



Walking Mantles—The Secrets of a Skirt
—Coffee—Coffee Making.



WALKING mantles nowadays are somewhat difficult to distinguish from walking dresses, and they again are fashioned in the likeness of mantles that are trimmed with fur and fit closely. This kind in our illustration is called a pelisse, and is made of any rich kind of material, such as fine cloth, silk of very thick kinds—for example, sicilienne, damask or matelassé, or in that superb texture "Velours du Nord," with revers of fur or rich-looking passementerie, and lined throughout with thickly wadded silk. I ought to explain that "Velours du Nord" is a fabric that is between velvet and plush, and in appearance is longer in its pile than one and shorter than the other. Now I want you to observe this pelisse in my sketch. It is made of blue—very dark blue cloth. It may be worn with or without the

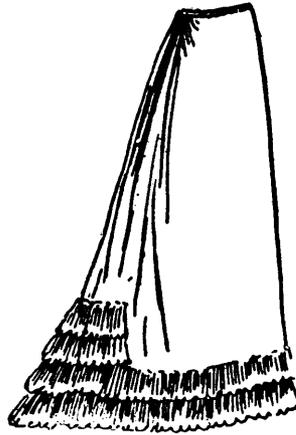


fur, and also without the capes if desired. The dress part is, as you see, made perfectly plain, fastening to a certain distance straight down the front, but gradually diverging to the left hand, where it hooks nearly invisibly down that side. The capes are made to open with plain revers of cloth or silk down the middle, and to fasten in front. The

fur is worn like a long boa that hides its commencement under itself, and crossing to the left side is fastened there by a brilliant buckle of gold, silver or jet, and then hangs straight to the hem of the skirt. Should objection be taken to its swinging about like a long end it could easily be fastened by a few little loops of fine cords to some quite small buttons, down the edge of the dress, or it might be made on to the mantle as a permanent trimming, capes and all. The fur may be anything you like; in this case it was grey like chinchilla or squirrel. The cuffs also are removable if desired, and can be buttoned on at will. I omitted to say that the back of the skirt is set on in full pleats to give a certain amplitude to it. In velvet this is a particularly becoming pelisse.

* * *

The secrets of a skirt are not always known at a glance. One may see two women, both wearing dresses of nearly the same material and cut. One will have her skirt hang so that it sets out at the sides, and the hem of its plain front coops in towards the feet, while the full breadths of the back also fall in rather than outwards. The other will have her straight plain front hung so that it keeps straight all the way down except just at the feet, where it turns a little, a very little, outwards like the rim of a bell. The sides are as even and straight as possible, and the back, without being wide, has ample material in it, and stands slightly away from the feet, so that there is not the remotest chance of its being kicked up in walking, which is so peculiarly ugly and untidy looking. You will also hear a



faint rustle or "frou frou," as it is called, as of silk, which suggests all sorts of small luxuries in the way of a silk lining. And so it is, for no well finished dress is ever made up without—formerly a silk foundation—and now a silk lining. But there is still much that goes to complete a properly turned out skirt, and this is its "balayeuse," or, very literally, its "sweeper," which is neither more nor less than the frill that you see tucked just inside the hem. In all evening and house dresses they consist of lace and muslin frills, but in gowns of cloth and thicker woollen fabrics such materials would be quite unsuitable; so I give you a rough sketch of what is put into a skirt, which, for convenience sake, I have turned inside-out in the picture. The frills are of pinked out black, or whatever coloured silk your skirt is lined with, and two rows are put round the front, and three, or more—if necessary—are set on to the lining of the skirt behind. This is what gives the pretty "throw off," as it is called, to the lower part of a skirt, which people may in vain try to imitate if they are unacquainted with the secret.

