

HOME INTERESTS.

Conducted by HELENE.

At last spring is in the air. We have waited so impatiently through a long trying winter and though we wade ankle deep in slush these days we feel it is such a little way till bird and flower will be with us and in the fulness of our enjoyment of the happy summer we will forget the hardships through which we have passed. The sun's rays are already quite warm, and the tiniest semblance of bud on tree tells us of Nature's awakening.

FASHIONS.

Necklaces of opal beads are much worn. Ecru lace is used in preference to dead white.

New earrings are of large pearls in a peculiar shade of buff.

Chiffon mohair is softer and less wiry than the ordinary mohair.

No one with a paucity of gowns is wise in selecting a conspicuous red koltlet.

New finger rings show settings much larger than have been worn for a long time.

Those fascinating Du Barry hoods, which any girl who knows how to use a needle can readily fashion for herself, are making quite a furor for themselves, and fashioned in gauze with a dainty silk lining they certainly are most becoming to any type of face.

A new toque, the latest thing in Paris, has no brim at all at the back, but at the front the brim of the curled up type is nearly three inches high and the same height at the sides also, but from the middle of its sides it slopes down until at the centre of the back there is none left. The termination is absolutely flat, nearly square, and on it cache-peigne of some sort is to be affixed. This toque fits beautifully over the coiffure when the latter is low.

The flat disk trimmings made by sewing tiny braid together in small fashion is seen upon a number of the best wool frocks, the discs being used in varying sizes, and usually matching the material in color. Made of fine soutache set on edge, they are perhaps at their best, and in the smaller sizes are made to simulate buttons or enter effectively into braiding designs worked out in soutache.

That long familiar blouse bolero, in one form or another, is bobbing up as serenely as ever, and the plainly fitted bolero and the loose bolero also have their places. Often with the bolero bloused slightly in the back and half loose in front, over a chic girdle, little basques are used, or some modified position idea is carried out; but, after all, the disguise is a thin one.

Certain of the new linen frocks, for example, have heavy lace or embroidery inset in long tapering points, with the points running up the skirt; and this not only adds to the flaring effect of the skirt bottom but offers a good opportunity for actual introduction of extra width in the lower part of the skirt.

The question of sleeves in the future—that is, the coming spring and summer—is one of interest, and many of the predictions made concerning them are heard with mingled pleasure and disapproval, the latter for some, the former for others. So far as the lingerie blouse is concerned, the leg o' mutton, with a full top tapering down to rather narrow sleeves below the elbow and gathered into medium width cuffs of tucks or bands of fine embroidery, are among the latest imported models. This is the most sensible fashion of all. Its full top conceals both the too thin and the too fat arm unless it be of the sheer variety, and its close lower portion does away with the dipping and mussing of the fuller old style sleeve.

Flounces and frills are, of course, used upon the sheer summer frocks and evening frocks, but aside from those instances flat trimming that will not interfere with the long lines of the skirt silhouette has the preference, and the flat front breadth or the flat front trimming is retained.

The full skirts which have prevailed during the fall and winter will undoubtedly be good during the coming spring. Of course the fulness will be confined in plaits, flaring gracefully at the knees. Walking skirts will be shorter. The correct length is three or four inches off the ground. By a trick of fashion carriage and reception skirts are to be

worn three or four inches on the ground all the way around. They must be as long in front as in the back.

There is a promise that the coats for spring will be short. Jackets and perhaps Etons will take the place of the three-quarter coats and those even longer which have been worn during the winter.

Pretty fancy aprons are dear to every feminine heart, and the making of one requires small labor and expenditure. With aprons, as with all else, different designs are suggested by the materials at hand. A pretty one may be made of white dimity.

Across the bottom are three squares of primrose figured mull. These are set on the dimity with insertion after the French manner. To attach either lace or insertion, baste it evenly about one-sixteenth of an inch from the edge of the material, then overhand it in the usual way. By throwing the thread well to the right before taking each stitch it will be found to roll the little edge of material and securely fasten it.

