

FACTS AND FASHIONS.

By a Fashion Authority.

Specially written for THE DRY GOODS REVIEW.

SILK merchants should have no occasion to grumble over their prospects this season, for they never were better, particularly as regards black silk.

A gown of this sombre hue is a necessity in the fashionable wardrobe to-day, and light silks for whole costumes, as well as for shirt waists, will be in heavy demand as the Spring advances.

The fashionable world is giving itself up to the purchase and wearing of silks, glace, taffetas in all fancy styles, dettings, velvet figures and warp prints. The chine promises to be well worn as the season advances. Fashion is leaning in that direction, and fine effects will be shown towards Spring.

The black silk gown, however, at the present time, is the great consideration. They are to be lined, of course, with any bright shade of taffeta, the lining being separate. The skirts are long and full, about four and a half yards in width, and many have a demi-train, from 6 to 15 inches in length. If a flounce is put on, it must be very carefully stiffened, and the edge bound with velveteen to set it out well. The top of the skirt is now invariably tight at the waist, and down to about 6 inches, where it flares out gracefully to the hem. A very smart effect can be produced by a black skirt, with bodice of white silk, with collar, belt and cuffs of black.

Mousseline de soie enters largely into dress trimming this season, and a half low bodice of this material, with bands of pink, petunia, or blue velvet, and some jet, is most effective. A long scarf, with double ruffle at the ends, must always accompany the costume.

Quantities of jet are put on; sometimes, an entire front is composed of it. A handsome imported afternoon black silk gown was shown lately—heavy gros-grain, with raised bayadere stripes about half an inch apart. The skirt was absolutely tight for about six inches from the waist. Then it flared well out, and had a train of about six inches. Lining separate of burnt orange taffeta, with ruffles at the edge. The bodice had a full front of burnt orange velvet, held close by an open work of jet. A pale shade of shirred burnt orange chiffon formed a yoke to meet the velvet and jet. The collar was very high of the chiffon, with tabs of the velvet edged with jet. A narrow fold of velvet edged the waist, which formed a sharp point. The sleeves were skin-tight, and had a small fold of the same, to take off the perfectly plain appearance at the shoulder.

Broche silks are worn to a certain extent, but the plain style is far the more artistic, and allows of the most tasteful and varied ornamentation. Merchants can confidently expect a good demand for black silks, as well as broad-cloths and mixtures of silks and wool. The present fashion is sure to be a favorite for a reasonable time to come. Slimness is the order of the day, and as black accentuates this it will be worn extensively.

Many modistes are turning out black skirts with two bodices, one for day use and another for demi-toilette.

Jet, spangles and flitter can be used to a lavish extent, and all kinds of black and white combinations, which are so artistic and becoming, will be worn extensively.

Entire velvet gowns or velvet in part run the silk costumes closely. Vests and revers of velvet are now entire waists of this lovely material. Basque tails are getting longer and evolving into

coat tails all made of velvet. Sometimes, instead of an entire velvet skirt, it is made of moire, armure or bengaline, with the trimming laid on in folds or coming up knee deep in application. In fact, the designer can elaborate and ornament as much as she desires in this material, or she can build

severely plain gowns entirely of one material. A good quality of velvet is now to be had of a light weight which makes it more comfortable to carry than formerly when its weight was always against it.

Although there is such a demand for rich material it must not be supposed that there is no room for woollen costumes that are equally handsome in their own way and quite as effective. The New York Horse Show, which is to fashion on this side of the water what the Grand Prix is to Paris, showed any number of splendid wool gowns, which were quite as much admired as their silken sisters. The prevailing color was pale gray and next came the light fawns and browns.

Gray will undoubtedly be a strong color for this Spring. For this time of the year, the blues and purples are having the strongest run, and will go well through the season. In Canada, there are not such rapid changes in fashions, the wealth is not so great, and the high pressure and demand for variety not so excessive, and a fashion started in the Autumn will run well through the Winter months with very little variation.

Round waists are the order of the day and have a slight fullness brought well to the centre. The front is slightly pointed to give the waist band the proper set. The fronts can open either at side or down the centre. Yokes are square and run bolero effects close. Skirts are glove-fitting over the hips and flare well to the ground and are lined with hair cloth to give them the desired firmness. Every woman desires to have broad shoulders, a long, round waist, and medium hips, and designers must do their best to aid and supplement where Nature has been deficient.

Sleeves are close, long over the hands, but none are perfectly plain at the top. All have something to take off the plainness there; either a few tucks, an epaulette, etc., and all have a few gathers.

A good deal of fur can be used for trimming cloth winter gowns, a three-inch band round the skirt with medici collar to the coat and cuffs to match.

The tailor-made skirt proper is still clear of the ground, and a well-cut skirt can just barely touch and still keep clean. Long skirts, to be worn in their proper place, are long in front as well, but the short walking skirt is in still, and will remain in for the Winter. It fits snugly around the hips, and flares well out into a fine fullness below, and can be either flounced or trimmed.

Hopsack is still a favorite; a blue over orange silk, and trimmed with jet passamenterie, makes a charming gown for house wear. A vest of burnt orange, veiled either in black or cream lace, trims the bodice.

Tailor-made gowns are once more severely plain, as they should be, and are trimmed often with simple rows of stitching and nothing else.

Many evening gowns have long sleeves made of gathered chiffon or mousseline de soie. They are made very long, and fall over the hands, and are very graceful.

A great deal of lace, net, mousseline de soie, etc., is worn this Winter for ball dresses. A lovely imported gown for a young girl was shown in pink silk, with all-over of white chiffon, embroidered with silver sequins; the bodice had folds of pink velvet around the top, and the full chiffon came up to meet it; the sleeves were small