Feminine Fancies and Home Circle Chat

A Limerick Tea

Now that the winter season is with us, the season that in towns is the most friendly and sociable of all, people are only too eager and glad to seize and act upon any new idea or suggestion that they may hear of for the better entertainment of their guests. Book, play and flower teas seem to have had their day, and that a long and popular one, and people are getting tired of them, so that something new is wanted. No doubt in time 'Diabolo' teas will be attempted, but in the opinion of many a hostess, their popularity is somewhat doubtful. Therefore, why not try a "Limerick" or "Last Line" tea? This has not yet been essayed and would be decidedly new. The Limerick craze great as it has been seems rather on the increase than the wane, for everyone is eager to test their versifying powers. The invitations to a Limerick, or last line tea, either name would do, but the former would be the better of the two, for it would include both pastimes, would be issued upon the usual "At Home" cards: "Mrs. Brown "At Home" on such and such a day. Hours from four to half past six o'clock," and in the lower corner of the card the words, "A Limerick Tea.' And as cards and prizes will be required, it would be advisable to add the letters "R.S.V.P." so that the hostess would then know how many guests to expect and provide for. The refreshments would be the same as those provided at the usual afternoon "At Home," and as only a limited number of guests would be invited, it would be better for them on arrival to be shown into the drawing-room direct, and to go into tea later and all together during the first interval in the games. On entering the drawing-room each guest would be presented with a card to which a pencil would be attached. On these cards each of which numbered five lines would be ruled, and the word "Limerick" printed on the top. On these lines each guest would have to write a "Limerick." No doubt, knowing this would be expected of them, the guests would have thought out the verse beforehand and would write it down from memory. But the rule to be observed—and this should be strictly insisted upon—would be that each verse should be original and that the maker of it should write this down on her card. A certain time should be allowed for the arrival of the guests and the writing down of verses. Then the cards should be handed to the hostess, or some person deputed to receive them and read out the verses. After handing in their cards the guests could go in to tea. This would make a break in the proceedings. On their return to the drawing-room a bell should be rung to summon any loiterers there might be, and verses would be read aloud. The number on each card being proclaimed before the reading, but not the name of the writer. The verse that received the greatest number of votes, as being the best, should be awarded the prize and the name of the winner announced. If time permitted, the guests would then have to write a last line to the prize Limerick, a certain time being allowed them to do it—say a quarter of an hour. They would have their own numbered cards returned to them for this purpose and each would write his, or her last line on it and return it to the judge, who when time was up, would read out the last lines and take the votes of the company as to the best. When this was decided, the prizes would be presented to the winners by the hostess and the party would break up, the guests being asked to partake of tea or coffee on their way out, which should be fresh and hot, as the earlier tea. The only additions required to be made by the hostess for a Limerick tea to the things that are provided for an ordinary afternoon one would be the ruled and numbered cards with pencils. Also small numbered tickets such as are used for cloak-room purposes. The number on these would correspond with those on the ruled ones and each guest would fasten a number to his coat, or her dress. Three prizes would be required, one for the winner of the best verse and one for the winner of the best last line, and a booby prize for the person who wrote the most foolish verse. Of course more prizes could be given, such as a first and second for the best verse, and the same for the last line and if preferred the tea could be only a "last line" one. The verse or verses of each of four lines could be chosen by the hostess and written, or printed on the ruled cards given to the guests, so that all that the latter would have to do, would be to add a last line, but both this and the number of prizes given would be at the option of the hostess, and the various details can be carried out to suit the taste and means of the hostess.