Of course the stitches should be small and even, and loose threads must be afterwards removed. Lace trimmed insertion edges the sides of the apron and is also carried across the top, while a ribbon run through fastens it around the waist and also permits of smoothing out the gathers, so that the apron may be folded away free from wrinkles. Little lace trimmed mull pockets are placed low down towards the bottom so as to be more accessible when one is holding sewing in the lap.

Aprons made of plain pink and blue or of figured materials are most attractive, and the tiner they are the daintier they appear. Strange to say, they should be wider than long by at least three or four inches. Pure white aprons are much trimmed and befrilled and have lace trimmed ties.

TIMELY HINTS.

An apple-parer works just as well on potatoes as on apples, and saves time as well as food, where there is a quantity to be cored for.

To set the dyes in cotton stockings put a handful of salt in the washing water.

Pounded glass mixed with flour into a paste and placed near rat holes will banish the rats.

A cement made by adding a teaspoonful of glycerine to a gill of glue is a great convenience in the kitchen and it is especially good for fastening leather, paper, or wood to metal.

When cooking a small roast, first sear it all over on a hot spider. This will immediately drive in the meat juices, and less heat will be required in the oven.

To clean window blinds, spread on a table, and rub over with bread-crumbs. This treatment will make blinds look quite clean and fresh again, and they will not be pulled out of shape, as blinds often are in process of washing or ironing.

Drops of oil on the clothing may be removed with benzine or ammonia. Take a piece of flannel, saturated with the liquid and rub all around the spot with it, working gradually toward the centre. As benzine is very inflammable it should be handled with care.

Starch and iron wide lamp wicks for oil stoves. They will not then cause trouble in fitting them into the burners.

When stewing fruit never use a metal spoon; a wooden spoon is best, and those with short handles are most convenient for thick substances.

WELL TO REMEMBER.

That cinnamon drives away moths. That washed lace is not to be blued.

That brown or green is the best background for pictures.

That stove blacking should be moistened with vinegar, not water.

That olive oil, when taken by itself, should be well "chewed."

That squeaky doors may be temporarily silenced by an application of oil.

That water may be kept cool by wrapping the water jug in a wet blanket.

That we often suffer by breathing in the minute hairs shed by pet animals.

That cream and sugar neutralize the good effect of strawberries or the bile.

That fresh fruits are valuable because they encourage natural processes in health or sickness.

That borax and boric acid are not

identical, as the former is a compound of soda and boric acid.

That boric or boric acid does not contain any soda and that it positively never irritates.

That bread is toasted to take out the moisture that the saliva may be more moisten it.

That stained enamel saucers may be cleaned by boiling in water with a little chloride of lime.

That the rubbing of the sulphur end of matches on ink-stained fingers which have been dampened, will remove the soil.

That freckles may be removed by this application: One part lemon juice, two parts eau de cologne and eight parts elder flower water.

RECIPES.

Quick Muffins.—Mix one cup of flour with one scant teaspoonful of baking powder, one egg, one teaspoonful of butter, and half a cupful of milk into a thick batter. Place six large muffin rings on a hot griddle; put half a teaspoonful of lard into each. Fill each ring half-full of the batter, bake over a moderate fire a light brown; turn them over with a pancake turner and bake the same on the other side. Serve in a napkin. The rings may be placed in a buttered baking-pan and baked in the oven.

Egg Bread.—Break two eggs into a bowl and add half a teaspoonful of salt. Beat them well and mix with them half a pint of buttermilk. Add a pint of sifted white meal by slowly shaking it in the bowl with the left hand and beating it in the egg and milk with the right. Add more milk if necessary to make a smooth, stiff batter. Then make a depression in the centre of the mass and rub a level teaspoonful of baking soda into it through a sieve. Stir and beat steadily until the soda is well mixed in. Grease a shallow pan and pour in the mixture. It should lie in the pan about an inch deep and be allowed to rise. Bake quickly in a hot oven, with the heat turned on the bottom. To serve cut in small squares with a hot knife and place them on a warmed plate. This bread is best for breakfast.

