



Woman's Dress on the Farm.

BY LAURA ROSE.

My talk is not to be on the latest cut of a skirt or the newest development in sleeves; neither do I wish to speak of spring jackets or summer bonnets; but just to offer a few homely suggestions on the necessity and comfort of proper everyday apparel.

The clothes we wear have vastly more to do with our mental and physical condition than we give them credit for. A woman feels better, works better, and looks better, when conscious of the fact that she is neatly and suitably dressed for her work, and her appearance has an influence on all with whom she comes in contact. How often the opinions we have formed of our friends change, for better or for worse, after we have made their acquaintance in working-day clothes. It behooves us at all times to be at least presentable.

Beginning with underwear, nothing can be nicer than the combination suits—chemise and drawers in one piece—thus doing away with unnecessary bulk and bands about the waist. Fine natural wool combinations can be bought for \$2.00 a suit for winter wear, while serviceable cotton or flannellette homemade ones answer for summer. The winter undershirts should be warm but not weighty, and in the warm weather some good washing material should be used, and they should be worn short. As far as possible I would strongly advocate wearing washable dresses while working in the kitchen. A dark print made with ordinary width skirt is preferable to a wrapper, which seldom looks neat, and the former is more easily laundered. Above all things avoid wearing cast-off Sunday clothes. Nothing gives one such an untidy, slovenly appearance as spotted, dusty velvet or threadbare silk trimmings on a basque in which you churn, bake, etc. If it is necessary to wear discarded "better clothes," make them over so as to be more in keeping with your work.

Always wear an apron while in the kitchen. It is a good plan to have two on hand at once—one for baking and at meal times, the other for doing the dirtier work. And now I must get down to the "understanding," which is really the most important. Many women think any shoes are good enough for wear in the house in the morning, and so wear old, high-heeled slippers or thin-soled, run-over boots, and then when their backs ache or their feet and limbs are tired and swollen they attribute it to a hundred and one causes other than the right one—improper footgear. Get boots on purpose to wear while working. They need not be expensive, but to insure health and comfort they must allow the feet ample room, and have thick soles and low heels. I must emphasize the low heels; the high ones are so tiring and injurious. Laced boots are preferred to button ones, as they support the ankles better.

A dusting-cap (a round piece of print, 18 or 20 inches in diameter, with a casing for an elastic two inches from the edge) is especially needful at this housecleaning season. While protecting the hair from dust, it often conceals the unsightly curl papers or the hurriedly arranged coiffure. This winter I made one from some old fine black cloth, and found it just splendid for running about outdoors, hanging out clothes, etc. It cannot blow off and is a protection to the whole head. Then there are two other conveniences—a large pair of old rubbers and a pair of mittens kept near the door so as to be easily slipped on and off when going for wood or water, if the good man of the house allows you to do such work! You may consider these little things a trouble, but when once you are accustomed to them you'll find that after all it pays, for it is often through thoughtless exposure that colds are contracted, especially at this season of the year. By keeping the head covered and the hands and feet warm and dry, much sickness may be averted.

"Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie,
Which we ascribe to Heaven."

Indecision.

Of all people who provoke us few are more tiresome than those who will never do anything thoroughly. Their actions are incomplete. A natural deficiency of brain structure mars their deeds. They leave the door open; they always remember something to be done just as they are leaving the house, and spoil the effect and good augury of the departure by running back for a pocket-handkerchief, a memorandum book or a final order to the waiter. But the worst of it is they won't let others do what they want right off. A matter has been settled. It is an immense fact and saving of time to accept decisions; it clears the way. A small thing done is sometimes better than a big one prepared or in preparation. These hesitating tempers, however, won't let the small thing do itself. The matter, as I said, has been settled, dismissed. Then they say, "Oh! but—" The luckless decision is caught by the last joint of it's tail just as it was going steadily and safely out of the room—caught by the last joint

of it's tail, pulled back all flustered and rampant, to have a smut rubbed off it's nose. Plague on it, let it go with the smut! As it is, the charm of the launch is spoiled. These people, too, won't eat or drink in a complete way. They put back, ask you to take back a piece. They will have "only half a glass, please." They will be helped "presently." They affect a combination of meals, tea and dinner, say, and a cloth over half the table. They mourn over a wholesale clearance of old papers. They dread nothing more than a final decision of little things; and, whatever they do, seem to leave some part of it designedly unfinished.