The Comments of an Onlooker

It would be hard to decide which party is guilty of more foolish and ill-considered remarks. The people who abuse masculine dress of today, or the people who defend it. When Mr. Louis N. Parker denounces the modern man's dress as foolish and hideous," "an eyesore from his horrible hat to his ghastly boots." He is, as a writer in the Westminster Gazette says: "Hankering after the lost magnificence of velvets brocades and feathers." How silly people of the present day would look running after a motor bus dressed in velvets and snowy frills! Of course the student of costume knows that the man in the street, whether in the reign of the first Edward, of Elizabeth, or the Georges, would not go about attired in velvet and feathers, but in the plainest homespun, and if a soldier, he would in all probability, be wearing leather. But the "Parker School" and all others who are dissatisfied with modern clothes should know that the dress of the past, like the sports of the past, and the feelings of the past, would if revived, be destestable, because they would be self-conscious. Clothes are an expression of life and personality, and probably the dress of the modern man reflects him and the conditions under which he lives well enough. The agitation against men's clothes is coupled with an agitation against men's bald heads. The grievance refers to a man's want of shame about a bald head. "What would be said of a woman," asks the exploiter of the grievance indignantly, "If she were equally callous and appeared at the theatre without any hair, natural or artificial? Is there any reason why baldness in a man should be tolerated? demands the good lady? I should personally imagine that the different way to regard baldness in the two sexes is due to the Bible, which says plainly, "A woman's hair is her glory," and infers perhaps, that a man's head of hair is only an incident. Yet one point of view is undoubtedly modern, for in the older days when men considered their appearance more, no man, if he had a bald head showed it outside his bedroom, and even there hid it in a night cap. He appeared in a wig to face the world, perhaps quite right! but it is doubtful in the extreme, I should say if we ever see a revival of wigs for men in our time all the same! It was suggested a few weeks ago by a correspondent in a London paper that "inasmuch as the inappropriateness of dress of many ladies of the present day is a serious public hindrance to the enjoyment of things beautiful, a bureau of taste should be formed, where ladies of education should advise their fellow creatures how to dress, and to the best advantage." It is a bold and humane idea, and I wish it success. But, of course, women do not always agree with one another what they should wear and what would be most becoming to their particular style of beauty. It appears at the present moment that complaints are being urged about dress reform for both sexes—it is to be hoped that they may settle their differences amicably—but it is rather a comfort from a woman's point of view that a question has been raised against men's attire, for as a rule the complaints against the ways, and customs characteristics and opinions of women, outnumber similar complaints against men by about ten to one.

Household Hints and Recipes

Some Suggestions for a Shooting Luncheon.

Menu.

Spiced Beef (cold).
Hot Pot—A Lancashire Dish.
Pheasant Pudding.
Cheese Sandwiches.
A Luncheon Cake. Ginger Breads.

Spiced Beef.—Eight pounds of silverside, or if preferred, brisket of beef. Remove any skin, gristle or bone. Rub it over with half an ounce of saltpetre, half an ounce of salt. Then rub it well with the following spices, pounded: one ounce of black pepper, one ounce of allspice, half an ounce of ground ginger, quarter of an ounce of cloves and half the quantity of mace; then add three ounces of salt and a quarter pound of coarse, brown sugar. Let the beef remain a fortnight in this pickle, turning it and rubbing it every day. Take it out and roll it very tight. Tie with a broad tape Boil it gently for two and a half hours and when removed from the fire put a dish over it with a heavy weight on it, and before serving glaze it on the top.

Hot Pot.

A strong earthenware casserole dish will be required for this, which could be packed into a hamper. Butter the dish well. Have plenty of boiled potatoes. Cut in slices and put a layer at the bottom and next put a layer of rump steak and either oysters or kidneys; pepper and salt these; then another layer of sliced potatoes, then more meat in alternate layers up to the top. Let the top layer be potatoes. Pour in about three quarters of a pint of stock. Put butter in small pieces on the potatoes. Bake in a slow oven from three to four hours and for the last half hour leave the lid off so that the potatoes may brown. This is very popular for a shooting dish. If onion is liked, it should be boiled for a little while first and chopped very small before being sprinkled over the meat.

Pheasant Pudding.

Take two good sized pheasants, which is sufficient to make a pudding, but unless the birds are very young, skin them before you cut them up into joints. Line a basin with a good suet crust, over this about three quarters of a pound of rump steak, then the pheasants, well seasoned with pepper, salt and mace; pour over a quarter of a pint of brown gravy, cover with paste and boil two hours. Mushrooms are sometimes added, but the pheasants do not require any additional flavor.

Cheese Sandwiches.

Grate two ounces of cheese and mix it smoothly in a basin with a dessertspoonful of mustard, the same of anchovy paste (or sauce is better), a pinch of salt and of cayenne, a tablespoonful of butter and the yolks of two hard boiled eggs Mix this until it is a smooth paste, then spread it between slices of buttered white or brown bread and cut into oblong shapes.

Luncheon Cake.

