

THE CARE OF ONE'S CLOTHES.

BY JOSEPHA CRANE.



MUCH is now written and said concerning dress and clothing generally. Where to buy good materials or clothes ready made, and how to make, mend and when to wear them. But any close observer of dress cannot have failed to note that where one girl who has but a small allowance for dress will always be well turned out on all and every occasion, be it at home or abroad, another who has double or quadruple the amount to spend often looks shabby, her clothes, though well made, have no freshness about them, and there are various small details, too numerous to name, which are not carefully attended to, or else are altogether absent. This latter state of things is often accounted for by want of care, far more than lack of money, and consequently it has occurred to me to give a few hints to girls on the subject.

It is, let me say in starting, an important one. If you are told in Holy Writ to "eat and drink to the glory of God," you can most assuredly dress so as to honour or dishonour, please or displease Him. You can bring principle into the small matter of selecting a dress or hat, the way you wear them and the care with which you keep them. As the beautiful works of Almighty God praise Him, so can you, by wearing what is pretty, becoming, and artistic, if that is consonant with your means, and it nearly always is so. It is more a matter of taste than money.

And a well-dressed woman is certainly a pleasanter object to contemplate than an ill-dressed one, consequently to look nice may come under the head of duty to your neighbour as well as yourself. It is to some people most irritating and annoying to see colours worn together that do not harmonise, clothes that in no respect follow the line of beauty, and small accessories untidy or absent; and even if such are not irritated it is decidedly better altogether to be pleasant to look at. When you are yourselves well and tidily clothed, unconsciously you are in a sweeter temper, less shy—if such is your affliction—and more at your ease.

Granting this, then, to be the case, that you aim at pretty and good dressing, let us see how you can be helped in your laudable endeavour, by a few suggestions that may be fresh to you or may prove to be the germ of others.

The underclothing of a woman should always be neat and orderly and as pretty as she can afford to have it. I may hit the conscience of some reader when I remark that I have been over and over again shocked and astonished by the state of the undergarments worn by those who were externally neatly and well-dressed. A girl who would not go out with a missing button on shoe or glove, who would be unhappy if her collar was not immaculate and her dress in perfect order, will often, when shorn of these, reveal a very opposite state of things. Torn and unmended under-

linen, or that has the lace or embroidery *in holes*, or coming off in parts; buttons hanging by a thread, or their place taken by a pin, frayed edges of skirts, stockings full of holes, and sometimes—this is true, though unpleasant to name—many of the articles themselves worn when more soiled than perfect cleanliness permits; all this I have seen repeatedly, where carelessness and not great poverty was the obvious cause.

All this is extremely unbecoming and objectionable, and whether it be a young duchess, whose delicate clothing is adorned with the finest lace, or the poor cottager or shop girl, who has cheap coarse things made of unbleached calico, all should be clean and in order.

To attain this end get good clothing in the first instance. Ready-made underclothing, the cheapness of which is often the result of the sweating system, can rarely be rightfully encouraged. It is better to have a small stock of underclothing, and renew it as it wears out, than to buy a great deal at once. Always incline to good material and little trimming, rather than common stuff with loads of cheap embroidery and lace that will stand but few visits to the laundry and always looks the rubbish that it is.

Each week as the clothes return from the wash you should go over them carefully, giving them the stitch in time which is proverbially said to "save nine."

Some people, when they notice a hole or anything needing repair, stuff the article into a drawer, and when several have accumulated spend some time in mending. This, however, is not the better plan, and if you have not a large stock of things the temptation to wear them unmended is very great.

If buttons are worn out, remove them altogether. Linen buttons are very inexpensive, and some new buttons neatly sewn on will freshen the appearance of the article to which they belong.

All woollen and merino vests, etc., should be carefully overlooked after each washing, as a very tiny hole, scarcely larger than the head of a pin, will soon spread if not mended at once. With care you can make these comparatively expensive items of your wardrobe last a very long time.

When you have mended the freshly-washed linen, etc., place each article underneath those in your drawer; this plan ensures all being worn equally in turn.

A girl who has the good desire to look nice and be neat is often vexed in her soul by the rapidity with which her dresses wear out, particularly if her purse is not replenished quarterly with equal quickness. If girls are not very rich I always advocate the possession of a few, rather than many, dresses, etc., as these can be worn while in fashion, or at least not very conspicuously out of it; and for all reasons it is a better plan than to have a great many half-worn articles of attire.

