

WOMAN and HER WORK.

I see that a well known physician, Dr. Ernest Hart, D. C. L., has been lecturing in London recently on the "Art of Living." It seems a little strange, because I fancy, we conceived end of the century people who have such exalted ideas of our own cleverness, thought we knew all about the art of living, as well as most of the other arts; but Dr. Hart thinks otherwise, and says that at the end of 5,000 years very few of us will understand even the elementary principles of comfort and health. I don't dispute the doctor's opinion, but I think we should remember before condemning us for our stupidity, that individually we have had so little benefit out of the 5,000 years. Why some of us have only lived a week or two and the oldest person I ever saw wasn't 90, so I don't think it is quite fair to credit the present generation with the whole number, and then blame them for not making the most of the enormous amount of experience those years represent. I am quite sure that most of us do the best with the limited means at our disposal (and considering the many disadvantages under which we labor, we succeed as well as can be expected, but the difficulty is, that just as soon as we have got the matter down to a science and reached the age of eighty, or ninety, we are obliged to give up all our cherished theories, and turn our attention suddenly from the art of living to the unpleasant necessity of dying. So what can be expected of us? But to return to Dr. Hart. He devotes special attention to the art of going to bed. Now to most of us the art of going to bed would seem to be one of the simplest things in the world, but the lecturer directs his remarks especially to "the ordinary well-to-do Englishman" dealing at some length with that gentleman's suicidal custom of warming his drawing, dining and sitting rooms comfortably, and leaving halls, corridors and bedrooms at an atmosphere which is seldom much above freezing point in winter, and frequently a good deal below it. The thoughtful, and self indulgent Englishman, Dr. Hart adds, will sometimes have his bedroom warmed by a coal fire or a gas stove, but this is an exception and usually reserved for the delicate members of the family. The lecturer draws a graphic and amusing picture of the British householder removing his clothes in the arctic sleeping room, and putting on "something which is called a 'night shirt,' a sort of linen, or cotton sack which leaves the lower limbs and feet uncovered and at once makes a man an uncomfortable, and ridiculous object, the clothing of a primeval savage"—which means that Dr. Hart is strongly in favor of pajamas as a night attire. He next attacks the linen sheets which are considered the only correct thing in well-to-do English homes, and denounces them with perfect truth as the foster mothers of rheumatism, and the worst of all material for contact with the skin and pictures the hapless Briton, ignorant of his woes, and going peacefully to sleep in his linen night shirt and sheets trying to counterbalance their evil effects by loading himself down with a superabundant mass of blankets and quilts all tucked in around the edges like the swaddling clothes of infant savages; letting the fire if there is one, go out, and going contentedly to sleep in a room which is almost at freezing point, after spending the day in well warmed rooms.

It does sound ridiculous, I must say, and as if the English at least stood greatly in need of advice on the important subject of going to bed, considered as a fine art. But Dr. Hart gives plenty of good advice on the subject of beds, and bedrooms which might be profitably applied by Canadians as well as English people, though we do not need any instructions on the subject of keeping warm. He advises that the heavy burden of quilts and blankets which weigh most people down at night, be discarded and two light eiderdown quilts be substituted, that the temperature of the sleeping room never be allowed to get below 60° and last that everyone wear pajamas instead of night gowns. We can thus, he says go to bed rationally, healthily and prepared for any emergencies of the night, instead of appearing as scarecrows clad in our hideous night gowns, should there be any hidden alarm during the night. It seems to me that a man in pajamas would be quite as ludicrous a sight as one in a decorously long night shirt, but of course this is a matter of taste.

After all Dame Fashion is an indulgent mistress to her votaries, and does a great deal to please them! She seems to have a kindly way of looking out for their defects and providing for them, that is very soothing; and whereas she provided a greater choice than now, for all sorts and conditions of women. The thin and lanky girl with narrow shoulders and scarcely any chest who was once almost a reproach amongst her plump, and pretty sisters has now little to dread from the dangers of competition, her large sleeves hide her defects of figure, and the voluminous folds of her skirt conceal her too slender lines and make her look just

like everybody else. If her neck is long and thin she has only to purchase half a yard of chiffon, pleat it up into innumerable frills tack it inside the high collar of her dress and not only be in the very height of the fashion but enjoy the comfortable knowledge that one of her greatest defects is successfully concealed. If she is just a shade too stout for her own ideas of grace and beauty, but has a lovely neck and arms, why then it would seem as if the Marie Antoinette fash and the three quarter length sleeve had been especially designed for her convenience and to display the turn of her beautiful throat, and the rounded beauty of her arms; while the severely plain lines of the skirt and its fullness at the lower part, take away from the two ample outlines of her hips. So taken altogether we all of us have much to thank the goddess of fashion for just now.