* * *

Coffee, as it is drunk in England, was the subject lately of a good article in one of our leading papers, and it is a topic on which I think there is much that may be said. My own experience of "furrin parts" leads me to say that we English do not know how to make coffee, and they, the foreigners, do not know how to make tea. But in England, and indeed the British Isles, it is the one idea that everything must be made like tea, and to show how deeply this idea is in our minds I cannot help quoting the Irish waiter when I think of the various beverages that are treated to the same process. Do you know the tale? If not I will tell you. At a large ball in Dublin, one of the guests asked his fair partner, when offering her refreshments, what she

would have; and, as she answered, "A cup of tea, please," the waiter, who was closely watching for her order, immediately burst out with, "Is it tay-tay you mane, miss, or coffee-tay, or chokolarity-tay?" There really is a tea made out of coffee leaves—though that only exists as the great beverage in Sumatra, and the Islands of the Eastern Archipelago, tea being made of a very nourishing and supporting quality from the roasted coffee leaves. It is, however, of coffee as we know it and use it that I would speak. Very few people in England, unless they are connoisseurs in the matter, care what kind of coffee they drink, but they may speedily detect the real kinds when they see them unroasted: for instance, the Mocha or Arabian you may know by its being a small dark yellowish berry, the Javan or East Indian is of a blueish or greyish green tint. There is a curious fact about coffee that just everyone does not know, which is that it greatly improves with keeping. It takes three years to properly ripen Arabian coffee, and even the worst American coffees in ten or fifteen years become nearly as good as the best Oriental kinds. There is a great deal in the way coffee is roasted, and to drink it in perfection it should be made immediately after roasting and grinding. It is always best, even if bought ready roasted, to grind it yourself, thus avoiding any chance of adulteration.

* * *

Coffee making is a very simple thing abroad, and why should we not find it so here? I will tell you how not to do it. See that your coffee is ground by the grocer, which will be to his own advantage, namely very coarsely, with generally an admixture of chicory, which is an adulteration that not every one cares for, particularly when one knows that chicory itself is adulterated also with turnips, carrots and Venetian red. Put this ground coffee, say half a cupful, into one of those coffee pots that have a cotton bag at the top, and pour a lot of hot water on it that boils, but is not necessarily at over boiling point. Set it to stew on the hot plate of your kitchen range, or on the hob of your dining-room fireplace. Pour it off and you will have the decoction that we generally have supplied to us in England, whether with hot or cold milk, and either for breakfast or after late dinner, which tastes first of the grounds, and secondly, in a stale fashion, of the coffee. Now I will tell you how best to make coffee. Buy your coffee fresh roasted, if you do not do it yourself grocers will generally tell you the days they roast their coffee; keep it in a tin well closed. Grind it every morning, having your mill set to make it rather fine. Allow a good teacupful to every three persons. Have the ordinary French *cafetiere* that divides in two parts, with a large-holed drainer at the top, and a finer one half way down, and a little flat stamper. Warm your pot thoroughly, then take out your top drainer and put in the coffee and press it down hard and flat, then replace the drainer. Remember that you must not be content to have your kettle so called boiling, but it must be actually boiling over, before you attempt to pour water into your *cafetiere*. Continue pouring till coffee and water rise together through the holes of the top drainer, then stop and set the *cafetiere* close to the fire on a trivet or somewhere to keep it very hot without stewing it. Fill it up once or twice more according to the quantity of coffee required. Pour off the coffee, after letting it stand for a minute or so to become quite clear, till you have filled each of your cups about a third full. Then fill up with hot milk. Replace the *cafetiere* by the fire, and, if necessary, fill up with over-boiling water, so as to keep up a good supply for second cups. By this means you will, I think, be able to emulate the best coffee made abroad. Sugar, I think, makes a great difference to the foreign-made coffee, and you rarely see there any but the lump sugar used, never the moist brown so often employed. For evening coffee the cups should be filled, and only cream used if anything is required.

Things One Would Rather Have Expressed Differently.

Doctor: How is the patient? Nurse: Well, he has been wandering a good deal in his mind. Early this morning I heard him say, 'What an old woman that doctor is!' and I think that was about the last really rational remark he made."—Punch.