

REVIEW OF FASHIONS.

In one of the windows of a N. N. uptown dry goods store a very gorgeous cloak is exhibited. It is of gold and cardinal and cream brocade, with swan's-down trimming, and quilted, pale gold satin lining. It is such a departure from all the received canons touching orthodox cloaks, so rich in color and striking in effect, that it at once attracted attention and served as the basis for a universal announcement of the new departure in cloaks, and the employment of magnificent gold brocades instead of the plain black cloth, silk, velvet, and plush, which have heretofore done duty for those who could not afford sealskin. But the gold brocaded cloak hangs in the window still, and there is only one of it; while the crowds of women on the thoroughfares and elsewhere still pursue their way in the selfsame dark, plain cloaks of cloth and silk, and plush and velvet—very few of the latter, for plush has taken its place.

It is strange there is so little recognition of the real and growing permanency of the essential facts in the dress of women, and the necessity which is felt that novel ideas have some basis in what is true and useful to be widely circulated. Women themselves, more and more generally, begin to see and act upon this principle; and it is so vital to healthful progress that it is of the greatest importance that it should receive recognition and encouragement. Usefulness is the great law of life, and the eternal succession of useful little elements, changes, departures, fancies, and ignorant and unauthorized dictatorship, have burdened and muddled the whole question almost beyond the hope of extrication. But there is a divinity doubtless, that steps in occasionally and guides our destinies, even in regard to dress; and it is no mythical or capricious goddess, but one whose laws are immutable and eternal. This divinity, whose decrees we are really obliged to accept whether we will or no, works partly through modern machinery, whose costly parts and conditions cannot be changed except for good and sufficient reasons. The weekly, monthly, quarterly, or even yearly disturbances in fashion, must therefore be limited to difference in design largely, and the original ideas of handworkers which have always a value in proportion to their merit and afford fields of remunerative effort to both men and women. Whatever is made by machinery must be made for the million, or it would not pay for the cost of the force that produces it. It is not limited production that pays the profit to the world's workers, but that which addresses itself to the greatest number; just as it is the "third class" which is said to pay the dividends on English railways. But machinery is a very fixed fact, it cannot change its methods, its productions must be repeated, and repeated, until the machine is worn out. Yet so marvelous is the work done by these steel and iron fingers that the most fastidious cannot afford to disregard it, and so it is accepted, like the air and the sunshine.

It is rather curious that it is to this

generation we owe much that now renders dress easy, healthful, and economical. It was Queen Victoria that gave us thick walking boots in place of "paper soled" slippers, and low shoes, and the "Balmoral" skirt, which paved the way for the walking dress which has stood all the shocks and assaults of the past twenty-five years, and is now impregnable. We hesitate to mention that in which we were the pioneers, but there is nothing that has exercised so wide, so formative, so moralizing an influence upon popular dress as the modern paper pattern. Can any of us realize a time when they did not exist? Is it not to these is due the fact that the American girl, the American woman everywhere, is the neatest and most tastefully dressed of her sex, from Maine to California, and from the South Sea coast to the wilds of the Rocky Mountains. It is not too much to claim the paper pattern as a great civilizer, as a great industrial and economic agent. With a paper pattern, and few yards of home-made cotton or wool, no woman need be ill-dressed—nor is she.

Almost the only advantage which the rich woman has over the poor woman nowadays, is the power to have made by hand what is ordinarily made by machine, and thus adapt it, if she has a sufficiently cultivated taste, to her own personality; but the poor woman can easily do for herself, if she is trained and skilled, what the rich woman must pay some one to do for her. Industry is the key that unlocks the world, and women are beginning to find it out—even wealth cannot so certainly enter its inner portals, or discover its hidden treasures, as the successful worker.

It is to this new gospel of use—this trained industry—that the dress of American women is adapting itself. It has had to work itself out of the old, awkward, clumsy, ill-fitting, and monotonous dress of the working poor, and the capricious, luxurious, fantastic, and ever-varying attire of the rich. It must be graceful yet economical; it must satisfy taste yet afford freedom; it must be diversified yet permanent—no interfering with the requirements of the worker, yet disguising nothing of the lady beneath. Is it too much to say that these ends have been measurably achieved?—that the best dress of to-day—light, warm, pliant, sanitary—with its even surfaces over the body—its few parts, its pure materials, its artistic outlines and soft tints, is superior to any that has existed heretofore, and shows a most hopefully progressive, not backward, tendency.

