

Courrier des Dames.

Our lady readers are invited to contribute to this department.

SUMMER FASHIONS.

FROM THE 'LONDON GRAPHIC.'

The war of the neutral tints and the bright hues is more fierce than ever; an artistic eye, which knows how to blend the various shades, will produce an excellent effect, but surely the defect of vision known as "colour blindness" must be on the increase, or no milliner would permit her patroness to wear a bonnet of mustard-green on the top of a mass of yellow hair, and a costume to match; three cases of this flagrant bad taste did we see at one morning concert. Some of the neutral tints are most graceful and becoming, especially to young people, for example, the delicate shades known as Eau de Nil, réséda, India sky, ozone, faded rose, and bleu de ciel; provided we blend these mixtures so as to please the eye and not to outrage good taste.

It is a duty which every woman, young, middle-aged, or old, owes to society, to make herself as pleasing and graceful in appearance as is in her power; the prettiest face may be disfigured, and the plainest made pleasing, by indifference on the one hand, and judicious care on the other. How often we see a small woman, with a slender figure and delicate features, load her head with false hair and a bonnet one mass of flowers and lace, which makes her look top-heavy, whilst a tall, majestic figure would carry off and be improved by this *cotifure*, and yet adopts a classical style, with a small bonnet on the summit.

With reluctance we must confess that wide and narrow stripes, together with figured patterns, are very fashionable; they are becoming enough to slim figures, but to all who are inclined to *embonpoint* they are most unsatisfactory, and should never be adopted except for underskirts. Black with a bright contrasting colour will be much worn on chilly days during this month. A very stylish costume may be arranged by dextrous fingers; the petticoat of black gros grain or good foulard, on the front breadth should be embroidered in *point Russe* a rich pattern with minute jet and steel beads, wide at the bottom, and narrowing towards the waist; train on which should be five narrow flounces, edged with bead gimp; by a simple arrangement of strings the skirt can be tied up and converted into a walking costume. With this petticoat may be worn either a polonaise to match, or a coloured one of plain Persian tussore, self colour, or a very pretty new material called *Broché de Flandres*. Those of our readers who like wide stripes will admire the *Krowtee* guipure; it is very strong and light, the stripes are an inch wide, alternately thick and transparent; this fabric is excellent for seaside wear, as it is almost untearable.

One of the most elegant yet inexpensive materials for this season is the *Cora Indian silk*, which washes as well as a muslin, is quite as cool, and does not require so many under petticoats; the last-named advantage is very great, especially at the seaside or in the country. By trimming this silk with a colour suitable to the complexion of the wearer, it may be made becoming to every style of face and figure; for a blonde, blue, mauve, shell-pink, or even green should be chosen; but the last-named colour must be very carefully selected, or it looks vulgar. A brunette cannot go far wrong with *maroon doré*, and various shades of dahlia, crimson, or trimmings of the same hue in lace and insertion.

Never since the time when fashions were first instituted has it been more difficult to give advice as to colour-tone than at the present moment. The lessons on cookery at the International Exhibition have proved most successful, why should not some eminent R. A. come forward and give advice to professional and amateur dressmakers and milliners as to the blending of neutral tints and strong contrasts in dress? Let any impartial male critic, who is totally ignorant of the materials which constitute a lady's toilette, take a chair in the park, or any other place of public resort, and he cannot fail to perceive how utterly regardless of what is becoming to them are so many of the occupants of carriages as well as pedestrians. They ask of their *modiste*, "Is it fashionable?" and are content if answered in the affirmative.

For morning wear the unbleached holland, white muslinette or sateen, and piqué have superseded the dark blue linen of last month, by reason that they look so much cooler, although in fact they are not so, and for scrambling over rocks are far more useful. The mixture of pale grey and pink is still in great favour whether for morning or afternoon costumes.

There is quite a struggle for supremacy between the long plain skirt of rich material and the decorative style with puffings, ruchings, and flounces. The former are made very flat in front and over the hips, and very full at the back; this style is most trying to any but irreproachable figures. The *Revue de la Mode* recently gave two very graceful specimens of the latter school. The one was a toilette of mauve coloured *glacé* silk, Princess shape, with a *pouf*; the skirt was trimmed with white guipure lace insertion, surrounded by a narrow edging; the front breadth was ornamented *en tablier*, with large bows of lace and ribbon, which were gradually diminished to the waist, open sleeves, trimmed with lace; a scarf composed of guipure insertion and organza was thrown artistically round the shoulders; a rice straw bonnet with garlands of roses in two or three shades; lace strings knotted loosely under the chin. The other, for a young girl, was composed of a