Half a pound of butter beaten to a cream, three eggs, half a pound of Demerara sugar and one and a quarter pounds of flour, quarter of a pound of candied peel, half a pound of sultanas, half a pint of milk, two drachms of carbonate of soda, one drachm of tartaric acid. Mix the acid and soda with the flour, then rub in the butter, add sugar, sultanas and peel; beat the eggs well, make the milk a little warm, adding to it the eggs, and mix quickly the other ingredients. Put into a warm buttered tin and bake as quickly as possible. This takes one and a half hours.

Gingerbread Biscuits.

Rub half a pound of butter into one pound of flour, half an ounce of ground ginger, half a pound of treacle and one teaspoonful of carbonate of soda. Let the mixture stand for quite half an hour, then roll out thin and cut into shapes.

Some Simple Xmas Cakes for a Family.

By Request.

Mocha Cake, St. George's Cake, Ribbon Cake, Drummond Cake, Sultana Scones, Muffins, Oatmeal Cakes, Favorite Buns.

Mocha Cake.

Required:—Two eggs, two ounces of castor sugar, two ounces of fine flour, a teaspoonful of baking powder, three ounces of butter, seven ounces of icing sugar, strong coffee to taste. Beat the yolks of the eggs with the castor sugar, add the flour by degrees, in which the baking powder is mixed. Beat the whites of the eggs to a stiff froth and add them to the cakes last. Butter three small round tins of the same size and divide the mixture equally between them. Bake in a quick oven for a quarter of an hour. When cold, spread each cake with coffee icing and lay one on the top of the other and ice the whole outside evenly.

For the Icing.—Stir three ounces of butter to a cream with seven ounces of icing sugar and when it is fit to spread, add a few drops of very strong coffee.

St. George's Cake.

Required — Three-quarters of a pound of flour, three eggs, four ounces of sugar, two ounces of butter, two ounces of lard, four ounces of sultanas, four ounces of currants, two ounces of mixed peel, a saltspoonful of spice, half a glassful of brandy, a teaspoonful of baking powder, salt.

Mix the various ingredients (dry) in one basin, excepting the spice, which must be mixed with the brandy. Have both currants and sultanas nicely cleaned and dried. In a second large basin heat the sugar and butter, with the yolks of the eggs, brandy and a little milk. By degrees, sift the dry ingredients into the eggs, etc., until all is mixed. Beat for ten minutes, add the stiffly beaten whites of eggs and pour into a greased tin. Bake at once in a steady oven for an hour and a half.

Ribbon Cake.

Required—One pound of flour, half a teaspoonful of carbonate of soda, teaspoonful of cream of tartar, four ounces of butter, six ounces of sugar, three eggs, two ounces of picked sultanas, two ounces of currants, one ounce of citron, a little molasses, cinnamon and ground ginger to taste. Mix the carbonate of soda and cream of tartar with the flour, cream butter and sugar together with the yolks of three eggs and a gill of water. Sift the flour with the butter by degrees and beat all together Then divide the dough into three equal parts. To one add the fruit, spice and treacle; the second, color to a nice pink, and the third keep to its natural state, flavoring it with grated lemon. Bake each in a shallow tin of equal size, and while hot, place the cake with fruit in it between the two others, brushing white of egg over it to make it stick. Ice with pink water icing and decorate with cherries.

Drummond Cake.

Required—Two ounces of butter, four ounces of lard or beef dripping, one pound of flour, four ounces of sugar, quarter of a pound of raisins, quarter of a pound of sultanas, a little citron, half a teaspoonful of powdered ginger, two eggs, half a pint of milk, a teaspoonful of baking powder. Rub the dripping, etc. into the flour with the finger tips till all look like crumbs, add the sugar, baking powder and a pinch of salt, stir all together thoroughly, and work into a light dough with the eggs and milk. Mix the spices with the milk before commencing to make this cake. Pour all into a greased tin and bake in a steady oven for one and a half hours. Do not have the oven too hot at first, or the cake will brown before it rises, and so be spoilt.

Sultana Scones.

Required—Two ounces of butter, one pound of flour, one teaspoonful of baking powder, sour milk, three ounces of sultanas, salt. Rub the butter into the flour, adding the baking powder and salt. Work all into a light dough with sour milk, working in at the same time a handful of sultanas. Roll out the dough to about an inch thick, cut into three-cornered shapes and bake until lightly browned and cooked in a good steady oven.

Muffins.