The workers among women are now no longer confined to the poor. The women's Exchanges throughout the country, all of recent origin, have developed the unexampled need among women supposed to be well off, for active work, and that which paid work brings, and quickly gather a list of many thousands of consigners, all of whom are workers at home—many of them women know in society—but all of them compelled, and generally glad to adapt their dress to the new purposes of their lives. The Woman's Exchange in New Orleans has upwards of thirty thousand ladies on its list of workers—one thousand more than the Ex-

change in New York, which has done so much to maintain the integrity of many suffering and dependent families. And all these Associations tell the same story. Under these it is a sin to be the mouth-piece of a few, and the most frivolous portion of womankind, when the great army of women everywhere are making such heroic efforts—when so much that they do is misunderstood—and the mere echo of commonplaces which have not even the merit of being true. Women cannot travel faster than the train of public opinion will take them; and that they have made "good time" for the past twenty-five years, no one will venture to deny, and their dress has certainly kept pace with their advance in other directions—the revival of low necks by twenty-five or thirty women out of a million, notwithstanding.

THE BABY, YOUR BABY ANY ONE'S BABY.

Mamma's darling, papa's pet. What would you take for her? When you offered her for \$40 you would not have taken a farm. Then she was only a little bit of a thing and lay in the cradle and slept all day and used only once in a while to look up at you with wondering eyes. After a while longer she began to talk baby talk to you and smile at you and the little fingers would close about your big one and pull it and you felt the pressure of baby hands, your baby's hand, and you said baby was worth \$50; not a cent less would buy her. The days and weeks roll on and baby begins to sit up in mamma's lap. She knows you and when you come in and say "hooty-tooty" baby's eyes sparkle and she laughs and flops her little arms up and down, and you take baby for a romp about the room and she likes it and begins to seem to know something. She crawls when she sees herself in the looking glass. She reaches for this and that. She pulls your nose and sticks her finger in your eyes, but baby is queer. You are apt to kiss her. You tell mamma that you think baby is worth \$75, and at the same time you would die for her at that very minute. How willingly you pay for baby's picture in short clothes and for all the little things she may need. And if she gets sick away goes your appetite, away goes your rest. You think of nothing but the little sufferer. How gladly you would take her place. You would give all you have to see her well again. We are talking of your baby now, you know. She is to you the poor, sweet innocent little thing. Papa's pet, papa's life. A little later and she sits on the floor at the door and when she sees you coming commences to crawl and stretch her little hands for you, and you see the light of recognition in her eyes. She clings to you. She trusts you. Baby is worth \$100—to anybody—and a campaign fund would not get her from you. No, you wouldn't take all the world for her. But may be yours is a boy. No difference, the price is the same. God bless all the babies of the land.

Fifty years ago Meissonier's pictures fetched from five to eight dollars apiece, and while making them he was so poor that his luncheon consisted of a raw apple, and his dinner of soup, bread and fried potatoes, his total living expenses for six months being ten dollars.

Some time ago General Di Cesnola presented a cast of an original Babylonian cylinder to Mr. J. F. X. O'Connor, an American pupil of Professor Haupt. The cylinder contained an inscription in Assyrian cuneiform letters, which Mr. O'Connor has translated, and which refers to N. Chadnezar and the magnificent building "Bab'le."

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THE RIGHT SORT OF WIFE.

An exchange gives expression to the following sensible words: "It is astonishing to see how well a man can live on a small income, who has a handy, industrious wife. Some men live and make a far better appearance on six or eight dollars a week than others do on fifteen or eighteen. The man does his part well, but his wife is good for nothing. She will even upbraid her husband for not living in as good style as her neighbor, while the fault is entirely her own. His neighbor has a neat, capable and industrious wife, and that makes the difference. So look out, young man, before you go into matrimony; for it is a lottery in which most men can have but one ticket, and if it turns out a blank, your whole life had better be a blank, too. Luckily, no one need go into the wedded state with his eyes closed, as is the case with lotteries; and we judge all who are sensible enough to use their optics may draw a prize."

Although the newspapers have announced that Madame Patti has bought a handsome billiard table and sent it to her castle in Wales, it is not she who plays the game: but Nicolini.

Sir William Thomson, of the University of Edinburgh, is one of the directors of the railroad at the Giant's Causeway, where electricity is successfully used as a motive power. At Mr. Cyrus W. Field's request, he recently made an examination of the New York elevated roads, and reported that the same motive power could be applied to them with a great saving in the cost of running. The experiment will soon be tried.