

The Ladies' Column.

LONDON NOTES.

The hats this year are really lovelier than ever. I dare say this is stated every spring, for the freshness of spring flowers is a charm in itself, which no doubt gains something by contrast with the dreary days we leave behind, only I think this year it may be said with special truth. Madame Vera has just returned from Paris, and the little shop in Lower Belgrave Street is full of pretty things. Her favourite flowers this season will be hyacinths which indeed, are hard to beat in point of grace and color. One big black hat is almost covered with mauve and yellow bloom; another, white and pale pink bells are massed together. A lower hat in fine pale-coloured straw is lined with moss-green velvet which also forms the pulled crown. Lilies of the valley, with their own bright sheath-like leaves, are brought forward in painted wreath, and a loose bunch of violets falls among the velvet bows behind. Black and gold will also be much worn. A grey straw is trimmed with puffs of net and nodding balls of jet black elderberries, mounted on gold stems. Broad gold ribbon is tied into a bow on the very edge of the brim, and the ends go gliding out of sight. A yellow straw is veiled in black Chantilly. The feature of this hat is the flowers. They are poppies, but of a kind which never grew in any field, for the petals are gold satin lined with soft black velvet, and the stamens are dull green. Not natural, of course, but stylish to a degree, and what we call for want of a better title—very French.

The marriage of the daughter of the Princess Christian to Prince Albert of Anhalt-Dessau is fixed for the first week in June, in St. George's Chapel, Windsor. The Emperor of Germany will be present. It will be a double occasion, that of the parents' silver wedding and the marriage of the Princess. The Duchesses of Edinburgh and Buccleuch and Lady Salisbury are organising a fund for a gift to the Princess, which will be on a large scale. A great deal has been said about the presence of the German Empress in Paris, where, it would seem, she outstayed her welcome; but it was a London, not a Berlin, telegram that hurried the Empress's departure. This is not generally known, but it is stated on authority that her Majesty, on receipt of a wire from her Emperor grandfather, communicated with her daughter, with the result as given.

Town is filling rapidly. Sunday was warm and bright, and each parade was a sight not to shudder at but to see. The basish bodice and the three quarter jacket or coat were the only wear. Magenta is to be one of the popular colours of the season—on Sunday it was conspicuous by its absence. Sunday in the season is a very fashionable day—there is so little to do, and everyone does that little so well. It is Lent, but people cannot keep up a 40-day fast, so they drop the church parade and attend a drawing-room. I walked behind a woman and a girl on Sunday evening, and heard their high-pitched conversation. "I tell you, Nan, she's a wicked wicked man—he reads novels and does needlework on Sundays, and I won't see no parson or visiting lady; that's what I calls real wicked down wicked." Perhaps it is—and perhaps it is not—but one thing is wicked: judging your neighbours.

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