white foulard, with broad rose-coloured stripes arranged in a kilt flounce, so that the colour should form a lining to the white. Polonaise of plain white foulard, without any trimming, looped up with rose-coloured bows; rice straw bonnet trimmed with white ribbons, and a rose under the turned up brim on the left side of the hair. Now that the hair is dressed so high on the head, ruffs are becoming more popular. They should be regulated as to size in proportion to the length of the wearer's neck. Whether it be the *Henri III frisure*, which is made of three rows of pleated tulle, cut on the cross, or the *Medici frill*, which has a single frill in front and a double at the back, it matters not, one thing is certain, the depth and fullness must be judiciously studied, or a failure will be the result. A most useful, if not altogether ornamental adjunct to the toilette is the leathern chatelaine worn by most Frenchwomen when travelling or in the country; it is well to be provided with the means of repairing a rent or damage when out on a scrambling expedition; to the scissors, needles, &c., of the ordinary chatelaine, our Parisian neighbours have added a watch in ivory, tortoise shell, and even wood, a most excellent arrangement for travellers.

We have little to say about evening dresses, which are trimmed so elaborately as to defy description without an accompanying illustration; the materials mostly used by matrons are *moiré antique*, satin, or faille, whilst young people prefer more diaphanous fabrics, such as grenadine, net, or tulle, which are always trimmed with lace, blonde, or very light fringe and wreaths of flowers. Patterns are so easily procured from Paris that there is no difficulty as how to make a costume in the latest fashion.

Never were children's dresses, especially for little boys, more pretty and simple than at present for morning and general wear; the knickerbockers fastened in under the knees, which always made the juvenile wearer walk badly, and were injurious to health, as they stopped circulation, are quite gone out, and replaced by loose trousers half way down the leg, made in holland or linen, with a short blouse or jacket and waistcoat to match, bound with blue or scarlet, and a square collar to correspond, striped stockings and high buttoned boots. For more dressy costumes velvet and cachemire, in blue, maroon, bottlegreen, or black look very nice, with gold sugar-loaf buttons, a white waistcoat, and square-worked collar, or for the tiny boys a collar of point lace; high shoes, with cut steel or silver buckles, and spun silk stockings, plain or striped, are most appropriate for the full dress of the young *monde*. The Dolly Varden hats, which are so light and shady, for little and big girls in the country, have again made their appearance; the Panama hats, trimmed with velvet and wild flowers, are also much worn.

WHY MEN DON'T MARRY.—The reasons "why men don't marry" were fully explained in a lecture given the other day by the Rev. Henry Morgan to the Young Men's Christian Association in New York on this question, interesting alike to Christian young women as to Christian young men. The reasons, according to Mr. Morgan, are eight in number, and are as follows: 1st. Because they cannot get the woman they want—they look too high for beauty, talent, and perfection, which are beyond their reach; 2nd, because they are cowards—they dare not "face the music," and quake at the lightning flashes of a fair maiden's eye; 3rd, because they are sceptical—they have no faith in a woman's constancy, and believe her weak and frail; 4th, because they are selfish and stingy, and do not think they can support wives; 5th, because women of genius are not good housekeepers (the reverend gentleman advised his audience not to marry geniuses); 6th, because of man's own extravagance—many young men spend their incomes foolishly, and cannot afford to marry; 7th, because they are afraid of divorce, which is made by the laws too easy—free love, Mr. Morgan thinks, is poisoning the system of marriage; and 8th, because of women's extravagance. It costs as much, the lecturer said, to launch a woman on the sea of life in these times as it would to fit out a small schooner. As to sails, cordage, pennants, and streamers, the difference, he thinks, is in favour of the schooner. As to her outfit, she has to be freighted with bonnets, vells, necklaces, earrings, pins, chains, bracelets, rings, ruffles, bows, bands, buttons, loops, folds, pippings, plaits, silks, muslins, laces, fans, boots, slippers, parasols, collars, cuffs, nets, chignons, waterfalls, "rats," "mice," braids, frizzles, puffs, curls, panier, tournure, and Grecian bend. What a cargo, ejaculated Mr. Morgan, was this for such a small vessel! Few are the underwriters who take the risk in such a craft, and few were the men who would marry this "Dolly Varden walking advertisement." The lecture was heard with deep emotion by a vast concourse of Christian young men, and those parts of it which referred to women's failings were greeted with wild applause (!)

