

SPRING FASHIONS ABROAD.

There is always an indefinable charm and delight about spring clothing that is lacking at other seasons of the year. The rich draperies and heavy furs of winter are donned reluctantly after one mournfully folds away summer dresses and summer memories together in autumn. But the freshness and delicacy of the spring gown is in a sense an expression of the same intoxication and exhilaration with which the flowers burst into blossoming, and which thrills the lark's song with new melody.

First there is the bonnet, about which the most remarkable characteristics are the extraordinary manner in which violently contrasting colors are combined together, and the absurd extremes of its dimensions—a spray of roses tangled in a scrap of lace or a huge plateau of straw decorated with a whole garden of flowers. Flower diadems or flower capotes are again in favor, especially in violets and in the fashionable shades of mauve and old magenta softened with purple shading. These capotes have the disadvantage of becoming speedily vulgarized, and the preference on this account promises to be for wreaths and bouquets of beautifully made velvet flowers that are too expensive to become common. Black straw hats are trimmed with black lace, jet sprays, and aigrettes. White straw hats are lined and trimmed with strong contrasts in color. One has its brim lined with dark brown velvet, a wide band of the same color about the crown, a plume of beige feather tips, shading to brown, and just a touch of the sky blue which enters so much into the decoration of the new millinery.

For house dresses there is a decided fancy for trains of greater or lesser length, according to the importance and ceremoniousness of the occasion. There is a mania for girdles—long narrow affairs of bead passementerie loosely knotted and terminating in bead tassels. The Medici collar reigns supreme, sleeves cannot be too high or full, and bodices grow more and more intricate in construction, and bewilderingly coquettish and fanciful in design as the skirts grow more and more simple and straight. Now the Medici collar makes a short woman look dumpy, a plump one look broad shouldered and stout; the new seamless bodices require a faultless figure, for they bring out every defect most mercilessly, but the shortest woman will sport the tallest collar and the girls with most ambitious and aggressive shoulder blades will wear the smoothest waists. It is the way of the world.

Renovating Black Silks.

Plain black silks may be "renovated," in making over old dresses, in various ways. A very simple way is to lay the silk flat on the table; wipe the surface with a woollen cloth to remove the dust; then boil an old pair of black gloves in a quart of water, let it cool, and with the liquid wash the silk by using a soft sponge; while still wet turn the silk over, first spreading an ironing-cloth underneath, and with a flatiron as hot as can be used without scorching, iron it on the wrong side. Colored silks may be renovated in this way by boiling a pair of gloves of the same color in the water. For common black silks or ribbons, in cases where the matter is less important, a mixture of equal parts of strong tea and vinegar makes a very good washing liquid; the silk in this case should be ironed on the wrong side before it is quite dry. To clean silks that are very much soiled, take potatoes, wash and peel them, grate them to a fine pulp, add a pint of water to a pound of pulp, and strain through a coarse sieve. This makes a very good potato starch, which settles to the bottom. Then pour off the clear, mucilaginous liquor, which is the best article known for cleaning silks. Put a linen sheet on the table, spread the silk on this, and with a sponge dipped in the potato liquor give it a thorough washing; then rinse once or twice in clear water; after this iron as above. For common use in a small way, without waiting, potatoes peeled may be used by cutting off the end and rubbing flat surface on the silk, repeating the slicing to secure a fresh surface. If the silk is covered with grease spots take two ounces of spirits of wine, one ounce of French chalk, and five ounces of pipe clay powdered fine. Make this into a paste and roll into a stick and let it dry. Then moisten the grease spot or the end of the stick and rub it on the silk, brushing it off occasionally until the grease is all removed. This may be done before the whole fabric is cleaned by the process above described.

He Had to Be Polite.

Woman enters a street car in Toronto and a man jumps up and urges her to take his seat. The man goes out on the rear platform of the car and an acquaintance remarks:

"You are getting to be excessively polite. This is the first time I ever knew you to get up and give a woman your seat."

"This was a case of necessity, my dear boy."

"Ah! Who is the woman?"

"My wife."

"What, and a case of necessity?"

"Yes, for if I am not polite she might not grant me the divorce."

