

VELVET'S TURN NOW

Late Season Dress Models Show Its Merits.

THE PARISIAN SACK FROCK

Possible Only for a Slender Figure, But Very Modish.

The Variety Among the Nets Endless—They Are Used for Trimming as Well as for Whole Costumes—Sheer Embroidered Bodices Used With Heavier Empire Skirts—Dinner Gowns in Black and Gold—Relieving Note Given by the Separate Skirt—Much Done With Fringes by the Paris Makers—Ready Made Evening Frocks.

The beginning of the season did not promise particularly well for velvet. Few of the French models exploited that material and the estins, crapes and broadcloths seemed to have things very much their own way.

But as the season advances and the cold comes nearer the interest in velvets grows, and we have seen many beautiful late season imported models in this material, as well as some charming velvet costumes designed and made in New York workrooms.

Of course velvet is impractical stuff,



GREEN CLOTH AND CHIFFON.

showing spots and wear readily, prone to wrinkle, irreconcilable with bad weather. No woman of few frocks should dream of ordering a velvet, but a more beautiful material was never made nor one more becoming nor one giving a more emphatic impression of richness; and with these virtues to its credit why should a material be barred merely because it is not altogether serviceable? When did fashion makers or fashionable



TAUPE CLOTH EMBROIDERED.

women consider the wearing qualities of a material? As a matter of fact no such phenomenon militated against velvet this fall. The one fault that could be urged against the material was that, despite the suppleness which it has taken on in recent years, it does not drape so clingingly, so subtly as do the soft satins and crapes and nets and cloths; and since all the world had gone mad over clinging effects one heard less of velvet than of other stuffs.

On second thought the designers have



BROWN CREPE DE CHINE.

realized that for straight clinging effects without drapery velvet is all that could be desired, richer than cloth or the Ottoman which has been pushed forward for dressy costumes and imitatively beautiful in colorings.

Some of the new velvet models in three pieces or Directoire frock designs are altogether lovely, the straight clinging



VELVET GOWNS EMBROIDERED AND BRAIDED.

sack front so dear to the Parisian being particularly successful in this material. The mulberry velvet frock of the sketch will illustrate this point, and while extreme and possible only for a slender figure is of a type very well thought of along the Rue de la Paix.

In a Fifth avenue shop the other day we saw a velvet model even more serene in line than this. It was cut down but



OF OTTOMAN SILK.

slightly at the neck to show a shallow round yoke of fine net embroidered in spidery fashion with gold. The bronze green frock itself fell from shoulders to hem in unbroken line and with only slight recognition of waist curves. A line of small satin buttons embroidered in self-color and gold was set on each side of the front, reaching all the way from shoulder seam to hem, and the long close sleeves of velvet had similar buttons along the full length of the outside seam.

A narrow band of embroidery between two satin cords finished the velvet next the guimpe, and the only other relieving note of trimming was in the form of the flat pocket or amouliere which hung on the left side of the skirt supported by narrow satin scarfs from the shoulder and was handsomely embroidered. This aims, perhaps, by the way, is a late fad associated with the severely plain saquee street frock, and though the name may be a misnomer the thing itself is often attractive enough.

But these things, as we have said, belong to the extremes, and less trying velvet

models have the high Empire skirt as associated with a little bodice of embroidered net or chiffon such as is seen with many of the satin and cloth skirts. Sometimes a little velvet is introduced upon the bodice, but this is not necessary.

Colored net, or lace embroidered in gold is often used for the entire bodice of an elaborate frock, and plain net or chiffon may be effectively trimmed with bands and motifs of gold embroidered net. The manufacturers have provided laces and trimmings in a large assortment of the fashionable colors interwoven with gold or silver or embroidered in self-color and gold, and delightful bodice arrangements may be achieved with these trimmings. A clever little dressmaker told us the other day of a device to which she resorted in order to obtain just the bit of trimming needed, and the idea may be passed on for what it is worth.

One of this dressmaker's customers was

black and gold lace with a little tucker of plain gold net finishing the semi-decolletage and a frill of the same gold net falling over the hand.

Frequently an evening bodice with an Empire skirt of satin consists of nothing but a wide band of embroidered net running across the bust and around under the arms, two more bands over the shoulders and meeting the horizontal band and folded tulle or net to fill in the space of the square décolletage and form little sleeves. Sometimes when only folds of white or flesh colored tulle are laid across the low cut square opening the effect from a distance is at first glance rather startling.

In place of the embroidered bands over the shoulders satin scarfs may be used, and a pretty effect is sometimes obtained by adjusting the left scarf so that it ends in a soft knot at the girdle in front and falls in a long, neat, over the skirt in the back, while on the right side the arrangement is reversed, the scarf terminating at the girdle in the back but falling to the knee in front.