But you who grieve over the rapid wearing out of these, your few dresses, etc., can take heart, as well as

take the hints here given. There are several methods by which your clothes can be made to last much longer and look well longer, if you will but adopt them.

When you come in from a walk or change your dress for any reason, or take it off when going to bed, you should carefully shake and brush it before laying it away or hanging it up. Serge dresses require this being done very much more, perhaps, than others, for they catch the dust, and the latter by no means improves their appearance. Braid should be well brushed and the folds of the dress opened and divested of fluff, dust, etc. You should often turn out the sleeves of your dress and brush them well, and when you do this you will be astonished to find how much dust accumulates there.

Look over your dresses often and renew the braid if it is beyond mending at the bottom, and place fresh trimming where it is needed. These small things add very much to the nice appearance of a dress and certainly preserve it a good deal. When the cuffs or edge of collar show signs of being threadbare, before actual holes come, if you turn in the edges and reline collar and cuffs with a little piece of silk, you will be astonished to find how fresh a look it gives to both. Fur on your jacket that needs a few stitches should never be left as it is. Of course mending fur is very tiresome, but you can do it more easily if you keep down the long hairs with a card, so as not to entangle the former in your thread, and to allow of your seeing where you place your needle; and also if the needle is what is called a "glover," used by glove makers in the making of gloves: these can be had at most drapers', and are useful for the sewing of leather or kid.

The very way in which you hang up your dresses will assist towards spoiling or preserving them. If you have a pretty evening dress that will not bear crushing, lay it carefully by itself in a long drawer or trunk. If you hang it up put a sheet round it so as carefully to exclude all dust and smuts. If you live in London or any large town the latter are enemies you must carefully guard against, as, particularly when accompanied by a foggy atmosphere, they wage war against delicate materials and pretty colours.

Always see that there are loops of braid or ribbon on all your dresses, cloaks, etc., etc., by which to hang them. Few things spoil these more than hanging them up by the band, or the dress itself.

In travelling fold your dresses as they are—not inside out—and lay them carefully on the tray of your box, or within your dress-basket. Very much harm can be done to your clothes by careless packing; and if, on the other hand, you carefully fold everything, smoothing frills down and observing the natural pleats of the article, the latter will bear its journey and be none the worse for it. Of course if you place heavy things, boots, books, etc., on delicate dresses, roll up what should be laid flat, and cram in too many things, your common sense will tell you that the probable result will be very unsatisfactory.

A very great deal can be done in the way of preserving your clothes by the expenditure of a little thought and a little time.

I never advocate untidiness or the wearing of soiled or ragged clothes at any hour of the day, but still it stands to reason that if you have a nice new dress and you wear it when it is not necessary that you should do so, you will soon rob it of its freshness. It is a very good rule, which, however, has, as all rules have, its exception, not to wear in the house that which you wear out of doors, not, at all events, while the costume for the latter purpose is new. I am not going to give you any advice about never sitting down in a good dress, because such is purely ridiculous, but I do say that a thoughtful girl will make her walking toilette last very much longer by removing it when she comes in than will the girl who wears it in the house continually. Many a dress, too, that is quite serviceable and nice for home wear, cannot quite stand the bright sunshine and the *evidence* of walking out in it, excepting in the country or garden.

Cotton dresses tumble, as well as soil, very quickly, but you will keep them fresh and nice for a considerable time if you do not wear them much or at all indoors. Keep your last year's cottons for the latter purpose during the hot weather and in winter retain an old dress—mind that it is neat and in good order—for wearing about the house and for sitting over the fire in, when all your dear bosom friends come to your sanctum for afternoon tea.

Even if rigid economy is not absolutely necessary to you, your dresses will look much better if this plan is adopted.

If you do any dusting in the morning, or help in the kitchen or bedrooms, wear a large apron, even over your old dress. Accidents may happen and dust is liable to come, and it is nicer and cleaner to think that the big holland apron which almost covers your skirt, with its bib which protects your bodice, can be sent to the wash. A pair of loose holland sleeves, with buttoned wrist-bands and elastic run into the top hem, are very useful. If you are an artist you will, of course, have a provision of both, for a dress that bears paint marks is not at all sightly.

For gardening, of course, it is the same, only here I would advise an apron capable of coming into contact with earth and damp, and consequently rough and strong.

Some people think that dressing for dinner or high tea, or whatever the evening repast may be, is a sign of extravagance and a wish to ape those whose establishments are large and whose means are ample. As a matter of fact this plan is a strictly economical one, and can be recommended to all who wish to take care of their clothes and make them last as long as possible.