Our Old Maids

We can go back to the history of Adam to find the first old bachelor; but I have no record of who the first old maid was, or where she came from. I think she must be like Topsy—"Neber was borned; jess growed." Still, if we consult modern history, we may be able to find the pedigree of more than one. They are a great deal like the historical mule—They never die, but just vanish. It seems to me that they must be terribly lonesome during their existence on this mundane sphere, and their life must be a "barren ideality." I can imagine a band of old maids bewailing their fate, and, as the poet very candidly says:

"Above us a passion-flower opens the sky,
And earth in its languor half closes its eye.
For hours are but cloud-drifts that silently fly,
And love is a vision, and life is a lie."

There are several reasons why old maids exist, but to explain them would be a task that is beyond my power. They live now, and will until the end of time. No town can be without them, or, at least, should be without them. It is a hard thing to decide just when a lady does become an old maid, for the older she gets the less frequent her birthdays become. We have asylums for every class of afflicted people but the old maid. Perhaps such an institution would not pay. (If anybody will start an asylum I will take the contract to furnish pet cats of all color, creed and denomination.)—When an old maid gets so old that all her chances, like sunbeams, have passed her by, she becomes crabbed, crusty and selfish, and vents her spite upon any and everybody, bemoaning her wretched condition and lonely state. I think Miss Gossip was the name of the first old maid, and she still has members of her family living and very active—all old maids, but there are exceptions. I have seen many pleasant and handsome old maids in my time, and with dispositions just as sweet as could be asked for. This is the kind that make a person forget the Gossip family of old maids, and who are such of their own accord, and not because they couldn't help it. Perhaps I am judging the old maids in general too harshly. Methinks that could we but fathom the many ins and outs of their past lives, we would yet find some kind remembrance, and a tender spot away down in the corner of their hearts for some dear one of "Auld Lang Syne." And again, if we could but follow them into the secrets of the past we might find them reading over old, well-worn letters, or gazing fondly at some treasured trinket, or looking with tear-bedimmed eyes at the image of one who was dearer to them than they themselves would dare to admit. Still the world moves on, and when that great day comes perhaps that much-abused "old maid" will sit at the right hand of Him who doeth all things for the best.

But enough. Let us treat them kindly and not pry into the secrets of the past nor jar the golden chords of memories dear to them.

"Oh, dinna add to other's woe,
Nor mock it with your mirth,
But give ye kindly sympathy
To suffering ones of earth."

Aphorisms.

Cunning pays no regard to virtue, and is but the low mimic of wisdom.—[Bolingbroke.]

Affectation in any part of our carriage is lighting up a candle to our defects, and never fails to make us taken notice of, either as wanting sense or sincerity.—[Locke.]

Anger is the most impotent passion that accompanies the mind of man; it effects nothing it goes about; and hurts the man who is possessed by it more than any others against whom it is directed.—[Clarendon.]

Compliments, which we think are deserved, we accept only as debts, with indifference; but those which conscience informs us we do not merit, we receive with the same gratitude that we do favors given away.—[Goldsmith.]

Nature loves truth so well that it hardly ever admits of flourishing. Conceit is to nature what paint is to beauty; it is not only needless, but impairs what it would improve.—[Pope.]

It is often more necessary to conceal contempt than resentment, the former being never forgiven, but the latter being sometimes forgot.—[Chesterfield.]

Men talk in raptures of youth and beauty, wit and sprightliness; but after seven years of union, not one of them is to be compared to good family management which is seen at every meal, and felt every hour in the husband's purse.—[Witherspoon.]

Experience keeps a dear school; but fools will learn in no other, and scarce in that; for it is true, we may give advice, but we cannot give conduct. However, they that will not be counselled cannot be helped, and if you will not hear reason, she will surely rap your knuckles.—[Franklin.]

Effect of a Refusal of a New Bonnet

Husband—"Mary, I saw a very handsome bonnet as I came down the street this morning."

Wife—"Handsome bonnet! Well, suppose you did?"

H.—"I thought it would become you well."

W.—"Become me? I don't want any more bonnets than I have now."

H.—"You don't want another and newer fashioned bonnet?"

H.—"Certainly not."

The husband fell to the floor and died, and now his wife wonders what killed him.

The Intellectual Capacity of Woman.