The use of the separate scarf is better understood by American women than it once was, and one sees such graceful accessories cleverly handled in connection with frocks, for which their coloring furnishes a relieving note. Often the success of the toilet actually rests with some vivid note of color introduced in a filmy scarf. Certain vivid rose shades are particularly popular for the scarf.

The Directoire scarf, brought around from the back and knotted low in front or at one side on the skirt, is less used upon smart models than at the beginning of the season, because the idea was so easily caught up by the manufacturers and exploited in the cheapest of models; but girdles with long ends falling at side or front or back are still numerous.

Considerable is being done with fringes by the Paris makers, but though they certainly lend themselves gracefully to the prevailing lines and draperies American women do not show much enthusiasm over them. Some bodice nets with borders formed by several rows of two inch crystal fringe applied in festoon lines make up charmingly for evening.

The degree of perfection obtained in some of the machine embroideries nowadays is amazing, and by the aid of this superior machine work some makers are turning out very effective little evening frocks at absurdly low prices. For example, one house has been showing an evening frock at \$48 which succeeds in looking modish and pretty, though the delicate pink satin of which it is made is not of the richest and the embroidery which covers the short waisted little bodice is done by machine. Lines and color are excellent.

The Empire skirt is plain save for a line of openwork down the middle front and some tiny tufts running from the skirt girdle to the hip line. The short waisted little bodice is as simple, save for

the gold design untouched. The work took time, of course, but being, as we have said, a little dressmaker, she could give the time without charging extravagantly for it. It was successful, and the bodice is a thing of beauty.

Plain net scouted elaborately all in the color of the velvet makes an effective bodice for a velvet frock and occasionally a rather coarse mesh silk lace is laid over gold or silver tissue.

Right here let us sing a psalm of praise to the manufacturers of nets. The variety in this field is endless and though two or three kinds of net are almost ubiquitous there are hosts of other less common. Every imaginable change has been rung upon the size and arrangement of dot designs and fine lace or openwork lines or stripes.

A net now being used considerably for guimpes and sleeves in place of tuckered net gives the idea of a finely tucked net at a distance, but in reality a flat surface with fine lines of closely woven mesh alternating with lines slightly wider of the more ordinary mesh. Some of the fancy weaves in silk nets are charming and many of these are woven with bordure designs in faint color.

There are exquisite silk nets, too, with deep embroidered borders in self-color, and the robe patterns in net beggar description. Many of these latter are too ornate to be really beautiful, but others are altogether lovely. One finds sequins and paillettes—iridescent, gold, jet, crystal, all tones—lavishly used, but usually in fine designs rather than the massed glittering scales once fashionable, though suggestive of opera or ballet.

Appropos of sheer embroidered bodices with heavier Empire skirts, many of these bodices glisten with metal or crystal, or jet and often, when suitable material by the yard is not to be found, the dressmaker finds what she wants for the bodice among the beautiful scarfs of mousseline chiffon and net which are a feature of the season. One dressmaker triumphantly showed us a chiffon scarf in an unusual and delicious shade of rose, sprinkled with tiny gold beads and matching perfectly the crepe charmeuse with which it was being combined.

She had, too, another lovely scarf in some sort of silk gauze of a pale rose petal pink, with at intervals a tiny rose in applied crystal beads, the beads not set very closely together and merely suggesting the rose form. This was to be made up as a bodice for an evening frock of plain satin.

Handsome dinner gowns in black and gold are made with clinging Empire skirts of black satin or of one of the satin finish crapes and bodices formed from black net lace embroidered in gold. A striking and serviceable model of this type had a perfectly plain skirt and a soft girdle caught in front with soft choux of the satin, in whose centres were big black satin buttons covered by a network of gold cord. Above this girdle bodice and long sleeves were all of the

black and gold lace with a little tucker of plain gold net finishing the semi-decolletage and a frill of the same gold net falling over the hand.

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the self-colored embroidery, with a tucker of gold introduced into the centre of the flowers. The round décolletage is finished with a satin cord from which fall tiny balls of satin, and inside this neck finish is a tucker of net and lace.

The one serious flaw in the model is the long sleeve, which is made of coarse net, but with finer tucker net substituted the frock would have an air distinctly smart. Doubtless it would not wear long, but the effect is there, and what can one expect for \$48? We have seen a host of ready made models at from \$75 to \$100 which, overelaborated and fussy, could not compare for effectiveness with this cheap little model.

And while we are talking of ready made frocks it is astonishing to note the growth of this comparatively recent industry. Jonah's company was a juggernaut in comparison with the ready made clothing business.