Speaking of the late Elias Howe and his great invention, a gentleman who formerly resided in New Haven says he had for a neighbour a master mechanic who had done much toward perfecting the sewing-machine, and who from actual knowledge could give the cost of the different kinds now most in use. The Howe machine, table included, cost \$9; the Wheeler & Wilson, \$7; the Singer, about \$7; the Wilcox & Gibbs, \$5; from which it would seem that somebody must be making incredible profits from that indispensable little affair.

With an exhibition of energy, whether of mind or body, there is a coincident change or waste of nervous element, and as this element may be restored as rapidly as it is expended by the judicious use of Fellows' Compound Syrup of Hypophosphites, persons may study or otherwise work with comparative impunity while using it.

(Written for the Canadian Illustrated News.)

A Very Improbable Murder.

BY GEO. W. BINDLEY.

LAST summer, driven to distraction by the intensely hot weather and its attendant annoyances, dust and flies, (persistent demons, whom nothing less than the last remnant of your mental repose will satisfy), and almost fainting under that horrible lassitude which makes one feel as if the heat had caused all his spirit to evaporate, and felt only a dull, listless body for his portion, I determined to take my usual trip to the little village of Cairo.

I had been there often before, and during my five years stay in Canada, I do not think any summer has passed by without witnessing my Hagra to that oasis of cool breezes and pleasant shades. There were many things to recommend the place to my fancy. Firstly, the landlord of the only hotel in the place was an Englishman, and I say (without disrespect to the great army of Bonifaces, of which my Cairo landlord was after all only one of the rank and file) that for a combination of kindly host and social gentleman he is without his peer, (now don't quibble at that, there are hotel-keepers who are true gentlemen; and paradoxical as it may seem to you, they are fewer in number than the gentlemen who, placed by fortune's vagaries in an independent position, are after all in point of intellect and honourable motives, only fit to preside over *un palais à débiter le genièvre*).

Secondly, the place had an English look about it, and though absent for five years, I still have pleasant memories of the quiet sylvan scenes which abound through the length and breadth of England; but by far the greatest charm of all to me lay in the fact that it was comparatively unknown and unvisited by those worse than Goths, American pleasure-seekers, and being about five miles from the coast, you got all the benefit of the cool sea breeze without being pestered and annoyed with invitations to clam bake abominations, or by strong-minded Yankee girls with peculiar views regarding the sex's prerogative, and continually ringing the changes on Meum and Tuum. With none of the above drawbacks, within an easy walk to the cliffs which overhung the golden sands of the bay; with a little river rippling through its midst, with drooping trees on either bank, which kissed the laughing water in affectionate greeting; with shady hollows and picturesque nooks in profusion,—when sojourning there, I always felt inclined, like the woodman in that truest of all fables, (though from a very different cause), to send an invitation to the monarch Death.

I did not reach there until the month of August—the 20th, I think—just as the twilight was merging into the luminous haze of a summer night. I had walked from the station—for a public conveyance at the little place where the train stopped was a thing of imagination only—and the seven miles stroll through the balmy air and quiet woodland country had put me into that eating humour which overtakes us sometimes and makes either fish, flesh or fowl seem a dainty dish, even "to eat before a king."

Now the events which I am about to narrate as happening at Cairo (well, I confess it, Cairo is not the right name, but it is very near it) are so improbable on the face of them that many who read this will doubtless say to themselves while throwing down the paper, "What rubbish, as if such things could possibly have occurred, the man (i.e., the writer) is mad." To these the writer would quote the old adage that "Truth is stranger than fiction," and for confirmation would refer them to Carlyle Mason, his landlord friend.

As I mentioned before, I did not reach there until eventide. Mason and his wife both welcomed me gladly, and vied with each other in their endeavours to make me think that I had indeed left "Atra Cura" far, far behind. Nor were they unsuccessful. Well-told stories, for which Mason was famous, and a good supper, in the getting up of which his wife excelled, never yet failed to put me into the highest of animal spirits; and by the time that Mason's narrative and my supper came to a close, I felt that a quiet pipe of tobacco was the one thing needful to complete my sensation of earthly happiness.

After the repast was finished, the landlord went out to look after and examine his cattle, in the welfare of which he took great interest, while I, being tired, filled my pipe, and according to my habit quietly reconcoiled myself in a favourite corner of the parlour to enjoy that delicious dreamy retrospect which none but lovers of the weed ever experience.

