

and becoming, and looks its best with the white pipings I have mentioned.

Another skirt which I have lately seen is a kind of over-dress, with an under-skirt, which seems to presage a return to the old double skirt, which was worn years ago. The over-dress is darker than the under one. The fashion of using jet embroideries on net for skirts and lining them with a colour, or with black, has spread wonderfully. There were quantities of these embroideries sold at the winter sales, and though they were far from cheap they were eagerly purchased; for most

feels inclined to turn the cape up to display it. The collar is very high, and often lined with velvet, and having a frill of lace inside. I think we shall see numbers of such capes this spring.

Our picture, "In the first days of spring," shows a very pretty dress of a purple mauve cashmere, with a velvet jacket to match it in colour. The edging of it is a narrow band of ermine, and it has also a band and clasp of silver at the waist; and was worn with a white felt hat, much covered with violets. We have as many of these costumes of cashmere and

and are sewn on the waist-band—an excellent plan, by which you can wear either the basque or a band with the blouse. But, personally, I always consider that the addition of the small basque is more becoming and relieves the sometimes patchy effect of a bodice and skirt which do not match each other.

There seems no fear that the blouse will go out, for I hear of thousands being manufactured, ready for the spring; and I see that a very favourite new material for them is silk serge and also a species of lustre, of which ordinary ones are made. This is in plaid tartans of every imaginable kind and colour, and will answer for all ordinary purposes, as it will wear as clean as an alpaca.

I also hear of the manufacture in England of any number of dress improvers of wire, and, indeed, that they are already to be found in some of our West End shops. I am sorry to hear it, but at the same time, I cannot see how a dress improver can be worn when our skirts are to be so very tight-fitting at the top.

I see, in a daily paper, that in New York they have started an eminently practical thing, *i.e.*, a Rainy-Day Club, composed of women for the purpose of advocating the use of a rainy-day skirt in wet weather. This club has been most successful and is spreading over other parts of the States. The test of membership is, that members pledge themselves to wear skirts four inches from the ground in rainy weather, and some of the enthusiastic members advocate the establishment of a fine for the punishment of those who fail to comply with the rule. This plan seems far more sensible than to wear the divided skirt, which was the platform of the Woman's International Union, and which held a meeting lately. It seems to me, that the nation in general has already expressed an opinion on the divided skirt; as a costume for cycling it is certainly a failure, and every one has quite decided in favour of a short skirt as being in every way more suitable to the tastes of Englishwomen.

I do not know whether Englishwomen will desert their favourite dogs for a calf; but I see in the Italian papers that Signora Crispi has appeared at a recent festival in Sicily, accompanied by a tame calf, very prettily adorned, which followed her as tamely as a dog! The coat worn by the calf was made of a skin of dyed vellum, much begilded of course. The worst of this fashion might be that it may spread to the taming of other animals, and we really do not know where it might stop.

This will not appear so eccentric when we recall the loathsome fancy exhibited here, in our own country, at one time during the last century, when certain fashionable women, obviously courting notoriety, adopted little sucking-pigs in the place of their lap-dogs, and actually carried them about in their arms in the street! Yet such an insane vagary was of a piece with the wearing such preposterous and unclean erections on their heads; and representations of a coach-and-four as a patch upon their cheeks or foreheads. Truly, Society had become effete through an overweening vanity!

It is also reported from Paris that one of the novelties will consist in having landscapes painted on the soles of our boots and shoes! Where they will be visible, save in church at one special service only, is not told us, as certainly we should not see them in any position but kneeling, and they are evidently not intended for pedestrians. There is only one thing that reconciles one to the infinite vagaries of fashion, and that is, that so many earn a comfortable living by ministering to all kinds of odd tastes and eccentricities.



BODICE IN WHITE LACE AND BLACK CHIFFON.

women saw in them the means of reviving an old dress, or of achieving the manufacture of a new one, which would make a great effect at a smaller cost than that at which a good gown is usually obtained. The net is very strong, and the embroidery well done, so that a certain amount of wear may be looked for from them; and those of white, embroidered in black and silver, or green and silver, were quite beautiful for the evening.

Do not imagine that capes have gone out of date, they are too useful. There are many new ones of satin-faced cloth, generally drab or fawn in colour, and frequently ornamented with gold braid. The lining is generally extremely beautiful; so handsome, that one

velvet, or velveteen, as ever, this spring, and I notice that grebe has returned to favour as a warm trimming for the spring; while its colour makes it look quite fit for the season, and its becoming and softening effect is well known.

The other figure shows the front of the bodice, in lace and black chiffon, in the sketch given. This was a very graceful and useful bodice, and could be worn by anyone in the evening, either at home or at concerts—looking quite sufficiently dressy. The bands at the neck and round the waist are of black satin ribbon, and the small basque is of black chiffon.

Many of the basques are made separately,