



The Cold Winds—Little Girls' Frocks—The Material and Making of Dresses—Hospital Revelations—When Doctors turn Playwrights—Delicate Lips.

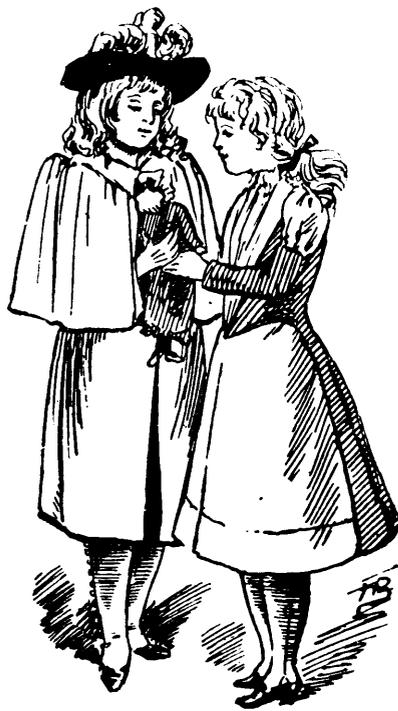
The cold winds that are blowing, whilst I write, make it very difficult to speak of the new fashions, as they have just the same effect on coming attire that we see these bitter blasts have had upon all vegetation. For the present the blossoms have shut themselves up, and hidden away their scarcely formed glories till the sun summon them to open to his warm, and—we will hope—more abiding rays. Still we must clothe ourselves, whatever the weather may be, and it is at any rate useful to have a costume that is adapted to any period of spring, so I hope, and think you will find this little French model suitable in every way. It is, as all the best Parisian style of dresses always is—very simple. The skirt is quite plain, of a woolly but very light make of



slate grey material, in fact a kind of camel's hair, which is beautifully soft and yet warm. The bodice is of black velvet or velveteen, fastened, as you see, across the chest with two large ornamental buttons of oxidised silver and gold. Any rich-looking buttons will do for this purpose, and two others are placed at the back of the bodice, just at the waist. Handsome buttons are one of those things that are much thought of in Paris, for they set off a gown to the best advantage, whilst cheap and tawdry ones detract from its appearance, at least so I have always found. The waistcoat that appears underneath is made of white corduroy

with the same style of buttons in a smaller size. The sleeves are quite a plain coat shape, opening over underones of the white corduroy. It is a very useful dress for a moderately cold or warm day, and the little black velvet coat gives it a smart appearance, whilst the white waistcoat is springlike, without being too masculine looking. This model could, of course, be copied in any other colours, with a dark or coloured waistcoat, if desired, or a light cloth coat, but it is one of those examples of how in France they often wear a different bodice to the colour and texture of the skirt, which is a very useful custom, for so often the bodice is the first of the two to get shabby. Besides, a coat and waistcoat of such plain colours as black and white will look well with anything. Another useful purpose that this costume will serve, is, that it will do quite well to wear without any extra wrap on days when the warmth of the sun really makes us believe that we are in a spring and not a winter month. It also does not look so painfully indoorish, like the ordinary dress of a hot old lady when she has taken off her cloak and prefers to walk about *en déshabille*.

Little girls frocks are very pretty now, and may be made in almost any modified reproduction of those of their elders. For everyday thoroughly useful wear there is nothing better than cloths or light woven serges, according to the kind of dress you require for them. If it is for cooler weather, cloth would decidedly be the best, but for days that are increasingly warm, nothing could be more suitable than a thin serge. French people are particularly fond of blue and red, and I therefore give you a sketch of a little dress of this combination of tints that is thoroughly serviceable for home wear. The plain skirt—for little girls' clothes in this respect follow exactly on the same lines as the attire of those young persons who are nearly quite grown up—is composed of a rich crimson shade of red serge. The hem, instead of being turned under, is sewn down on the outside, and a narrow white cord hides the sewing. The front of the bodice is filled in with the same material, pleated right up to the neck, and brought down



to a point at the waist. The sides and back of the bodice are of dark navy blue serge, either made like a coat at the back with the fulness cut in one with the upper part of the bodice, like a princess shape, and pleated in underneath; or, if preferred, the back breadths can be gathered on to the base of the princess cut bodice behind. The same thin white cord runs all round the extreme edge of the blue, and also of the red revers to the bodice. The sleeves are blue, with red puffs at the top. The other child wears a long mantle, with half-long cape set on to a yoke on the shoulders. It is of fawn cloth, or any of the soft greys that are now so becoming to everyone. Her hat is of a light fawn felt to match, lined with deep *loutre* velvet (of which, by the way, the yoke of the mantle might be made), and either turquoise blue or dark brown feathers as a trimming. The gaiters correspond in colour and material with the mantle.