Required—One and a half pounds of fine pastry flour, four ounces of yeast, one quart of warm water, and salt. Dissolve the yeast in warm water. Put the flour into a large basin and gradually add the yeast till all is quite mixed and then, with a wooden spoon, beat for twenty minutes. Let the dough then stand for one hour and a half. Make all into round cakes of the usual size and bake on a griddle which has been rubbed with a piece of suet. As soon as the muffins begin to brown turn them; when colored on both sides they are done.

Oatmeal Cakes.

Required—Three ounces of lard or butter, seven ounces of fine oatmeal, five ounces of pastry flour, three ounces of castor sugar, one egg, and a pinch of salt. Melt the butter and mix it with the oatmeal, flour and sugar, which have previously been well blended. Break an egg into a little cold water, beat it slightly and stir it with the other ingredients so as to make a stiff paste. Turn the paste onto a board, roll it out very thin, cut into large square pieces and scatter dry oatmeal over; grease a large baking sheet, place the cakes on it, and bake in a slow oven from twenty to thirty minutes. Serve when cold and what is not used store in a tight tin.

Favorite Buns.

Required—Twelve ounces of fine flour, five ounces of butter, four ounces of sugar, two eggs, three ounces of currants, two ounces of blanched almonds, one piece of candied peel. Before attempting to bake these little cakes, see that your oven is properly heated, so that the buns will puff quickly. Pass the flour through a sieve with the baking powder. Cream the butter and sugar together or if you prefer it use half butter and half lard. Add the eggs and beat all thoroughly. Wash and wipe the currants, chop the blanched almonds very finely, also a piece of candied orange peel. Add all the dry ingredients to the butter and eggs, beat thoroughly. Pour into greased bun tins and bake at once. These should not take more than fifteen minutes to cook if made in a small size.

A useful hint when milk has boiled over.—Throw a little salt at once on the stove. This will prevent the unpleasant smell of burnt milk pervading the house.

Shabby towels which have become worn in the middle will renew their usefulness if cut in two and hemmed. They make admirable bedroom cloths, and are quite large enough for that purpose.

Steel knives that are to be laid away for a time should be wrapped in tissue paper. It is far better than either flannel of flannelette, either of which material contains sulphur and are liable to cause rust.

When sweeping a carpet it should always be remembered to sweep the way of the nap. To brush the wrong way is not only bad for the carpet, but tends to brush the dust in—and not out of it, and makes the work doubly hard.

Lace curtains will last much longer if the washing of them is done at home instead of at the laundry. On taking down the curtains, shake them as free from dust as possible. They should then be put to soak in clear, cold water for at least a day and a night, changing the water once or twice if very dirty. If the curtains are white, a lump of soda may be added to the water they are soaked in. Wash the curtains in a nice, soapy lather, and then boil them. Rinse twice in cold water, the second quantity of which must be slightly blued. Next put them into starch made with boiling water and not too thin. After starching, open the curtains and stretch out to dry on a clean sheet laid straight in some room, long enough to take the curtains at full length. Pin out evenly. When dry, press at the edges with a good hot iron, the rest will be smooth enough.

A Hint to Mothers

Many children grow up sulky under the galling authority of grown-ups. When anybody talks of a nagging wife it is generally to refer to the man to whom she is married in pitying terms—much more to be pitied, however, are the children. A man can find a remedy in retaliation and therefore can endure much but children, and especially sensitive children shrink from continual fault-finding and suffer in silence. In fairness to most mothers it must be said they unwittingly fall into the habit of nagging their children. The tiresome ways of the latter seem to be at times more than they can bear, and the result is they are apt to forget themselves. "Don't do this," and "Don't do that," and so forth, are remarks calculated to reduce children to a state of sulky irritibility, and really it is small wonder that they sometimes rebel openly against an authority whose presence they feel in galling frets and unreasonable restrictions. Under such treatment a child, instead of learning to love and trust its mother becomes frightened of her. It becomes nervous of doing anything openly for fear of irritating her and being down nagging reproof upon itself. To go to the other extreme as many mothers do, of never correcting their children, is equally dreadful. Our modern prophets of a new heaven and a new hearth tell us that children must not be restrained, that they must grow freely according to their own natures, that it is wrong for parents to seek to direct them. That way madness lies. No child has a right to go its own way. It has a right to be shown the way it should go. No child has a right to get all it wants. It has a right to be taught to do without things. In fact, we ought not to set ourselves to make life too easy for the children. If they find things a little hard when they are children they will be far less hurt when they are men and women. Just as the children with too much to eat and too many clothes are far more sickly than the little folks who lead harder lives. So that the children who always get their own way at home will have a mighty bad time of it outside. But there is a right way and a wrong way of correcting children, and "nagging" will do far more harm than good.

