

COLOUR AS APPLIED TO LADIES' DRESS.

PART 2.—BY J. W. G.

It is not our intention to discuss whether the dress of the present day has assumed the proportions of extravagance as some have asserted. The most inveterate grumbler cannot deny that it takes very little to make a bonnet. We will leave the discussion in the hands of the ladies, and depend upon it if you are a bachelor friend of their's and attempt the argument, you will be worsted, and we cannot extend to you any sympathy. They will not only point out how little it takes to make a lady's garment, but call your attention to the fact, that it is the spring that moves the many hands of industry, furnishing food and labour for millions; that it stimulates man's fancy, skill, taste and inventive genius, and even impels him to study and scientific research.

Nor will we stop to enquire how the fair sex may be said to lay claim to the exclusive right of colour, leaving to us but black, white and brown. We do not repine, if they have the pleasure, we enjoy the sight, which is some compensation. Imagine, if by a freak of fashion, they were to adopt a costume as unvaried as the present masculine attire, and our shop windows—that now display all that is chaste and lovely in colour and exquisite in design—nothing more attractive than broad cloth or black stuff, what a depressing effect it would have. Then if colour, in regard to dress, may be said to be the prerogative of woman, it becomes her to use it with good taste. This can only be done by proper attention to its laws and not by open violation of them; not by wearing a dress of various colours regardless of all harmony.

We do not wish to be understood to advocate the wearing of a particular colour by a person at all times because it is in harmony. Let us denounce fashion as we will, we cannot resist the tide; in spite of every effort we will float with the stream more or less. Few have the moral courage to reject it altogether; then what is wanted is a correct knowledge of the laws of harmonious colour, so that you will be prepared to adapt yourself to the times. We dislike to see persons make themselves what is termed “odd,” by appearing in the garb of ancient days, or again give all their time and means to dress, caring nothing about the cultivation of their minds.

The rules of society compel ladies to dress according to the sphere in which they move, but it does not compel them to dress extravagantly; for nothing can be in worse taste than an over-dressed person. And how often do we see one plainly but neatly dressed, yet we are struck by her lady-like appearance. Again, others seem to love colour to such an extent that they decorate their person in all the colours of the rainbow; nor do they show any choice of delicate tones, but use them as strongly as possible. What can such an individual want, only to be stared at by the vulgar crowd who are caught by the glitter and show? No one, possessed of a cultivated taste, can admire it, but will immediately begin to read something of the character of the wearer—her tastes and habits—and too often the reading will not be very flattering.

We are very much inclined to think that it was sensible advice of a writer, when telling how to prepare a hare for dinner, to say “first catch your hare.” In our case we do not want our lady friends to perform any such feat, but