Velvet Sponge Cake.—This is an excellent recipe, and so easy that it may be prepared by a child: Two cups of granulated sugar, six eggs (leave out the whites of three) one cup of boiling hot water, two and one half cups of flour, one tablespoon of baking powder. Beat the yolks of the eggs a little, add the sugar and beat fifteen minutes; add the three beaten whites and the cup of boiling water just before the flour; flavor with a teaspoonful of lemon extract, and bake in three layers, putting between them icing made by adding to the whites of the eggs beaten to a stiff froth, six dessertspoons of pulverized sugar to each egg, and lemon to flavor.

THE OLD-STYLE NURSE.

"When folks first began to send for trained nurses," remarked the uniformed woman, according to the New York Times, "there were those who said I would soon lose my job altogether; but that was many years ago, and here I am still, with more calls than I can attend to, though there's such big classes of girls graduating every year in the hospitals that the profession is over-crowded. I have only got my experience to put against their education and hospital training, but somehow it seems to carry the day."

"And natural talent into the bargain," suggested a listener. "I have heard that sick nurses, like cooks, are born, not made." "I don't know about that. I dare say I have made lots of mistakes in my time—I mean when I was new to the business—but I always liked to be around sick people. And then there is another thing. Although I have been nursing so long I ain't a bit bossy, and that's just the difference between me and so many nurses, especially young ones, that's got goddams to show. There's lots of ladies who don't like to be put down in their own houses, and them's the sort who, when they've had to do with some sort of trained nurses, would rather send for me the next time there's sickness in the house."

"Of course, when a doctor puts a case in my charge, I'm going to follow out his instructions, no matter how the home folks may cut up about it, but there's ways and ways of doing most everything, and I never make myself disagreeable if it can possibly be helped. "She knows it all, but she made herself too numerous," a man once said to me of a hospital nurse who had attended him when he was down with rheumatic fever. "She had the whole family under her, from my wife down to the cat." And from what he let out from time to time after that—I was nursing his children through the measles, and he talked mighty free

in my hearing—I found that there was many an occasion when his nurse might have humored him without doing a bit of harm. But no; that wasn't the way they done things in the hospital where she got her training.

"I suppose when there's a ward full of sick people to look after a nurse has to be strict, and things has to be done just so, but it is different when there is only one patient to be waited on.

"But the patients I got along best with are sick children. I am fond of children to begin with, and having had a family of my own, naturally I know better how to treat them than nurses do who only go by hospital instructions. Many's the little tea party I have had with little girls who are just getting over the scarlet fever, and I've played dolls with 'em, and helped 'em make scrap books till they've said they'd rather play with me than with other children. Such treatment ain't down in the hospital books, but all the same, I ain't never lost any patients by it."

A WOMAN'S PERFECT GIFT.

"One crown of glory the elderly woman may proudly wear, and it is a distinction she could never have had in girlhood or early matronhood; she may be a grandmother," writes Margaret E. Sangster. "I can think of nothing so perfectly satisfying and so thrilling with a subtle ecstasy as the holding in one's arms, and looking into the face of the child of one's son or daughter. It is the second generation, and you have lived to see it; that fact in itself is delightful. You compare the baby face with those of your own children, and trace the quaintest points of resemblance, and oddly enough you see, what nobody else can see, fitting likenesses now and then to the child's remotest ancestors to some great grandfather or grandmother long vanished from the earth. Your granddaughter and you will be chums; your grandson and you will be comrades, and good, the only good, will be the outcome of the laudable association for all concerned. One of the most perfect gifts which comes into the life of a woman is the joy which comes to her over the cradle of her grandchild. It is without a single flaw."

ORIGIN OF VISITING CARDS.

