

made is composed of light-blue silk shaded with white. There are three flounces on the skirt, each trimmed with a broad row of white watered ribbon, having a very narrow wreath of blue-bells, fastened to the edge. The corsage and sleeves are ornamented with the same small blue flowers.

As a variety in dresses, we may mention one or two composed of silk, which have been made with the skirts open in front, in the peignoir style. These dresses are worn over another dress or slip of white muslin, ornamented in front with needle work in the *tablier* form, and on each side of the *tablier* the silk shirt is fastened to the muslin by bows of ribbon. The high corsage and long sleeves of the silk dress display the front of the under-corsage and sleeves, consisting of muslin ornamented with needlework and Valenciennes lace. This style of dress is particularly elegant when the peignoir or upper dress is composed of rich figured silk or brocade.

Dresses of barege, white or printed muslin or other transparent textures, are frequently made with the corsage low and plain, and over them are worn a canezeou of muslin or of white or black lace.

The new barege shawls are among the best adapted for the summer season. The texture being light and possessing a slight degree of warmth, renders them available when the atmosphere has become chilled by successive falls of rain.—Many of these shawls are long, like the cashmere shawls, and when folded they form a comfortable covering for the shoulders, and chest. They are of various patterns and colours: some are striped and others are covered with a palm-leaf pattern in tints vying with the most beautiful cashmeres. Those having a back ground and a border of palm leaves so deep as to leave very little of the ground plain, are most *recherche* for negligé costume. Among the most elegant patterns may be mentioned some covered with stripes, alternately blue, white, and fawn-color, the stripes being sprigged either with small palm-leaves or flowers, or covered with arabesque designs.

MOTHER OF PEARL.

Mother-of-Pearl is the hard, silvery, internal layer of several kinds of shells, especially oysters, the large varieties, which in the Indian Seas secrete this coat of sufficient thickness to render the shells an object of manufacture. The genus of shell-fish, *Pentadina*, furnishes the finest pearls as well as mother-of-pearl. It is found round the coasts of Ceylon, near Ormus, in the Persian Gulf, at Cape Cormorin, and some of the Austrian seas. The dealers in pearl-shells considered the Chinese from Menilla to be the best; they are fine, large, and very brilliant. Fine large shells of a dead white are supplied by Singapore. Common varieties come from Bombay and Valparaiso, from the latter place with jet black edges. South Sea pearl-shells are common, with white edges. The beautiful dark green pearl-shells called ear-shells or sea-ears, are more concave than

the others, and have small holes round the margin; they are the coverings of the Haliotis, which occurs in the Dalifornian, South African, and East Indian Seas.

In the Indian collection of the great exhibition, specimens of the finest pearl-shells were shown.

The beautiful tints of mother-of-pearl depend upon its structure; the surface being covered with a multitude of minute grooves which decompose the reflected light. Sir David Brewster, who was the first to explain these chromatic effects, discovered, on examining the surface of mother-of-pearl with a microscope, “a grooved structure, like the delicate texture of the skin at the top of an infants finger, or like the section of the annual growths of wood, as seen upon a dressed plank of fir. These may sometimes be seen by the naked eye: but they are often so minute that 3000 of them are contained in an inch.” It is remarkable that these iridescent hues can be communicated to other surfaces as a seal imparts its impress to wax. The colors may be best seen by taking an impression of the mother-of-pearl in black wax; but a solution of gum arabic or isinglass, when allowed to indurate upon a surface of mother-of-pearl, take a most perfect impression from it, and exhibits all the communicable colors in the finest manner, when seen either by reflection or transmission. By placing the isinglass between two finely polished surfaces of mother-of-pearl, we obtain a film of artificial mother-of-pearl, which when seen by single lights, such as that of a candle, or by an aperture is the window, will shine with the brightest hues.

It is in consequence of this lamellar structure that pearl-shells admit of being split into laminae for the handles of knives for counters and for inlaying.

TRIMMINGS.

Ribbons and trimmings are now so important a portion of the female toilet, that we can hardly make them too conspicuous in our pages. Everywhere, on the skirt and bodice of a fashionable costume, where ribbons can be placed with elegance, they are now to be found, in rosettes, bands, or ends, sometimes co-ordinating with it.

Ball dresses are seldom considered complete now, without one of those superb sashes that seem literally interwoven with natural flowers. Sometimes a sash, white blue, or rose tinted, is perfectly plain taffetas with a rich corded edge, which has great simplicity, and is very becoming to young ladies in their first season, when the utmost simplicity should prevail in the toilet.

We know of few things that can be used with more tasteful advantage in a full or demi-toilet than the class of ribbons we have illustrated in this page. They serve to transform a plain toilet into full dress, or render full dress more superbly complete; in short, there is no making a perfect toilet without them, from the shepherdess to the queen of fashion.