

MRS. GRUNDY'S GATHERINGS.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON FASHION AND DRESS.

The splendid tissues manufactured for evening costume, would seem now to have attained almost the climax of magnificence; yet, nevertheless, it is difficult to conjecture how far the luxury of dress may extend during the approaching season. One fact is self-evident, and must be generally satisfactory: it is, that the money expended on the luxury of the rich, carries comfort to the homes of the poor; for charity is never so judicious or so effectual as when it opens up channels for industry, and holds out rewards for labor. Instead, therefore, of adopting those utilitarian views, which tend to censure the progress of elegance, let us rather encourage that progress as an element of general prosperity.

Among the newest and richest products of the silk loom, we have seen some exquisite brocade woven in various brilliant hues, also moiré antique delicately *lamé* with gold and silver, over which embroidery, scattered in a variety of vivid colours, produces the effect of jewelled mosaic work.

Next to these rich materials, suited to full evening costume, the most marked novelties of the season are the new *sorties de bal* just imported from Paris. Some of cashmere, embroidered with gold and silver, and trimmed with fringe of the same costly materials, are types of Asiatic splendor. Others are of white satin, trimmed round with white guipure and edged with broad feather fringe; or instead of the fringe, rich Alençon lace, which, after forming a double row round the cloak, is gathered up as a hood to be drawn over the head at pleasure. We have seen several of these little cloaks, made of pink or blue therry velvet, lined with ermine; and without any trimming whatever on the outside. They are very simple, but very *distingués*. Others are lined with white satin instead of ermine, and are edged with broad feather fringe of the same color as the therry velvet. Several *sorties de bal* have been made of white or pink satin, covered with what at first sight might be mistaken for exquisite quilting in a most elaborate and elegant design; but which, on a nearer inspection, is found to be a light kind of embroidery. We have seen one of these cloaks made of white satin and edged with a trimming consisting of small rosettes of pink *mignonette* ribbon, producing the effect of a wreath of small roses.

Several newly-made silk dresses, intended for out-door costume, have the skirts ornamented with bands of velvet in lieu of flounces. One of these dresses, composed of dark-blue silk, is trimmed with bias rows of black velvet of graduated width. The corsage is high behind, but partially open in front, and is edged round with revers, in the shawl form.

To the corsage is added a *basque*, trimmed with two rows of velvet. The sleeves are split open as far as the elbow, and trimmed in the same manner as the *basque*. The under-sleeves worn with this dress consist of a large *buillonné* of worked muslin fastened on a wristband of Mechlin lace. The collar and chemisette are in the same style as the under-sleeves; Mechlin lace being employed to trim the collar and to form the front of the chemisette. The *mantelet* to be worn with the dress just described consists of black velvet profusely trimmed with black lace. The bonnet is of pink therry velvet, intermingled with *buillonnés* of blonde, and trimmed with white and pink flowers made of velvet. The same flowers are combined with blonde to form the under-trimming.

A dress of chequered poplin, green and black (just made up,) is in the redingote form. The front of the skirt is ornamented with trimming consisting of seven bows of chequered ribbon, corresponding with the colors in the dress. These bows, which diminish as they ascend from the bottom of the skirt upwards, are formed of loops and flowing ends. To each bow a jet tassel is appended, and the jet tassels are of graduated sizes. The front of the corsage is formed of plaits or folds reaching from the shoulders to the waist, in the centre of which they cross and form a corsage *en cœur*. The front of the corsage is trimmed with bows of ribbon, corresponding with those on the skirt, but smaller. The sleeves, which are of the pagoda form, are lined with white satin, and the edges in the inside are bordered by a *ruche* of white ribbon. The sleeves on the outside are edged with bows of chequered ribbon, the same as those on the corsage.

The *trousseau* of a young bride, whose approaching nuptials are at present a topic of interest in the fashionable circles, contains several beautiful dresses of worked muslin. One, intended for *petites soirées*, we will here describe. It has three jupes of skirts; the upper one forming a tunic. These jupes are edged round with a wreath of roses, so exquisitely wrought in open work, that the flowers seem as if made of lace inlaid in the muslin. At intervals and as if scattered accidentally over the wreath of flowers, are ears of corn, wrought in satin-stitch, and standing out in high relief from the flowers. The corsage has a *berthe* edged in the same style, descending in a point at the back and in front, and open on the sleeves. In this opening there is fixed a bow of pink sarsenet ribbon, with long flowing ends. A row of bows of the same ribbon and of graduated size, is placed in front of the corsage. Two bows gather up the tunic at each side, and the ends hang down to the very bottom of the skirt. Nothing can be more simple and elegant than this dress.