MINNIE MAY'S DEPARTMENT.

MY DEAR NIECES,—

All nature is awakening from the rest and sleep of winter, whose ice-bonds, unable longer to resist old Sol's genial rays, have reluctantly broken. The trees are putting forth green leaves, and soon will be again clothed in all their beauty. The pretty feathered songsters are trilling their lays among the branches, gladly proclaiming the return of spring while busily preparing for their tiny house-keeping.

We too must awaken from the comparative rest and inactivity of winter, for there is plenty of work to do. Housecleaning is the first obstacle we meet in our path, but it need not possess any terrors for us if we set about it properly.

There is not the slightest necessity for turning the whole house topsy-turvy, and thereby making everyone in it uncomfortable. Nothing so exasperates a tired man as to come home and find everything in a state of disorder, and it will certainly raise his opinion of his wife's executive ability if he finds the house freshened and brightened without the general domestic arrangements having been disturbed. This can easily be done by taking one room at a time, and as soon as it is finished replacing everything.

In cleaning any room, after the carpets and furniture have been removed, the proper order is to begin with the ceiling, then take the walls and windows, and lastly the floor. Kalsomine or whitewash dries more quickly when exposed to free drafts of air, the windows and doors being thrown wide open for the purpose.

The cellar is the first place that should receive attention, especially if, as is very often the case, any vegetables have been stored there during the winter. These should be removed very early in the spring and the cellar thoroughly cleaned, receiving a good coat of whitewash. Not only now, but at all times, the cellar should be kept scrupulously clean. If this is not done the health of the family is much endangered.

For bedrooms, especially in summer, matting or rugs are to be preferred to carpets, as they can be easily cleaned or often shaken and aired. To clean matting, add a pint of salt to half a pailful of water, then wash and dry quickly with a soft cloth.

To brighten the colors of your carpets, and also instead of so much sweeping with a broom, which always removes considerable wool, take a pailful of clean hot water to which has been added a tablespoonful of ammonia, then with a soft cloth (old knit underwear answers very well, as it can be wrung dry) kept for the purpose wipe your carpet all over. If this is frequently done the surface dust is removed and prevented from sifting through, and your carpets will look better and last longer.

If very much soiled, a good cleansing preparation is made as follows: Dissolve four ounces of white castile soap (or any pure make) in four quarts of boiling water. When cool add five ounces of aqua ammonia, two and one-half ounces of alcohol, two and one-half ounces of glycerine, and two ounces of ether. Keep tightly corked. To clean a carpet, use about a teacupful to a pail of water. A rather soft brush may be used to apply it.

This preparation may also be used to clean black garments by adding two tablespoonfuls to a pint of strong black coffee.

To remove grease spots, use without diluting. With a little stain (which you can easily make from some of the best dyes) and varnish you can make old wooden or wicker chairs, which have become shabby from any cause, look new and bright.

Mahogany color is very popular and gives a handsome effect on any article of wicker or wood work.

All furs should be well beaten and aired; and if you have not cedar chests in which to put them, you will find the long mothproof paper bags which are made for the purpose very convenient, as after filling them they can be hung away in a closet without any fear of the contents being molested by moths.

Whether housecleaning or whatever the work you have to do, take a lesson from the birds that sing so merrily, by going cheerfully about it.

How much easier everything seems when you sing as you work.

Learn to do the most important things first; and if your strength ebbs, learn to let the minor things wait. Try to get something out of life for all you put into it. Enjoy something to-day, for tomorrow may not be yours. We ought to get more than an existence with such help as song and sunshine, laughter and friendship.

MINNIE MAY.

THE QUIET HOUR.

A Word.

