

BY MRS. LEONARD MARSHALL.

*Illustrated by A. SINCLAIR.*

It is not my intention to attempt to teach my readers how to dress on a certain yearly sum, but rather to inculcate those principles of true economy which can be practised alike by those who possess the slenderest or the best filled purses. One cannot lay down hard and fast rules, or even say that the dearest materials are the cheapest in the end, because within the last few years Madame La Mode has treated us to so many changes of front that we never know but that the dress bought to-day may be out of date to-morrow. The woman who really wishes to look well—I do not say well dressed—should, however, make certain sacrifices which I shall



A RENOVATED GOWN.

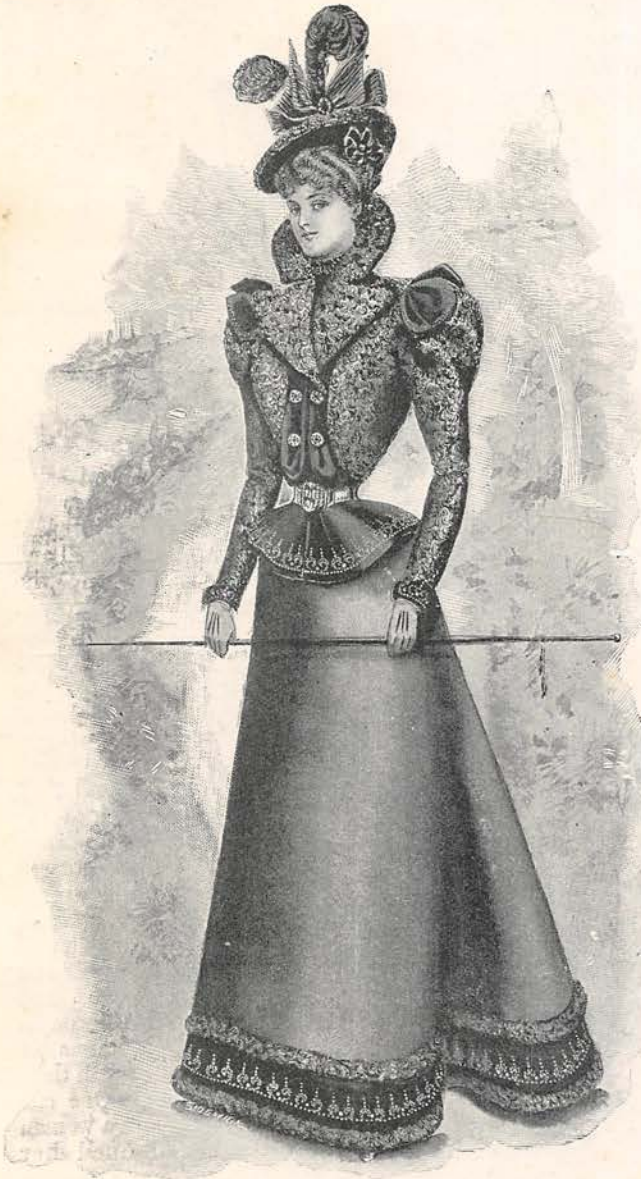
enumerate later on. There is a very palpable difference between the woman who looks well and the woman who looks well dressed. The latter case implies a certain want of harmony, an undue preponderance of the dress over the woman—the dress being only destined to serve as a frame. This state of things is obviously wrong.

Returning from the Continent, one is always struck with the fact that few Englishwomen are on terms of intimacy with their clothes. One can tell when a woman has donned her best gown, for she is rarely at home in it. Sooner than let this occur, I would recommend the rehearsal of new raiment until it has grown to be part and parcel of

ourselves. I am going to take it for granted that we are all vain, if it be vanity to look our best for the sake of those we love, and who love us. "A woman without vanity," said a French writer, "is a flower without