The material and making of dresses are still in measure undeclared by Madame Fashion. We may, however, count on the light cloths, before alluded to, and those woolly textures like the skirt of the dress in my illustration, is certain to be worn, when we are buying spring costume. These last, *lainages velus*, as they are called, are wonderful fabrics, and one is surprised in handling them at their exceeding softness. Poplins or bengalines and striped silks are both mentioned as amongst the coming favourite stuffs. I see a number of light beiges with large spots on them, but these are not worn by people of the highest taste, or who know best what will be the most fashionable. It is equally difficult to say what style will be the most favoured for the make of dresses, as to predict all the new materials chosen. Certain French houses affect particular ways of making costumes, but the prevailing taste of the Parisian ladies seems faithful to the *fourreau* skirt, and long basqued jacket, which is sometimes called a tunic, and occasionally buttoned back like the tails of the soldiers' coats in the time of Frederick the Great of Prussia. Long waists are still to be the order of the day, and every new way of trimming the bodices of dresses is arranged with this object in view.

Hospital revelations I am delighted to find are coming out in all directions. It is no secret that the managements of these great establishments are notoriously faulty, and that not only do patients go in them to be cured of their various maladies, but also to catch worse illnesses. In addition to the criminal carelessness that puts a patient not suffering from an infectious complaint into an infected bed, there is the terrible waste that goes on in the bad cooking and scandalous quality of the food provided for both patients and nurses. I regret to say that this is no new thing, for I could name more than one London hospital and country infirmary where the food provided is simply uneatable, both for its inferior quality and by reason of its atrocious cooking. Enormous sums are expended annually on every kind of good material in the way of nutriment for patients and nurses, but the latter certainly do not get it, or it is served up half-raw and ill cleaned. Now, of all things connected with the service of an hospital, that are, to say the least, unwise and bad economy, none are more so or more reprehensible than to ill-feed and under-feed the nurses on whom so much depends, and whose health, with the great and exhausting calls on their strength, should be kept up to the highest level. Yet many of them have to buy food constantly out of their own hard-earned salaries or they would be half starved. This food is not the proper kind either, to nourish them properly, but is easily bought, such as buns and cakes, and it is no wonder that they often fall into ill-health in consequence. It is to be hoped that the nurses will find the courage that should belong to their position, and "speak up" about what they see and know is wrong, and especially about the bad arrangements made for their night-work, which constantly leaves one young woman as sole attendant to a large ward with dying patients and those suffering from delirium tremens to be attended to at the same time, to the latter of whom even the combined strength of two men is inadequate.

When doctors turn playwrights we may naturally expect to find their professional knowledge brought into the service of the stage. This is the case with the play that Dr. Dabbs, of the Isle of Wight, has recently submitted with the assistance of Mr. Edward Righton for public approval, entitled, "Our Angels." Much after the plan of the memorable piece of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, a very powerful and sensational melodrama has been based on the effect of a certain and very strong medicine. In this case it is the terrible habit of taking morphia, which I regret to say is increasing, particularly in France, and is not confined solely to men in that land, but greatly adopted by ladies also. In this play it is accountable for all kinds of troubles, murder amongst them, and this is all worked out with the science of a medical man, and the skill of the dramatist. Dr. Dabbs was very fortunate in having Mr. Lewis Waller as the exponent of so difficult a rôle as that of an habitual drug drinker, for he exhibited the various involuntary moods of which such a man becomes the victim with great appreciation and talent. There is no doubt that when the piece has undergone the necessary adjustments to the requirements of the stage it will take a high place amongst those which are the favourites of people who like a good, stirring and emotional melodrama.