A word and the skies grow darker;
A word, and the clouds roll high;
A word, and the soul lies stricken,
And hurt hearts grieve and sigh.

A word, and the skies would brighten;
A word, and the clouds would fly;
A word, and the soul finds healing,
And hurt hearts cease to sigh.

Oh, word, ere too late, be spoken!
Let the threshold of silence be crossed,
Ere the thread of thy fate be broken,
And thy chance forever be lost.

Cheery Words.

Cheery words cost little, but how much good they do; how they drive away melancholy, banish gloom, and alleviate pain! The man who goes about saying them is the world's benefactor. Society is the better for his living. Many a lifetime hardly seems worth living to the hard beset, who have found trouble and sorrow, to whom the winds of fate have brought loss and wreck, or who have parted with their faith in humanity. At the period when they can scarcely lift their eyes from the ground, along comes, with his smile, and his cordial hand, and his look of genuine interest, one of those good souls whose errand seems to be to uplift his fellows. He does not say very much—nothing perhaps which can be remembered or recorded; but he leaves an impression of good-comradeship, of sympathy. The person he meets is encouraged, and passes on with renewed strength to meet whatever there may be to encounter.

In the immortal "Pilgrim's Progress" there are certain characters who always enlist our pity, among them Mr. Despondency and Miss Much Afraid. They have no outlook beyond the present disaster or the impending calamity. It is sorrowful to watch their stumbling and delayed progress, and to realize that they are typical of a throng of men and women handicapped by diffidence or encumbered by hardships, so that a joyous confidence is lacking to them. To such persons the speaker of the cheery word is a true missionary, brightening the dark day and giving them a moral and sometimes what is equivalent to a physical support.

A loving word is always a safe word. It may or it may not be a helpful word to the one who hears it; but it is sure to be a pleasant memory to the one who speaks it. Many a word spoken by us is afterwards regretted; but no word of affectionate appreciation to which we have given utterance finds a place among our sadly remembered expressions. Looking back over our intercourse with a dead friend or fellow worker, we may indeed regret that we were ever betrayed into a harsh or hasty or unloving word of censure or criticism in that intercourse; and we may wish vainly that we had now the privilege of saying all the loving words that we might honestly have spoken while she was yet with us. But there will never come into our hearts at such moments a single pang of regret over any word of impulsive or deliberate affection which passed our lips at any time.

A little explained,
A little endured,
A little forgiven,
The quarrel is cured.

The Master's Questions.

Have you looked for sheep in the desert,
For those who have missed their way?
Have you been in the wild waste places,
Where the lost and wandering stray?
Have ye trodden the lonely high way,
The foul and darkness street?
It may be ye'd see in the gloaming,
The print of My wounded feet.

Have ye folded home to your bosom
The trembling neglected lamb,
And taught to the little lost one
The sound of the Shepherd's name?
Have ye searched for the poor and needy,
With no clothing, no home, no bread?
The Son of Man was among them—
He had nowhere to lay His head.

Have ye carried the living water
To the parched and thirsty soul?
Have ye said to the sick and wounded,
"Christ Jesus makes thee whole?"
Have ye told My fainting children
Of the strength of the Father's hand?
Have ye guided the tottering footsteps
To the shore of the "golden land?"

Have ye stood by the sad and weary,
To soothe the pillow of death,
To comfort the sorrow-stricken
And strengthen the feeble faith?
And have ye felt, when the glory
Has streamed through the open door
And flitted across the shadows,
That there I had been before?

Have ye wept with the broken-hearted
In their agony of woe?
Ye might hear Me whispering beside you,
"This the pathway I often go!"
My brethren, My friends, My disciples,
Can ye dare to follow Me?
Then wherever the Master dwelleth,
There shall the servant be.

We know not half the power for good or ill
Our daily lives possess o'er one another:
A careless word may help a soul to kill,
Or by one look we may redeem our brother.

'Tis not the great things that we do or say,
But idle words forgot as soon as spoken;
And little thoughtless deeds of every day
Are stumbling-blocks on which the weak are broken.

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