that position to abjure all fancy materials—checks, plaids, and Pekins, mixed colourings, or anything that tends to mark the fashions of a season difficult to renovate. Plain fabrics of the classical kind, which are never out of date, still leave us a considerable choice to select from. Irish poplin, broché, velvet, cashmere, cloth, or serge are amongst the most utilitarian. Perennial, quiet colours, such as grey in the pearl or silvery shades, biscuit, navy blue, sapphire, dark green, and prune are safe enough. Old rose, primrose, and violets are so becoming that it will be found difficult to better them. The first and all-important part of a woman's trousseau is not one but two good French corsets, made to order, which, with the two worn last season cleaned and retrimmed, should last out a year. The one to be worn with day dresses should be of black satin, coloured broché, or black broché with coloured flowerets. The evening corsets should be of much lighter and smaller build, in pink batiste or pale-hued satin. I strongly recommend having both under and over petticoats made at home. The petticoats are no small item of expense, for a well-dressed woman requires a best silk petticoat, last year's renovated for second best, a smart rainy weather petticoat, and a light silk one for dinner dresses, etc. The ready-made jupon I have always found a delusion and a snare. It is skimpy, ill-fitting, and the silk cuts in no time; moreover, it lacks originality, through being made by the gross. The best way is to find out a good French skirt hand, and let her make one's petticoats in her leisure hours. The plan of

having a worker by the day about two days a week is a boon to women who cannot keep a maid. If she is a Frenchwoman she will turn her hand to anything—ironing laces, washing them in weak tea to give them the desired shades, and trimming up a hat if



A FASHIONABLE WINTER COSTUME.

perfume!" I go further, and declare that no woman is devoid of some sort of vanity, or above loving purple and fine linen.

Touching the stern fact that women with a moderate dress allowance must give up not a little, I will advise my readers who are in

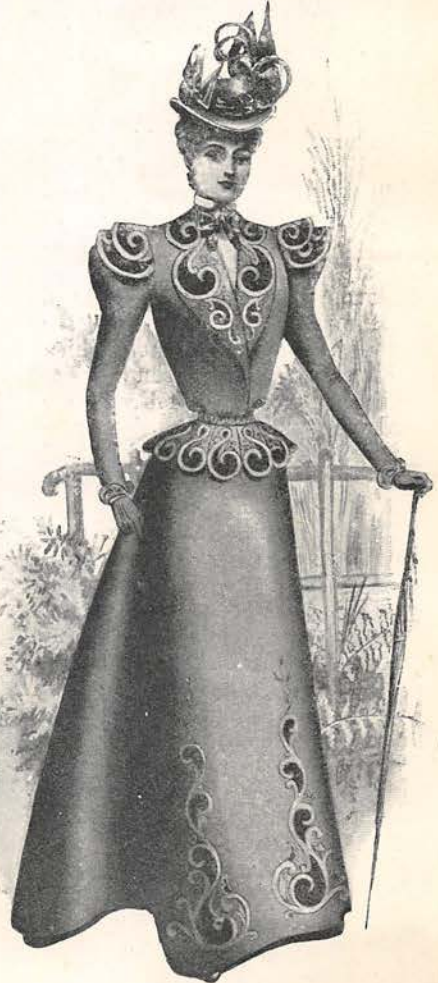


A DAINTY TEA GOWN.

required. Thus our clothes are kept in repair, lasting twice as long as they would if uncared for. Indeed, I cannot insist too much on the point that if the freshness of wearing apparel is to be preserved, great care must be exercised in putting away dresses. A small, dark room can be used for this purpose, and all the white materials should be kept in blue tissue paper to prevent their turning yellow. Good materials do not pay for themselves, as was their wont, because fashions alter so quickly that we care not to be burthened with a satin that "stands alone" if the cut of the dress marks it as being six months old. Reserve the rich fabrics for panels, front breadths, or bodice trimmings. Two dressmakers are necessary, one the *petite couturière*, who will deign to take the ladies' own materials and even renovate if desirable; and the *artiste*, who makes one or two of the best dresses of your wardrobe every year. These will give the latest cut, which dressmaker number two should be skilful enough to copy.

It is wise, when purchasing a dress length, always to include two yards more than is necessary; hence my horror of "robes," which the shops press upon one so energetically. Armed with the extra quantity, we can easily renovate the dress next year, and completely transform its appearance.

I have endeavoured to make the sketches given in this article illustrate my theories of economy, and take it for granted that dressmaker number one has condescended to utilise an old-fashioned Persian lamb mantle to build a *chef d'œuvre*. Thus the costume on page 260, which is of Aubergine satin cloth, boasts of a vest, collar, revers, and sleeves of astrachan. The blouse bodice is of velvet, embroidered in fine jet and steel, and fan-shaped pieces of velvet form the epaulettes. The skirt of cloth has a band of embroidered velvet



A TAILOR-BUILT COSTUME.