It is a nice arrangement and one which adds considerably to the comfort as well as the appearance of the person who adopts it. Especially in winter a thick woollen dress, which has been worn half or all the day, is somewhat hot when the gas or lamps are lighted, a good fire is burning and curtains drawn to exclude all draught. It makes the dinner or tea table bright to see a *quasi* evening dress, and anything that makes home more cheerful is so much to the good. I have

used the word *quasi* advisedly. Of course, if you are well off and have a good establishment and late dinner, evening dress in accordance with your means will be worn by you as a matter of course. But if you are poor, or, at all events, have not large means and only a small establishment, it is, while advisable to wear another dress than a walking or house one for dinner, as distinctly not desirable to wear out old finery or have a smart dress. The latter is out of keeping with a simple *ménage*, and nothing looks so shabby-genteel as veteran evening dresses worn when on their last legs. If you wish, and are in duty bound to use up some party or dinner dresses in this way, take off some of the smartness and modify them for home use. Don't come down to cold mutton and boiled potatoes and rice pudding in the dress that did duty for the big crushes you went to last year, or the grand dinner parties at your rich relations. It is out of place and ridiculous.

But if you do not go out much into society, and consequently have no evening dresses, old or new, at your command, you still can dress for the evening by wearing an old summer dress as it is or arranged in any way you please. A dressy-looking blouse worn with old skirts is a good plan, or an old summer dress with the sleeves shortened to the elbow will often save your other clothes and look nice and bright.

Wearing your walking shoes and boots in the house is a bad plan and not a clean one at all. Care in the blacking and polishing generally, and sending your foot-gear to be repaired in time, will make it last very much longer than if you are careless. You should brush your hats and bonnets with a light brush after wearing and put them by carefully, having drawn all strings through your fingers.

Keep your clothes in separate drawers, etc., as much as possible, and do not tumble up ribbons, gloves, shoes, hair pins, hats and all kinds of things anyhow in any fashion. Nothing is so destructive of clothing as untidiness in this respect.

If you like to keep your ribbons, hats, and all your minor accessories of dress fresh and nice, you

should arrange your drawers accordingly. Keep your things in card-board boxes or cases, and line the bottom of your drawers with holland fastened at the corners with small tacks, which can be removed when you have the holland washed. Some people lay a little cotton-wool between it and the wood, and the *slight* padding thus effected is convenient, as some piece of daintiness can be pinned down and kept in place. Before closing these few hints I would say that one golden rule for the care of clothes is to know how and when to wear them, and another, equally golden, is to be possessed of those articles which serve to protect them.

By the first, I mean that you should suit your attire to time and place. If you go to the sea-side or on a country visit you will very speedily spoil those clothes which in a town would have lasted a considerable time. Dainty boots in fields, or worn on a country road or on the shore with sand and pebbles, will soon be ruined, and the pretty muslins and delicate cottons or *mousseline de laînes*, so charming for careful use, will soon be spoilt if you go out blackberrying in them, or take a boating expedition. Stout boots, dresses that will bear rough usage and a chance wetting, hats that will keep on in a gale, or not be useless for future wear if they encounter some evening mists—all these are necessary for the girl who wants to look properly dressed on all occasions and who wishes to save her better and smarter things. Nothing, hardly, is so ugly as draggled finery, and a hat with limp feathers and flowers, a discoloured costume, and delicate shoes all rent and out of shape, are all unseemly.

If you wish to be careful remember the second golden rule. Possess yourself of a mackintosh and umbrella, and use your common sense as to when you should arm yourselves with these.

These suggestions are by no means exhaustive, but they may lead some reader to practise that economy which shall result in a charming appearance under all circumstances, and a dainty and neat attire even upon very slender means. How much can be done by a little attention to the hints I have given, I will leave those who take them to discover for themselves.

THE YEAR'S JEWELS.

BY M. C. GILLINGTON.

PEARL : NOVEMBER.

Melancholy.

W^HILE moonshine drifts along the sea,
 Grey glimmering light like that in dreams ;
 Oh, who is this that walks by me,
 Wan as the wan moonbeams ?

All wet her long entangled curls,
 All wet with sea her garments cling,
 And round her neck a string of pearls
 Gleams like a ghostly thing.

" These are the tears the sea hath shed,
 But on my breast they turn to stone ;
 The wailing sea that mourns its dead
 In endless undertone.

" And these I gather all night long,
 In strange sea-places far below,
 Where the deep waves in surging song
 Murrur their secret woe !"