"The use of visiting cards dates back to quite an antiquity," explains Mrs. Van Koert Schuyler. "Formerly the porter at the lodge or door of great houses kept a visitor's book, in which he scrawled his idea of the names of those who called upon the master and his family, and to whose inspection it was submitted from time to time. One fine gentleman, a scion of the nobility from the Faubourg St. Germain, was shocked to find that his porter kept so poor a register of the names of those who had called upon him. The names, badly written with a spluttering pen, and pale or muddy ink, suggested the idea of writing his own name upon slips of paper or bits of cardboard in advance of calling upon his neighbors lest his name should fare as badly at the hands of their porters. This custom soon became generally established."

THE STUFFED CHILD.

At the request of the Comptroller of New York City, Mrs. M. C. Ford investigated the teaching of special subjects in the public schools. Naturally, she finds that by the time the class teacher has done all that is imposed upon her by the music supervisor, the physical training supervisor, the drawing supervisor, the sewing supervisor, the cooking teacher, the shop teacher, and so on, "there is little time left for reading, spelling, and arithmetic." It is true, as the New York World says, that similar conditions exist in most of the American cities. It is not necessary, however, to agree with the World that "the real difficulty lies in the fact that the school day is too short for all the work that is done." The difficulty lies in the fact that a batch of superfluous studies is crowding out the fundamental and indispensable studies. The luxuries have conquered the necessities. The school day is long enough. The school course is altogether too long. The old-fashioned three R's, learned unforgetably in the draughty old district school, "the little red school-house" were the essentials of education, and superior beyond comparison to the smattering of the ornamental, the hodgepodge, the useless stuff that is smothering the poor children's brains nowadays.—Everybody's Magazine.

If you have great talents, industry will improve them, if moderate abilities, industry will supply their deficiencies.

IRISH AUTHORS.

It is somewhat melancholy to consider how few artists have resolutely shut their eyes to the allurements of London, says Edmund Downey in the Dublin Weekly Independent. The Dublin Weekly Independent, Miss Edgeworth Sheridan Le Fanu and William Carleton succeeded in resisting the temptation to live out of Ireland; though in his latter days the author of "Traffs and Stories" depended as much upon his English pension as upon the profits derived from his writings. Charles Lever hated London, and when he gave England "a wide berth," Lady Morgan had to come to London; so had Samuel Lover. And even those two essentially and intensely Irish novelists, John Banim and Gerald Griffin, were compelled by fate to cross the Irish sea.

London is undoubtedly the best literary market in the United Kingdom, but I fancy there is something more than the matter of pounds, shillings and pence in the selection of it as headquarters for Irish artists of the pen or the brush.

Imaginative writers are not compelled to inhale London fogs for inspiration, and the literary agent is sufficiently well able to make bargains in Great Britain for authors residing in Ireland. Must one be driven to the conclusion that there is something in the Irish air, or in Irish association, which is fatal to imaginative work? Or is the phenomenon to be ascribed merely to a desire to be, at any cost, in the thick of the literary scramble? It will be found (if anyone cares to pursue the inquiry) that a considerable proportion of Irish writers have drifted out of Ireland, not of malice prepense and afterthought. Roving propensities, accident, duty, causes entirely beyond control, have cast them adrift. But there must be many who have left their native shore, finding that Ireland had no place for them—and not infrequently making this discovery with some heart-scalding.

The late Mrs. Hungerford—the most successful Irish novelist of her generation—told me that no temptation would or could induce her to abandon her beloved County Cork; that she was happiest and freshest there, and that she did not consider she suffered anything in pocket by residing out of London.