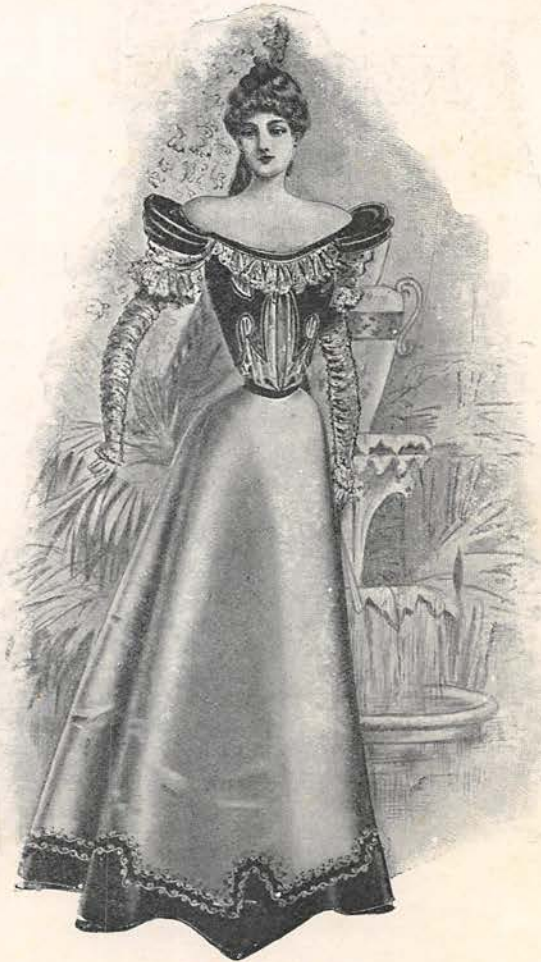
A PRETTY BLOUSE.

framed by two bands of astrachan at the hem. The *lure* of this toilette is mainly centred in the belt of oxidised flexible silver galoon, fastened with barettes and buckle of Parisian diamonds. The four buttons are artistic gems of steel and diamonds, made to order from a special pattern; and herein lies the note of individuality without which no dress, however rich, can be quite perfect. The skirt and basque are lined with that perfect shade of rose seen inside some Spanish melons, and the lovely note of colour is discreetly repeated in the hat.

The next thing we have to consider is the renovation of a dress made early last spring; but as it was then a best dress, there is not much to be done to the skirt. It must fit closer to the hips, and have additional silk *frou-frou* of a deeper shade, as it is safer not to attempt matching. The sleeves will be reduced to their present normal proportions, and cleverly lengthened by ruffles of lace. The collar has needed looking after, and a ribbon sash and full blouse slightly pouched in front completes the sum of alterations. As to the lovely green velvet bolero embroidered in gold, emeralds, diamonds, and turquoise, if it was deemed a little extravagant in

price at the time, it has at least given satisfaction, as it is as new in style and freshness as ever.

My readers will observe that the black satin skirt is a stock one, to be worn with other blouses or theatre jackets, just as the bolero may be worn over blouses of cream, pink, pale blue, or lemon chiffon, thus falling into the useful category of what may be termed, for want of a better word, "combination dresses." A tea gown should suggest sumptuous repose, restful harmonies of tone and colour. It is the delicious *deshabillé* of a pretty woman, who has taken off her armour to rest amongst the downy cushions of her sofa by her "ain fireside." The famous Madame Récamier's portrait, in her simple white gown, reclining on her stiff-backed Empire couch, manages, despite the incongruity of her surroundings, to convey



A NEW BALL DRESS.

the expression of feeling I am endeavouring to describe. Her pose, attitude, and expression tell you more than pen can write. We have greater advantages with our lavish use of flowing draperies, and should know how to profit by it. The sketch of a tea gown must be left, as to colour, to the taste of the readers; but I would fain suggest white, bleu-mourant, the restful delicacy of céladon greens, or the pinky mauve of an orchid, allied to deeper hues of velvet and dainty broderies of mixed gold and silver. Surahs, crêpe-de-chines, chiffon, mousseline de soie, and supple satins are amongst the most suitable materials that can be used. Irish poplin is also possible; but I would resolutely taboo moiré, velours, or any hard surfaces.