Beauty Preservation

To be beautiful and pleasing to the eye is the privilege, nay, the duty of the fair sex, and every woman has an inate and essentially natural wish to attain to this desirable ideal! It is difficult to define beauty of face, or to state in precise terms what parts beauty of feature, of expression, and of coloring play in the composition of the whole. It is, however, quite certain that a clear, healthy skin and complexion form the basis of all true beauty and refinement. How often have we heard the dear old story of Cinderella and more likely than not envied the luck of the simple little maiden transformed from a kitchen wench to a lovely lady by the magic touch of a fairy's wand; whereas we are in reality one and all possessed of a fairy godmother in the shape of La Mode, who with her style and good taste is capable of working incredible changes in every form. Given a fairly personable appearance, an upright figure, nice hair and a decent complexion it rests entirely with a woman herself whether she presents herself a "thing of beauty" and consequently " a joy for ever," or an insignificant dowdy little personage. For instance, take the coiffure, for that is a most important detail; hair strained back in unbecoming lines and twisted into a hard, uncompromising knot at the back of the head would make the prettiest woman absolutely plain, but softly waved and dressed in any style best suited to each particular face, the transformation is so complete that even the owner herself cannot but be delighted at her own appearance. Particular attention should be paid to our manner of walking. Many women have a singularly ungraceful gait. She either lurches or strides along, quite regardless of grace and elegance. Children from the earliest age should be taught to cultivate a good, easy walk. Now-a-days, more freedom of movement is engendered by the improved conditions of games, but even these have a degenerating tendency in some respects, and too often the hockey girl is conspicuous by her slouching walk. Hold yourself upright and walk well from the hips; the rest will follow naturally. Dancing classes are excellent schools for the acquiring of elegance. Care of the hands, nails, complexion, teeth and hair are one and all details that call for special consideration. Blessed with a naturally good skin half the battle is already won, but with the majority of girls and older women certain precautions are inseparable from a good appearance. Motoring to any great extent is positively fatal, unless certain well known rules are followed, such as smearing the skin with some reliable skin food; the cream should be wiped off the face and neck with a soft rag and gently rubbed with chamois leather after which a light sprinkling of good powder may be employed. Nails should be regularly manicured, and when they are very much out of condition to start with, it is best to pay a visit to a professional, subsequent home treatment being all that is required to maintain the desired appearance. Pretty, well-cared-for hands and feet are always pleasurable sights and what ever their proportions may be it is always the greatest possible mistake to wear gloves or shoes a size too small. The aspect is unsatisfactory and the discomfort invariably so. Be careful about the little details of dress always. It is the details that make the toilet more often than not, and the same applies to the details of the toilet. And remember, it is the absolute duty of women to look their very best on all possible occasions.

Fashions Fancies

Whether one's tastes lean towards the "old-fashioned" Christmas or the new, the subject of frocks and wraps demands consideration. As a thing of beauty combining with cunning cleverness all the attributes of utility, the evening wrap of the present season is supreme and apart. For one thing, the completest of all "slip-on" possibilities lies in the kimono outline of shoulder and sleeve and it is immensely graceful besides. Indeed, there is cause for much congratulation in the fact that this loose flowing outline is emphatically "with us," for the wrap. That it has been applied with undue zeal in the realm of the outdoor costume, and in that connection may, therefore, be considered to be overdone, is "another story."

As regards fabrics, chiffon velvet is most charming perhaps, though finest, supplest, satin-faced cloth runs it close. Both are adorned with the all-prevailing bullion fringe and tassels, silver as well as gold, and delicate scroll work, and with bands of filet net darned with vegetable silks, ivory or in delicate colors according to general scheme. One of the very loveliest wraps seen this season is of English cherry hue, enhanced with a powdering of plum blossoms embroidered in harmonizing silks and with outlined bands of black satin correspondingly enriched at intervals.