Here is an imperfect list—compiled at random—of Irish wits and worthies who swell London's intellectual throng: Justin McCarthy, publicist, historian, essayist, novelist, statesman, with his heart ever in his own country. He seems to have captured London (or to have allowed London to capture him) by slow degrees. His brilliant son—playwright, story-teller, poet—was born here; he could not help himself. The attraction of the English bar was doubtless the magnet which drew that earnest patriot and historian, Barry O'Brien, across the channel. Possibly it was the same magnet which affected H. A. Hinkson. This clever novelist has a good deal to answer for—he drew out of the Irish capital in 1893 its most charming poet, critic and story weaver—Katharine Tynan.

John Augustus O'Shea—a hopeless invalid now, alas!—was not coaxed from his native Tipperary by the fascinations of London. His exodus was brought about by the Garibaldi wars. O'Shea—a mere youth—took up arms in defence of Plus IX. Then he drifted to Paris, and the lust of wandering gripped him and tossed him over the globe. Mr. F. Frankfort Moore—the most prolific of all the Irish imaginative writers of to-day; he is the author of about forty brilliant novels, and he has written at least a dozen plays—many also urge that it was the passion for travel which divorced him from his country.

Mrs. Croker—a Roscommon lady—lived for many years in India. She is never out of touch in her books with her native land, and her absence from it is possibly owing to the fact that the duties of her husband, Lieutenant Colonel Croker, do not permit of an Irish settlement. Marriage, too, it was which, in 1857, took Mrs. Reddell—the author of more than thirty able novels—out of Carrickfergus. Miss Dora Sigerson is yet another of the ladies who was enticed across the seas. However, she is doing good work in instilling Irish ideas into her clever husband, Mr. Clement K. Shorter.

Duty banished Mr. Alfred Percival Graves. It seems a far cry now to his "Songs of Killarney" in 1872. The author of "How to Be Happy Though Married," the Rev. E. J. Hardy, has been for many years an army chaplain, and even London cannot always claim him. Born in Armagh, it is his fate to find

himself now in Hong Kong. Mrs. Casheley Hoey is another of the Irish ladies who left Ireland because of her husband's duties. Mr. Casheley Hoey, after the break-up of the old Nation, came to London to take up the position of Agent-General for Victoria. Mrs. Hoey belongs primarily to the generation and to the circle which could boast of Thackeray and Dickens. She was one of the most valued contributors to Dickens' "All the Year Round." She has been a contributor of literary articles and reviews to Edmond Yeates' World from its foundation.

Fitzgerald Molloy—poet, novelist, writer of picturesque history—is something of a traveller, but he is also a Londonist, perhaps not too Ligoted a type. Percy Fitzgerald—associate of Charles Dickens, author of innumerable works of fiction, biography, history and travel—is a confirmed and hopeless Londonist. He tells me he could not live out of London. Its crowded streets, its life, hold a charm for him which he cannot find in the place of his birth—Fane Valley, County Louth.

One may judge from my brief list that accident has had much to do with the fitting of the literary man as design. But the fact remains that Irish eyes, which should be glancing at Ireland, are covertly gazing across the St. George's channel. Is it possible—or is it worth while—to make an effort to induce Irish authors (or any considerable proportion of them) to remain at home?

Nearly forty years ago Carleton made a strange prophecy. "Banim and Griffin are gone, and I will soon follow them; and after that will come a lull, an obscurity of, perhaps, half a century."

Commenting upon this somewhat egotistic sentence in her Introduction to Mr. D. J. O'Donoghue's life of the great peasant, Mrs. Hoey goes on to say: "It will be a proud day for Ireland when among her sons she shall count one fit to wear the long-time folded mantle of William Carleton." It is to be hoped that when the new Carleton does arise he will be proffered honors (and more substantial rewards) in his own country.—Ex.

A SPRING DANGER.

Many People Weaken Their System by the Use of Purgative Medicines.