Turning my attention to the tailor-built costumes, I must proclaim the triumph of English work. I have seen dresses made by the best houses in Berlin and Vienna, and am convinced that nothing can compete with our English tailor-made costume. Severity, which was one of the characteristics, has departed this season, and tailors have kept up with the times, giving us the most perfect designs of scroll-work in appliqué velvet, braiding, etc., as illustrated in our tailor-made suit, in fine "Peau de Daim" cloth of golden brown, with appliqués of a lighter shade and a centre of brown velvet. The style is, if a

little elaborate in one way, severe enough in the matter of shirt, collar, and tie. Last year's tailor-made dress has derived benefit from the fact that additional cloth had been purchased with it in case of need, for a basque has been added with an improved scalloped collar. The basque and bolero have also been fully braided, transforming the whole into a very presentable and elegant suit.



A HANDSOME OPERA MANTLE.

A perfect ball-gown is rare indeed. The woman who looks well in her severe masculine walking or bicycling attire is often disappointing in a ball dress, as the great amount of exercise women now take makes full dress an uncomfortable incongruity. They have put on the frock anyhow, and are conscious that between Madame La Fleure's productions and themselves there is a gulf, a hiatus they cannot bridge over. Then, again, women with lovely arms deplore the present fashion of long sleeves, but they should be sensible enough not to wear them and hide from the world

one of woman's rarest charms. For those who have thin arms, the long, transparent sleeves, provided they are made of white material, are thrice welcome. The ball dress I have had sketched is on the lines of Worth's latest canons. The skirt of oyster-white satin antique is bordered by a curious horse-shoe band of black velvet, headed with a very lovely *passementerie* of gold, silver,



A SMART WALKING COSTUME.

of velvet. A delicate tracery of silver and gold, studded with diamonds and black pearls, outlines the top of the bodice.

A ball dress can only be economical under two conditions: it must be black or white. Total black I consider fatal to women past thirty; white is not always feasible, and is sometimes a little trying; therefore I have endeavoured to combine the two. Silk skirts can always serve as foundations to summer frocks, and next winter generally sees them transformed into petticoats, so that a good satin antique is by no means a useless purchase. I have combined the cycling costume so that it can be worn for skating; if a particular skirt is chosen, we can double the skirts. The material is cloth—colour is a matter of choice, but personally I incline to Indian red, or a rich Burgundy, or claret colour. The comfortable little bodice is double-breasted, with rounded revers of skunk or other fur. Two shoulder-pieces give the fashionable wide look to the figure. These are slightly full, the fur being very lightly gathered. The small Swiss-shaped belt is in leather or suède, embroidered in gold and steel. The sleeves are also edged with a band of fur, and the high collar is heart-shaped, narrowing to the front. There is no harm in cutting up old fur victorines and mantles now, as for a long while to

diamonds, and large black pearls. The bodice is a curved bolero of black velvet, with a narrow-pouched front of white; the new folded sleeves are also of velvet, and the *décoltée* is framed by a band of velvet and a frill of white lace. The long sleeves are of white silk spotted lace, and there is a slightly curved belt

come fur will be worn in "patches," rather than in large surfaces. A new opera mantle is always an initial expense, therefore it is more economical to choose a good material and have it made long at first. The model illustrated on page 263 is of a rich undulating pattern in silk and wool brocatelle, trimmed with an embroidered yoke of velvet and sable trimming. It is entirely lined with silk of a lighter shade, and a silken cord confines it to the waist. It is made with capelet sleeves. The sable and tails may be replaced by "moufflon" fur. This mantle, if made in dark colours, can also be worn as a carriage wrap.

The fact that I have not dilated upon any of the crazes of the moment is easily explained. If a woman wishes to dress with economy, she must avoid the newest things, which suddenly become very popular, get



A CYCLING OR SKATING DRESS.

common, and are considered bad style in an incredibly short space of time.