For the evening gown marquisette is undoubtedly one of "the" textures of the hour, apart from chiffon velvet, which, at once so regal, and exquisitely draping, occupies, without question, foremost place. The popularity of marquisette is very worthy, moreover, for the texture possesses a trace of firmness lacking in union—or more suitably expressed it combines "chiffony" effect with substance and modicum of weight, and of course it is forthcoming in all the most delicate colorings, among which shell pink may perhaps claim a trifle of favoritism.

The high waist still triumphs; indeed, more than one adaptation of the Empire style will be noted, and inasmuch as velvet is being regarded with such marked approval it is not surprising that the Princess mode remains in favor. Another marked feature is the preponderance of net for purposes beyond that of trimming already alluded to, not only the bold filet design, but the finer Brussels net is pressed into service in some instances to veil and exquisitely soften a basis of chiffon velvet. It is observable also that gold and crystal bugles form delicate tassels and tracelets and oust the sequin to a large degree. Nowadays much of the charm of the evening gown lies in its endless variety. There is no obligation to follow hard and fast rules regarding materials and trimmings and the skillful modiste allows her fancy full play when blending the exquisite materials at her command.

For ceremonial toilettes ample folds and flowing skirts are requisitioned, but the dancing frock is made with a skirt of comfortable length. In the matter of sleeves fashion is quite as amenable to reason. Pretty arms may be covered only at the shoulder and less rounded ones gracefully draped with airy guazes; and equally with the decolletage, the somewhat trying court bodice is not insisted upon—graceful bretteles which rest on the shoulders, or veilings of chiffon or net proving happy alternatives. Empire and Directoire models are for those who prefer these straight lines which add so considerably to the height, and belted bodices for slight figures with slender waists. Never were colorings more lovely than now, the prevailing tints, delicate and subdued, proclaiming themselves entirely artistic.

Beautiful embroideries, glistening sequins, and much tinsel brighten soft shades of satin, crepe, and velvet. And there are exquisitely beautiful examples of lace and net with lace applique (simply irresistable when lightly touched with color) at one's service.

Party Frocks for Children

The modern mother has not only the advantage of charming materials and effective trimmings but there are specially designed fashions of simple outline from which she can select those best suited to her requirements and her tastes. For washable and embroidered frocks there are quite fascinating flounces sold by the yard, and these form delightful frocks of the Empire type, and entail very little work. Accordion pleated fabrics are also very effective and are easily made up into pretty frocks. The old fashioned spotted muslin had quite a revival this summer, and is now greatly in request for Christmas party frocks. White muslin lined with pale pink, or pale blue might easily have a berthe of silk in a corresponding tint, and lightly applied with lace. Another suggestion is to have bretelles of ribbon connected by a sash instead of the berthe. Pin spotted net inlet with insertion lace, mounted on a soft ivory or biscuit tint has a girlish effect and bright ribbons are easily added. Dresses for girls from fourteen to sixteen are proverbially difficult, but the Empire and Directoire styles are helpful where very slight and undeveloped figures are in question. A cream white satin is pretty with yellowish lace and worn with a pale blue sash, and ribbons in the hair to match. The fashion for an Empire dress is not suited to very thin, transparent textures, but is admirable for silk or velvet or even for fine silky cashmere. Another charming model has a groundwork of ivory soft Roman satin, with some bias straps of pale turquoise velvet and a chemisette of gauged chiffon. A group of pin tucks form the sole decoration of the skirt, which should not be too full. The bodice and skirt are attached and the frock fastens down the back. This dress is very simple to make and is arranged on a lining reaching to a long waist and cut in three parts only. The Mother Hubbard, Grannie, and circular cloaks are very popular for young folks, and are very effective in blue, pink, or ivory blanket cloth. A more luxurious wrap would be of fine faced cloth, lined with quilted satin. The Inverness shape is charming for girls of all ages and by no means difficult to make in that thick blanket cloth, which looks and feels like soft felt.

The useful Japanese silks make ideal party frocks nicely trimmed with a good heavy Valenciennes lace, and they later come in beautifully for summer wear. I have seen flounces of this silk with tucks and lace, ready made, which would help the worker considerably—where frocks for skirt-dancing are required accordion pleated Japanese silk is pretty and such dresses are cleaned very reasonably or can look quite beautiful after being carefully washed. Linen is a material too often overlooked when gauzy fabrics are desired and this in faint colorings makes really lovely frocks, trimmed with narrow satin ribbon. Union too is most effective, left transparent inlet with medallion lace and showing the slip beneath.

