIGENT POLICE OFFICER.



"Meyes! what a splendid perlice-man you would make, Sammy!" said Mr. Morgan to his son. "Why, you've actually catched that there rat as I've bin a-trying for more'n a year! Here's sixpence for yer, Sammy."

That settled it—either the praise or the sixpence. From that day Sammy Morgan made up his mind to be a policeman. And now he was to be seen at every "Petty Sessions" held in the place where he lived, listening with open mouth to the cases that came before the magistrates, and paying particular attention to the evidence given by the policemen in their several cases.

It was perhaps a fortunate thing for our hero that the magistrates seldom held a sitting in that village; otherwise his time would have been taken up to the disadvantage of his education. Only once a month was justice made a martyr of in that particular spot, and once a month Sammy's Saturday holiday was spent in the manner most agreeable to his soul.

Time, which brings most things to most men, brought the great desire of his life to Sammy. By great good fortune his first remove was to his native village, where we may see him in all his full-blown pride—P.C. Z 1. For a little time, but only a very little time, his old friends and neighbours, who had known him from his babyhood, called him Sammy. He gave them to understand that this kind of trifling with the majesty of the law would not do. He was either "Constable," at your service, or Mr. Samuel Morgan, still more at your service. And his services were often required. It is generally held by their neighbours that the Welsh are a very moral people, or, perhaps I had better say, a very law-abiding people, and this is set down to something that runs in the blood. May it not, also, in some measure be due to the abilities of their policemen? P.C. Z 1's birthplace was a rather important village, called Brew, on the English borders. This was the scene of his most brilliant exploits. Any man, it is said, who is proud of his profession is sure to shine in it. Undoubtedly P.C. Z 1 shone. His first case of any