Ask any doctor and he will tell you that the use of purgative medicines weakens the system, and cannot possibly cure disease. Thousands of people take purgative medicines in the spring, and make a most serious mistake in doing so. People who feel tired and depressed, who find the appetite variable, who have occasional headaches and backaches, or whose blood shows impurities through pimples and eruptions, need a spring medicine. But they should not dose themselves with harsh gripping purgatives that gallop through the bowels, tearing the tissues and weakening the system. A tonic medicine is what is needed in the spring and Dr. Williams' Pink Pills is the best tonic that science has yet discovered. They are quietly absorbed into the system filling the veins with pure, rich red blood that carries health and strength to every part of the body. Dr. Williams' Pink Pills cure skin eruptions, indigestion, headaches, nervousness, rheumatism and all blood troubles. They improve the appetite, and make depressed, easily tired men and women cheerful, active and strong. Mr. James McDougall, Little Shippegan, N.B., says: "I have used Dr. Williams' Pink Pills as a tonic and blood purifier and have found them superior to all other medicines."

If you need a medicine this spring—and who would not be the better of a tonic after the long, dreary indoor months—give Dr. Williams' Pink Pills a trial. They will send rich, red blood coursing through your veins and give you the buoyancy of perfect health. See that the full name, "Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People," is printed on the wrapper around each box. All dealers in medicine sell these pills or you can get them by mail at 50 cents a box or six boxes for \$2.50 by writing the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

A little bit of sorrow
An' a little bit of song;
To-day an' then to-morrow—
So the old world moves along.
A little bit o' bloomin'
At the comin' of the May,
A little bit o' gloomin'
To proclaim the autumn day.
And in the long hereafter,
When the balance sheet appears,
If I've had my share o' laughter,
I will not begrudge the tears.

Dear Boys and Girls: In all the letters I have from my little nieces and not one mentions a thing at all. Do none of the little in a sugar district? I count of a sugaring out interesting to all readers. Genevieve sends her love. Santa Claus was very you, I think. Grandpapa supporter of our paper. I wish to see more letters. Chester. Many thanks. A kind wishes. Write again. Margaret is a new comer, very welcome. Washing reading the little letters a his part well. What a studies for a small boy. I think it would be very to have a class of only five or there is the advantage of being able to give individual. Love to all my little and nephews.

Your friend,
AUNT J.
Dear Aunt Becky: My grandfather has taken paper for a number of years always read the little letter Aunt Becky, and thought like to see my little letter in the True Witness. I am girl of ten. I have two sisters one brother, and dear know enough, he is so mischievous. Claus came to our house one night and brought me lovely things. I live five miles from the church and a half a mile to the school. Now, dear Aunt I bid you good-bye. From GENEVIEVE

Fath. N.B.
Dear Aunt Becky: I was glad to see my first print, and thought I would again. My cousin will also, and it will be her first. We are having bad weather I am wishing for spring to be glad to see all the little week and hope to see more of the children write such good I will write soon and I now saying good-bye.

CHESTNUT
Hudson, Mass., March, 1906
Dear Aunt Becky: This is my first letter. I am two years old. I have three brothers. Our baby is two years old. We all love her. She is nine months old. We three girls go to French Sisters' school and well. In the real cold sto we cannot go every day. I lot of snow here now. We True Witness and like to read children's letters. Santa Claus kind to us all Christmas. Sisters is to write a letter hope to see this letter. Wishing you a happy new year. Your niece,
MARY MARG

Ogdensburg, N.Y., March, 1906
Dear Aunt Becky: We take the True Witness read the little letters in it. I am eleven years old. I go to school every day I can in the winter roads are bad sometimes. I have three sisters and two brothers. My baby is nine months old. I is not working now. He with us. We have some here are dear here now. We have and two calves. Now I hope this letter in print next week I will write a longer letter to you. Good-bye.
From your niece,
MARY MARG

Ogdensburg, N.Y., March, 1906
Dear Aunt Becky: You said you were glad from me, so I will write another. I wish all the boys and would write, so I will let them fun of reading the letters to is going on. If all the boys would write they could page with letters every week think they are a little lazy to school every day, and geography, grammar, health reading, British history, and Canadian history, spelling and chism. It is very fine work