Topics of the Hour

Rumors are current to the effect that a visit of the King and Queen to Berlin has been definitely arranged. The visit will be of a state character, it is stated, and will take place in the early spring of next year.

The Queen has been in great good looks during all the recent court festivities, in spite of the fatigue attendant upon them, and has always seemed bright and charming. Her Majesty's taste in dress is well known, and the costumes which she has worn for the shooting parties have been models of neatness and suitability. The Kaiserin, like our Queen, is an enthusiastic photographer, and both royal ladies took many snapshots of the shooters and surroundings of Windsor Forest.

The German Empress has charmed everyone with whom she came in contact by her kind manner. Especially was this the case when she visited the German hospital at Dalston. The Kaiserin, who was beautifully gowned in pale blue silk and lovely sable furs, went over every ward.

After the visit of the King and Queen of Spain to Sandringham, they returned to London. The young Queen stayed at Kensington Palace with her mother, Princess Henry of Battenberg, and the royal baby, and has been doing one or two plays. Meanwhile King Alfonso went down for a few days' shooting to West Dene Park, the residence of Mr. and Mrs. W. James. Next week the Queen of Spain will accompany the King on his visit to the Duke and Duchess of Portland at Welbeck Abbey. What interests the King most of all is the shooting, for His Majesty is devoted to sport. But the young Queen will enjoy the ball which is being given in her honor.

It is sad to hear of the death of Lady Brampton, who died just recently in London, as the result of an accident. She was only ill for eight days, and survived her husband better known, perhaps, as Sir Henry Hawkins) six weeks. On November 6 she went for a walk alone and, in stepping back to the curb in Berkeley Square to avoid a motor car, she fell down and hurt her wrist. Death was the result of the shock. Lady Brampton has by her will left (with the exception of a few personal legacies) the whole of her estate of at least £150,000 to various Roman Catholic charities.

Appertaining to Court Mourning

Ambassadors are compelled to go into deep mourning whenever the latter happens to be officially ordered by the monarch to whose court they are accredited. The sovereign's commands in the matter extend not only to the envoy himself, but to his wife, to his secretaries and attaches, and to their wives and even to their male and female. The directions given are of the most peremptory and explicit description, prescribing the color of the gloves, of the dresses, of the coats and of the stockings, the liveries of the domestics, and the upholstery of the apartments of the embassy; while at some of the smaller German courts where old Dame Etiquette's rule remains particularly strict, even black underclothes are exacted as a token of official woe on the occasion of a royal demise.

This is no mere exaggeration or flight of imagination; for when old Prince Maurice of Saxe-Altenberg died the other day, the official gazette of the grand duchy of Saxe-Meiningen, in decreeing court mouring for him, expressly insisted that black underclothes should be included in the trappings of woe.

Court Mourning in Russia

In Russia, when court mourning is ordered, every official above a certain rank is compelled to have one of the apartments of his residence in the metropolis draped completely in black cloth, with the furniture upholstered in black, to clothe his servants in deep mourning, to have his carriages upholstered in black, and the coat of arms, crests and monograms removed from the panels of the equipages. These rules extend to the foreign ambassadors at St. Petersburg. Moreover, every vestige of the gold and silver embroideries of uniforms, as well as the epaulets, has to be shrouded with crepe—a terrible expense since the slightest drop of rain or snow has the effect of taking the dye out of the crepe, and damaging the embroidery beyond repair. Many of these uniforms cost as much as six hundred dollars, and the pay attached to the offices of those entitled to wear them is not so big as to admit of their spoiling many of such uniforms in the space of a year.

Deep court mourning at St. Petersburg entails upon the women connected therewith the obligation of wearing on public occasions and state functions dresses of black flannel, cut high in the front, long and voluminous Charles or "angel" sleeves fastened at the wrist, wide collars and "weepers" of linen and long court trains of black flannel fastened, not to the shoulders, but to the waist, black caps, trimmed with crape, and black veils.

All visiting cards while court mourning is in progress must have black borders and the same rule applies to note paper and envelopes; in which connection it may be pointed out that the use of black edged and black sealing wax for correspondence is of Italian origin, dating from the beginning of the seventeenth century.