It has taken some centuries to convince men that women are truly capable of rising to any position above that of slavery—socially and physically. It may take another century or two to convince the world of the fact that a woman, given the same intellectual advantages and education as a man, will prove, intellectually, his equal. For the world is conservative in respect to women, and it is doubtless difficult for those who have enjoyed complete superiority and sway for so long a time, to realize that, in the increasing battle for existence they are confronted by a rival. And the presumption of such rivalry takes them aback. The popular argument is that these smaller, delicate beings, with whiter hands and long hair, and with the badges of servitude clinging to their very garments are physically and therefore mentally incapable of taking an equal place with man in the intellectual world. And when, as is the case very often, women overcome the disadvantages of their position and win a place for themselves in the world, the example is quoted as a peculiar one, which is not likely to occur again.

But experience is gradually proving the contrary. Women having had greater educational advantages in the last few years, have proved themselves able to appreciate them, and to bring their refined and cultivated intellect to bear upon the practical and social questions which affect them and the stronger sex equally. It is, after all, the environment of a life which greatly influences its growth. Given surroundings of frivolity, and a woman will grow up frivolous, without aim or use; but in a healthful, intellectual environment, she will acquire earnestness of purpose and thought. The names of Elizabeth Browning, and Mary Somerville, and George Eliot, are so undoubtedly crowned with due honour, that no eulogy is needed to augment their fame. They are examples of talented women, just as Carlyle, Scott, and Browning are examples of talented men; and in Mrs. Browning and Mary Somerville we see how perfectly possible it is for women to be true examples of womanhood as well as of intellectual power—to be loved and revered for their purity and goodness, as well as admired for their work.

"Much learning" did not unsex them, nor need it ever, for true knowledge can but make the learner more humble and more willing to learn—aye, and more patient too, for no woman can achieve any intellectual triumph without paying a price for it. Physical weakness hinders, though it does not crush mental effort, and, in the words of one who in marvellous creative power is unrivalled among women, "Knowledge through suffering endureth."—Great Thoughts.

The Queen of Spain

The present Queen is a Princess of the House of Hapsburg. She is the daughter of the Princess Elizabeth, a lady who has always been considered the most charming of the Austrian Archduchesses. She is a woman well advanced in years, and has been twice married to Austrian Archdukes and twice widowed. A special favourite with the Emperor, she embellishes the whole family life of the Hapsburgs by her wit, her physical charms, preserved even into mature middle age, and her social talents. Her children seem to have inherited some of her originality and force of character. Thus, her eldest son insisted upon making a love marriage, espousing in 1878 a daughter of the Duke of Croy, a marriage without precedent in Austrian Royal annals, and which caused not a little flutter, as the Prince insisted that the union should be treated as an equal one, and his wife regarded as Archduchess. It is his sister who is the present Queen Regent of Spain. The Princess was but twenty-one when she left Vienna to unite herself to Alfonso, and had therefore lacked time to take any important place in Austrian society. Nevertheless, it was felt by the Viennese Court that an attractive figure departed with the Archduchess Christina, who harboured a good heart, open to noble sentiments, under a pleasing exterior.

What Makes Wrinkles

We are told by some scientists that wrinkles are due to a gradual wearing away of flesh underneath the cuticle; others declare them come from a drying up of the epidermis.

I am inclined to the latter theory as being the more reasonable of the two, and one which can bring artificial aid to bear upon. If the epidermis becomes dry we can apply olive oil beaten to a cream with very little rose water. A lady who is advanced in years (indeed, she has reached her sixtieth birthday), has a lovely complexion and no wrinkles. When asked her reason for believing that she possessed the secret of perpetual youth, she laughingly replied that she had found the fountain of youth, for herself, in olive oil and rose water. She also says that patent face powders are to be shunned, and preference given to "drop" or prepared chalk, which is harmless, cheap and lasting, having a peculiar clinging quality, and is not "dead white," but yellowish in tone.

The olive oil and rose water should be applied directly after the skin is washed in good mild soapsuds, rinsed and then thoroughly dried. Rub the ointment into the skin until it is entirely absorbed. Then apply the chalk, if it is day time, and even in rough weather the skin will not become chapped.