There is not much to be said of blouses. I give one, on page 262, adapted to slight figures in flowered silk crêpe trimmed with bands of hand embroidery, with a design of corn-flowers on a mauve ground. It is made on a tight-fitting bodice lining, and has the new frilled basque. The best mantle shows how an old fur mantle may serve to build up a new one, as the moufflon or astrachan now retrims a velvet mantle. The fine jet embroideries can be replaced by jet *passementerie*, which is less expensive.

I could write a chapter upon hats if space



A "HENRY II." TOQUET.

arrangements. A plume of ostrich tips is placed on one side. Felt hats can be blocked like new if given to the proper people, who will also copy any shape required. Really good Paris models can be bought at one particular house in London at prices varying from £1 10s. to £2 2s. They come from the best Parisian houses, and could not be purchased for three times that amount in Bond Street. The cost of a



A MANTLE À LA MODE.

were not failing me. One handsome black hat, trimmed with tips (long feathers are too heavy) is indispensable. The flowers under the brim can be changed at will. The two new ones illustrated are a picture hat and a toquet. In the picture hat of felt, note the graceful sweeping curve upwards on one side, where the feathers are placed. The crown is of the new soft chamois felt, and the trimmings consist of ribbon bows, an edging of sable round the brim, and a jewelled band round the crown. The toquet Henri II. can be made of velvet or chamois felt, with tails of sable round the brim, fastened at intervals with paste



A STYLISH CHAPEAU.



COLLARETTE AND MUFF OF FUR AND LACE.

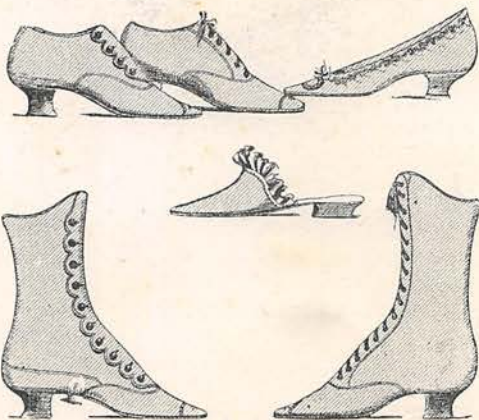
really clever workwoman is 3s. per day, and the little *couturière* should not charge more than from £1 15s. to £2 2s. for making a dress, exclusive of sundries.

Boots, shoes and gloves must be good; if a stock is laid in, they will last twice as long again. Two pairs of boots, two pairs of walking shoes, pretty slippers and tiny red velvet *mules* for home wear, with some nice evening shoes, make up the sum of one's requirements for a very long while to come. Boots laced up the fronts, which are not rights and lefts, give the best wear; they should all have the low, broad, Louis Quinze heels, with the exception of winter walking boots.

Black and dark gloves will be worn this winter, which will be a notable economy. A white glove is a thing of dread if the hand is not very tiny, so the majority of women have cause to be grateful for Fashion's tender mercies in this matter. The prettiest muffs and collarettes I have yet seen can be made up of pieces, and of frilled sable, chinchilla, mink or skunk mixed with lace, like those I have had sketched from recent Paris models. I have much more to say, but must hurry to a close. I will only add a few words. Black in dress is a false economy; it shows wear more quickly than anything else, besides accentuating the lines of age and forming a background for wrinkles. To endure black, a woman must be fair, corpulent, and—twenty! Colours are a science in themselves. False colourings, such as

petunia, lavender, old rose, shot blues and purples, are only fitted for blondes—brunettes should choose in the flame-colour, orange, amber, yellow, and tomato-red tints. White or cream about the throat is becoming to all women, but, above all, to those who have resolutely passed the rubicon of the thirties. A note of colour, clear as a clarion call, is delightful to waken up the insipidity of grey or fawn, but it will jar if that note is distorted by too frequent

repetition. *Petite* figures must adopt plain or striped materials; checks and large brochés are reserved for the majestic daughters of the gods. A large hat will dwarf a small woman. Buy sparingly at sales. Never buy what is not wanted. Remember, too, that there is no reason why we should pay dressmakers for taste, if we can learn to cultivate it in ourselves. The art of dressing cleverly is economy



SHOES FOR THE SEASON.

itself, because it is the art of combining one garment with another, so that, possessing a true sense of the fitness of things, we may be able to grace each social function to the pride of our friends and our own satisfaction.