One of the features of the season is the washable silk which seems to be shown in every possible variety, and as far as texture goes they are only distantly related to the soft and flimsy fabrics we have been accustomed to under that name. The new wash silks are lustrous, which they have never been before, and there is no possibility of mistaking them for a good quality of cambric, which was one of the drawbacks of the wash silk of yore. They are crisp and glossy as taffetas, and yet they will really wash, and look well after it, too. They show all the regular taffeta patterns, and the checks are perhaps prettiest of all. Black and white both in checks and stripes seem to be the most popular, but of course the Dresden patterns are coming out in newer and prettier designs everyday, and they will enjoy a share of public favor. Contrary to all expectations there is a great demand for black silks, which will be used for best skirts, to wear with the lovely dainty blouses with which we bid fair to inundate this season. These skirts will take the place of the everlasting crepe on which everyone wore last summer—"For a good black skirt you know, to wear with my blouses." There is a plain black taffeta silk in a close firm weave which gives it a very rich appearance, and there is also a heavy taffeta figured in very neat designs, both of which will be found most satisfactory for skirts. Black satin damask with large and well defined figures, will be a favorite silk for handsome costumes, and black satin duchesse, will also be much worn. Speaking of the multiplicity of dainty blouses to be worn this year, here is what one girl said to me the other day—"Sometimes I think it does not pay to be clever with your needle, and able to make your own things because if you seem to dress better than other girls on that account you only go the credit of being extravagant and dressing beyond your means. Mrs. Someone told me the other day that I was considered a very extravagant girl, and people wondered where the money came from to dress in the style I always kept up. It turned out that one of my chums had told her mother I had fifteen different blouses, not one of which really belonged to a skirt, but all extras. It was true enough, but every one of them and the two skirts I wear with them did not cost as much as most girls pay for a single suit, and I made every one of them but two myself. There are two old shirt waists for wearing around the house in the morning, and two white blouses from last year, and then I made myself four new shirt waists for this summer, and two zephyr gingham. The print waists cost me just 39 cents apiece, the best cambrics 63 cents and the zephyr gingham trimming and all, about a dollar each; I had some good white embroidery so I made it up into a white blouse, and the lawn to make it with cost 54 cents. Then I have the tartan blouse I have been wearing all winter, my best red crepon, the pink silk I made myself for an evening waist, and my pale blue zephyr crepon, for my best in the summer. You know I got a black mohair dress last autumn, but I have worn it so little that it is fresh and new for the spring, and I shall wear the skirt all summer with my blouses, and have my last year's black serge for second best. So I cannot see how anyone can call me extravagant, do you?"—And I don't see either, but still there are many girls in the same position, their own ability to plan, their skill with their fingers enables them to have a constant change of dress, and to present an appearance of elegance and style, almost unattainable even to girls with large incomes. I think my friend's explanation of her method of dressing may give some useful hints to other girls whose purses are not long but who know how to use their needles; and so I publish it. She has a curious way of her own of buying, and she seldom waits until she actually needs a thing before purchasing it, but has her eyes open all the time for possible wants, and looks a long way ahead. When she has a dollar to spare, and sees anything she fancies, she will say, "I think I had better get that now, while I have the money, and it will be just the thing for me in the spring." I have often seen her buy an end of beautiful silk which was

cheap because there was so little of it left; and when I have asked her in surprise what use she could possibly make of it the answer would be—"my brown cloth dress will have to be made over next autumn, and this will be the very thing for it" then in the autumn she would appear some day in a beautiful new costume of brown cloth, with vest, collar and cuffs of rich silk, and even I who have seen her purchase it, would be deceived for the moment into thinking she really did dress beyond her means. It was the same with everything, an elegant new hat covered with ornate plumes, would surprise her friends, until she quietly explained that it was the same black velvet hat that she wore two winters ago, only bent into a different shape, and that the feathers had been collected at different times from the various hats she had possessed, steamed, brushed, and re-curved. "You see I take such good care of my clothes, that they never seem to wear out," she says. And that is the secret of her good dressing.

Black velvet ribbons are amongst the newest decorations to be worn with plain house gowns, this spring, and they will also be employed later in the season for the garniture of the dainty lawn pique, and dainty dresses to be worn during the summer. Each of these dresses will have its own set of blue, dark brown, or black velvet ribbons, which really go with the cotton fabrics better than silk ribbon.

Amongst the "novelties" for this season there are actually seen kilted skirts and jerseys! Is it fourteen, or fifteen years since they first appeared in conjunction? I really cannot remember? Of course the bicycle craze is responsible for the jersey, and a very sensible thing it is for those who are taking violent exercise of any kind, but what has revived the kilted skirt I wonder? It is sometimes plaited the whole length, and sometimes, when the wearer is young and slender, it is adjusted as a close fitting jersey striped bodice, and fastened just about at the hips, as it was when it first came in. Some of these skirts are plain, and others are trimmed with several rows of ribbon, put on near the foot, before the material is plaited. Others again are trimmed with ribbon sewed on from belt to foot, and appearing on every third or fourth plait. This trimming is put on after the plaiting is done. What next shall we have in the shape of novelties, I wonder? ASTRA.

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Friends fall off; friends mistake us; they change, they grow unlike us, they go away, they die; but God is everlasting and incapable of change, and to Him we may look with cheerful, unpretentious hope.

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"John," she said, "there's a burglar trying to get in the house." "Is there?" was the uninterested reply. "Yes. Aren't you going to do something about it?" "No, Maria. I'm a humane man, but if that fellow falls over Johnny's tin wagon, and steps into a toy drum and gets frightened by leading on a rubber doll that says 'papa' and barks like a dog, I'll be his own fault. I don't feel called on to interfere with my advice or to offer a helping hand, for it won't be a deserving case."—Washington Star.

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