

FROCKS FOR TO-MORROW.

By "THE LADY DRESSMAKER."

ONE of the great regrets that we have this season is to find that skirts are to become longer, and that our comfortable short ones are to be declared unfashionable. Such an alteration should have been made at the beginning of the summer, not at the moment when we have to encounter London mud, country roads, or the unswept streets of small towns. The skirts of very smart gowns quite touch the ground, or even rest on it for over an inch; a wretched length for walking, and so difficult to hold up. However, I feel inclined to think, from my own observation, that the many who have to go to and fro without carriages will continue to like, and wear, the short skirt. We are more independent in our ways of dressing than we were; and, though the advance is not great, still we can hold our own opinions in some degree. Of course, so long as we have the bicycle to ride, we shall be compelled to have the short skirt; and I notice that most women of moderate means content themselves with a bicycle costume, which will answer for walking as well.

There is no doubt at all of the popularity of tartans this winter; and for blouses they are immensely used, both in silk and woollen fabrics. The wide box-pleat is again to be seen, and it has, of course, fancy buttons in the centre as of yore. Tucks also remain in fashion, but many of the newest blouses are made on the cross, especially if the tartan used be a large one. Here quiet colours are preferred; but in Paris the largest-sized tartans and the brightest colours are used, and no doubt look charming under that clear sky, where they would keep clean much longer than in dirty London. The Russian blouse shape is the one most liked, and it is made to bag over the waistband all round, in the prettiest new blouses. Velvet of the prevailing hue of the tartan is used for waist and collar-bands; and this is an excellent addition, and improves the appearance very much, besides taking off a little from the rawness of the tartan. This rawness or glaringness of it has been the reason, I believe, why it has never had any great popularity in England; and it is strange that everyone has a feeling of it, though few people go further than to say it looks too showy and bright.

The fashionable tartans are not Scotch, but are those for which the French have always been fond, namely, fancy tartans; and they are certainly, some of them, very pretty and even mellow in their colouring.

The Russian blouse is, of course, the thing to wear; but the ever-useful cape has by no means disappeared, and there is no fear that it will, in view of the numbers of handsome ones that have been prepared by the furriers and are worn by the best-dressed women. These are mixtures of fur and velvet, with handsome *passementerie* and lace. In fact, nothing is more remarkable than the manipulation of fur this year, and nothing shows the pitch to which the tanning and preparation of all kinds of pelts has been brought, and their wonderful suppleness. The fur flounces are as soft, or softer, than cloth would

be, and when put on over the shoulders yield as easily as if they were made of velvet.

The improvement in electric seal this year

is very great; and I was surprised to see the prices asked for capes made of this material at the West End shops. Of course they



A RUSSIAN BLOUSE AND FUR CAPE.