Mrs. Mason meanwhile was preparing the best bedroom, which, I may here mention, was situated on the ground floor, and the entrance to which was from the room wherein I was sitting for my reception. I don't know how it is with other men while enjoying the soothing fragrance which arises from the burnt offering of King James I.'s abomination; but with me certain periods of my former life and characters connected there-

with invariably, during the sacrifice, cast their shadows on the white curtain of my imagination. And on this night especially, whatever may have been the cause, scene followed scene in picturesque confusion; friends of Auld Lang Syne, chased acquaintances of a month; Indian jugglers from Allahabad danced impossible can-cans with nuns from Lima; Parsees from Bombay performed their morning devotions to the rising sun; monks from the Appenines passed in stately procession to the two o'clock Matins; men from all countries, women from all climes, salaamed, bowed, shook hands, embraced, danced, and fought with the most utter disregard of creed, nationality, or religion. But through all the ever-changing scenes, mingling with the fast succeeding characters, and always distinct amidst the greatest riot of my imagination, was one fair face and graceful figure. She did not mingle with the changing throng, joined not in their mad revelry, nor exchanged with them the sign of greeting; but always standing apart, and with the same bright smile upon her pure young face that it wore the last time I saw her alive, as she leant against the bulwarks of the good ship, careering so gaily over the treacherous blue waters that were within a few short minutes to be her ——— Good Heavens! what a heart-rending shriek, just like the one she gave, when the hideous shark was ——— Pshaw, what is this? My pipe broken, and the lamp not lit yet? I must have been dozing; but that shriek was horribly real; it is ringing in my ears yet; still it could have been nothing. Thus reasoning with myself, and I must confess it, with rather indifferent success, I sorrowfully picked up the fragments of my pipe, (an old and tried friend by the way) and, guided by the cheery voice of my host in the distance, made my way to his private room. There was still a nervous feeling of fear upon me as I opened the door, and I suppose my face betrayed it; for both Mason and wife looked rather astonished when I entered, and to explain my ridiculously scared appearance I was obliged to relate a portion of my dream. Mason laughed heartily, as well he might.

"My dear fellow, take my advice, in future never go to sleep after a hearty supper; the only wonder is that Lucifer himself with all his attendant demons did not hold an inquest, sitting on your outraged stomach; if you heard a shriek at all, it was, take my word for it, from slighted digestion. Now I am going to administer a tonic; give a name to your drink, and I will tell you an anecdote that will make you laugh enough to scare away all the blue devils that were ever born in a hog-head of gin."

Mason was as good as his word, anecdote succeeded anecdote, until wearied with laughter, and with spirits in the highest state of exaltation, I bid good night to my kind host and wife, and retired to my room with the full conviction that sleeping immediately after a hearty supper is neither beneficial to body or mind.

As I mentioned before, this was my fifth visit to Cairo, and it had been my good fortune to always have the same sleeping apartment; consequently, every piece of furniture in it seemed to be an old, familiar friend, and every part of the room, from the latticed window to the quaintly-panelled door, brought up recollections of many pleasant hours spent during former visits. It was not until I had undressed, and was about to extinguish the light, that I noticed an addition to the well-remembered furniture of an old carved oak bureau, and then I recollected Mason having mentioned coming into possession of it, about a week before my arrival. I have a weakness (well it almost amounts to a mania) for old carvings, so, promising myself a pleasurable examination in the morning, I jumped into bed, and in five minutes Morpheus had as sure a hold on me as U. S. Grant has upon the Presidential chair.

How long I slept I do not know, neither do I know what woke me; all I know is, that I found myself wide awake, and with a most uncomfortable feeling of dread in possession of my faculties for a time, so sudden was the shock with which I was roused from sleep! But as my senses got clearer, I found that I was incapable of moving either my hands or feet, and that I was laying diagonally across the bed, with my head supported by one of the pillows in such a way that I could see every object in the middle of the room without changing my position.

The moon was at her full, and cast a flood of silvery light through the open window, illuminating with its radiance the entire centre of the room, only a small space behind the curtain on one side of the window being left in comparative obscurity.

Out of this shaded corner, on which, by some mysterious power, all my faculties (for I was by this time fully awake) seemed bent, a figure of a man shrouded in a horseman's cloak advanced, dragging after him on the floor something, of which I could not make out the nature, enclosed in a white wrapping.

I made another effort to get from the bed, but with no effect, and when I again turned my face, down which the perspiration caused by my efforts rolled in big drops, towards my unwelcome visitor, I beheld a sight which

(Continued on page 14.)