In Russia, as in many of the other monarchical countries of Europe, failure to comply with the official orders for court mourning entails displeasure that may take the form of exclusion from court, and from functions and entertainments at which royalty is present, and a boycott on the part of all those connected with the court and the government. If the offender happens to hold any office he is liable to dismissal; while if it is a foreign envoy who has neglected to adhere to the commands of the Lord Chamberlain his government will receive a hint to recall him, on the ground that he is no longer persona grata.

Stiff Rules in England

In England, however, court mourning is statutory. There are no official regulations but laws in England, which render court mourning obligatory, and provide for the severe punishment of any peer of the realm or dignitary of the crown who fails to obey.

The only occasion on which these have been invoked in recent times was when the late Lord Darnley, the most eccentric and wrong headed of noblemen, at the time of the death of Princess Mary, Duchess of Teck, made a public announcement of the fact that he no longer intended to assume court mourning when the latter was ordered by the lord chamberlain in the official Gazette in the name of the sovereign. Had the earl merely abstained from putting himself and his household in black, no one would have made any remark, but the communication of his intentions to the press called down upon his head the wrath of the authorities, who actually inaugurated steps with a view of imposing upon him through the tribunals the fine and imprisonment provided by law. It was the present King, however, then Prince of Wales, who with his customary good sense, caused the proceedings to be dropped, on the ground that the statutes on which they were based were no longer in keeping with the spirit of the age, and that the offence of Lord Darnley was from a modern point of view one rather against good taste than against law.

Under ordinary circumstances, court mourning in England is ordered by the lord chamberlain, and varies in duration from eight hours to three month, the length depending upon the importance of the royal personage whose demise is thus observed, and upon the degree of his or her relationship to the reigning house of Great Britain. The order invariably indicates a number of details such as the color of the feathers, gloves, fans and dresses to be worn by the women, as well as directions of an analogous character for the official mourning of the men; and the term is usually divided into two parts, during the second half of which the mourning is lightened.

In the case of the death of the sovereign or of the monarch's consort, or of the heir apparent, the order of the lord chamberlain is supplemented by a command for general mourning issued by the earl marshal of the realm, namely, the Duke of Norfolk, in the name of the crown; and although no penalties are provided for failure to obey, yet the people at large invariably make a point of complying with the edict. During the six months that followed the death of Queen Victoria, there was scarcely a man, woman or child in the land from the richest to the poorest, who did not don some token of sorrow for her loss.

Formerly court mourning in England included the display of hatchments. The hatchment consists of a large black frame, inclosing a black ground, upon which were painted the arms and crest of its owner, and it was hung lozenge fashion on the facade of his house, generally midway between the second and third storey, as near as possible to the centre of the building. Sometimes the black background was powdered with drops of gold to represent tears, and adorned with skulls and crossbones at the corners. Up to the beginning of the Victorian era, no one was entitled, either by usage or by etiquette, to an escutcheon of this kind on the front of his mansion, unless his ancestors on each side for four generations back possessed armorial rights. But when London was invaded by all those parvenus who now occupy such a conspicuous and influential position in English society, and with disregard of custom began to display on every pretext hatchments adorned with the most preposterous coats of arms, on which the quarterings were conspicuous only by their absence, the thing degenerated into vulgarity and was and today is almost entirely abandoned.

Queer Funeral Customs

One of the queerest features in connection with this court mourning abroad is the species of grim comedy which provides that a royal personage shall be regarded as alive until finally laid in the tomb. It is an etiquette which belongs to a bygone age and savors of something akin to mockery. Thus, it is not until the Lord Chamberlain breaks his wand of office over the coffin of his royal master or mistress as it is being lowered into the vault or tomb, that he and all the members of the household are relieved of their duties; and at nearly every European court it is customary to lay day for the illustrious dead to lie in a sort of levee or reception just before their interment, when all the great officers of state and members of the court pass one by one before the corpse, bowing low, and kissing its cold and clammy hand.

In conclusion, it may be mentioned that the admission of the Empire of Japan into the concert of Great Powers has resulted in a source of considerable embarrassment to the various royal, families of Europe, just in connection with the question of mourning. The court of Tokio is extremely punctilious about going into mourning on the occasion of the death of a foreign sovereign or royal personage, in fact, it has been known to go into mourning for European royalties as many as eight times in one year.