EDITOR'S TABLE.

EDITORIAL CHIT-CHAT.

Common Sense About the "Fashions."—An effort has been made, recently, in London, by certain artistic and literary persons, to revolutionize the "fashions," by substituting the ancient Greek costume for that worn at present. On this absurd proposition, Mrs. Oliphant, the popular novelist, has lately commented, with singular good sense. She shows, very clearly, that the change, for many reasons, is quite impossible. She also maintains, that, as there is no possibility of any revolution in dress, it is well to consider the possibilities of what we have. The fashion of close-fitting dresses, it is very plain, must have sprung first from special adaptation to the needs of the climate: and it has held sway through all secondary changes; while the long skirt falling to the feet, the original garment of all Northern women, is in itself one of the most reasonable and beautiful dresses that can be imagined. That it has been swelled out like a balloon, at one time, and more recently, tightened to "a single trouser," does not interfere with the general principle of the garment. The princess dress, the fashion of the day, could not be more agreeable and graceful in line. When made too tight, it is, of course, absurd; but this is the fault of the wearer, or of the maker, not of the design. The fashionable vagary of the day, the tightly tied-in skirt, which renders locomotion difficult, not only prevents the dress from being beautiful, but is objectionable on other accounts. But we must not be unjust; much uncomfortable appearance is appearance only, as Mrs. Oliphant affirms; and the sashes and drapery, tied in under the knees, seem to embarrass action much more than they do, and are really ugly rather than uncomfortable.

Now the true province of art in dress is to educate the eye to the full ugliness of all such seeming bonds, so that women may refrain from emphasizing those bonds, as many do, by outlines of what is called art-needlework, among other things. "As for the long skirt indoors, it is not a thing which ever will be abolished, in our opinion," says Mrs. Oliphant; "it is graceful and dignified in itself; it belongs to the fundamental idea of women's apparel, and possesses all the practical and symbolical qualities which are necessary to a noble and fine ideal of dress." Finally, she concludes, that, "it is far easier to rail at *la mode*, and accuse that capricious influence of all the insanities under the skies; easier, too, to talk of the Greek clyton, and imagine a causless and impossible revolution. But neither of these heroic devices will at all meet the difficulty; whereas, here is a much humbler one that will do so, if we choose to try it. A little trouble, a little patience, and good sense, where needs must, perhaps; (for the moment,) a vigorous pair of scissors to cut the knot of a ligature, and it will be found that the thing is done—not with any flourish of trumpets, indeed, or in a heroic manner, but sufficiently and well."

In a word, the conclusion to which Mrs. Oliphant comes is that which has always been maintained in these pages; it is, that the art of dressing well consists in knowing the prevailing fashions, and adapting them to your particular style. What suits one will not always look beautiful on another. There should be discrimination, the result of a cultivated taste. To deviate from the prevailing *mode* entirely is, on the other hand, a grave blunder; for anything odd makes a lady a laughing-stock, and to dress quite out of the fashion is, therefore, to be avoided.

A Word About Aprons.—School-room aprons in brown holland are made with pockets, a bib, and shoulder straps to cross and fasten at the back; red or white braid. Housekeepers' aprons are made long and turned up to form a deep pocket; this pocket is stitched in the centre, and so forms *two* pockets. One small pocket is placed in the centre above the deep ones, just where a pocket is on an ordinary apron. Colored braid should be stitched on. These are often called laidies' maids' aprons, and also ladies' gardening aprons, and are most useful. White muslin ones for morning house wear are very fashionable now, with a bib. They are generally made in spotted or figured muslin, with a deep hem all round, and a frill of patent Valenciennes lace. They are about thirty inches long and thirty inches wide, are gathered into a band, and have two square pockets. The bib is made separately, and sewn on, so that it can be removed at will. It is wider at the top than at the waist, and should be six inches high and about eight at the top, all edged with lace. As these aprons are wide, and require to be kept back well, wide strings of muslin or ribbon are sewn half-way down, and these tie over the dress. Sometimes the dress is arranged in a sort of little puff at the back, and the strings keep it up by means of a guarded pin, and tie below. These aprons can be made in silk (black satin with black lace being particularly fashionable just now), brocade (also much worn, often for five o'clock tea), or in white, thick, cross-bar muslin, or brown holland. Then there are lawn-tennis holland and crash aprons, with embroidered flowers on them, which are always popular. Those in navy-blue sheeting, with cornflowers, poppies, and corn worked on in crewels, are most effective. They are about ten or twelve inches long, and about eight or nine deep, and are made in the form of a large envelope, without the flap. They have a band attached to them, about one and a-half inches wide, which passes loosely round the waist, and buttons on one side. Gentlemen use them much, and they can be varied and made very attractive. No lining is required. They are quickly made, and can be merely bound with braid. Smaller muslin aprons, with a plaiting of pale blue or pink satin ribbon, about four inches wide, covered with a flounce of lace same width, look very pretty.

"Always the Authority."—The Rutland (Me.) Opinion says, "The finest fashion plate in the May magazines is furnished by Peterson, and no lady who has this magazine will appear dressed out of taste or fashion through any lack of an opportunity to acquaint herself with a knowledge of what is proper. Accompanying the brilliantly colored plates are full descriptions of the costumes with full details of the manner of construction. The Spring fashions are a matter of discussion, wherever two or three ladies are gathered together; and as Peterson is always authority on these matters, none of them should try to get along without it."

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