More and more, too, women who do not need to buy ready made clothing for economy's sake buy ready made models for convenience sake, and the supply of high class models provided for such trade—models both imported and domestic—increases wonderfully each year.

One woman who but recently started in business in a very small way, carrying on a few high class models at one time and choosing them with uncommon skill, tells us she has done a \$75,000 business this last year, and it would be interesting to know what one of the important houses devoted to such business accomplishes in its year.

The frocks of the small stockists are domestic models, all save one of which a back view is given, and all are good, though the sleeve of the brown crepe is a trifle too fussy for the harmony of the frock and a simpler sleeve would have been more in order. A tendency to fussiness and a lack of artistic understanding of line are the chief faults of our domestic designers, and this year ought to be educational for them, for line now counts 75 per cent. in the success of a frock, and provided the lines are perfect the greater the simplicity the better.

The taupe gray cloth of the outfit is a successful model, thanks to this same gospel of monotone simplicity, and this same model works out well in satin. The line of the sleeve cap or drapery is possibly a flaw here, a clinging continuation of shoulder line being in better taste than any marked break between the lines of over and under sleeve.

Corded silks such as Ottoman have been strenuously pushed for costume material this season, but while undoubtedly handsome they do not find great favor, women objecting that while an Ottoman coat may be worn it doesn't look warm as does cloth or velvet.

And here we come back to our point of departure, the velvet costume. (Soutache and other braids figure prominently in the trimmings of the handsome velvet coat and skirt costumes, and stunning passementerie ornaments, buttons, etc., are introduced with the braiding. Bands and cords of satin too are favored trimmings, and one sees heavily embroidered net or satin or cloth used for trimming velvet, as in the superb French model of the central group.)

PROGRESS OF SWEDISH WOMEN.

Great Changes in Their Physical and Mental Training.

There has been a great change in the condition of Swedish women within the last fifty years, since they have been brought into closest touch with English and American travellers. Formerly a Swedish girl of the upper classes was brought up as a household plant. While her brothers were hardening their bodies with all manner of healthy physical exercises, she was told it would be unladylike to follow their example.

She seldom ventured out during the winter months, with the result that her mind and body suffered in consequence. A transformation has now taken place and she has become a keen sportswoman and an enthusiastic devotee of all outdoor exercises. Her brothers look upon her as their chum and a "jolly good fellow."

In 1870 the universities of Sweden, Upsala and Lund, opened their doors to women and allowed them both to matriculate and to follow the profession of a physician. Since that date the number of women who have taken advantage of the permission has been steadily increasing, and would be larger still but for the heavy fees of the girls' high schools, which make education so expensive that students generally prefer the higher Training College of Lady Precursors, which gives instruction free of cost.

The expenses of the studies connected with the medical profession and the long course (from seven to nine years) which it involves, from the time of matriculation, have been a great drawback to women, while the requirements are higher than for any other medical degree in the world. Nevertheless, a fair number are finishing their studies, while many have duly qualified and are practicing physicians.

There is nothing to prevent the Swedish woman from taking up any profession she likes except the military and the clerical, but most confine themselves to teaching, and 99 per cent. of the national school teachers are women. The assistant professorship in higher mathematics and in theoretical astronomy at Stockholm High School was held a few years ago by Sofia Kowalewsky, a Russian by birth, winner of the Bodin prize, and one of the best mathematicians in Europe! Her sad and premature death cut short a brilliant career.

Many women now find work as post-

office clerks, and many of them obtain the less remunerative posts. Those who prefer an outdoor life to a sedentary one in an office sometimes devote themselves to gardening, which is a healthy and fairly profitable pursuit.

Many are journalists, and they hold their own in literature. In art the women are in exactly the same position as the men, both as regards the right to study and in the matter of prizes. They can also be elected members of the Royal Academy, and many have availed themselves of this privilege.

It is to the honor of Sweden, says a writer in the Queen, that the fact of a woman working for her living in no way lowers her social position. Many professional ladies are the daughters of court officials and are received and welcomed in the court circle.

The women of the peasant class are sturdy, active members of the community, every day useful and important as they are. They work as laborers on the farms and receive about \$30 a year.

The principal source of the farmer's wealth is the dairy produce, and the women are usually employed in the morning till late at night. Many are engaged as jobbing gardeners, and in Dalsland they are often to be seen in their picturesque, practical, and sturdy costumes doing the heavy work on private estates as day laborers. The care of the graves in public cemeteries is always conducted by women.

The working hours of a Swedish laboring woman are from 5 in the morning till 8 at night, and two hours interval is allowed her for three meals; her husband's hours are the same. The Swedish woman's life is a healthy one is proved by the fact that its average length is higher than in any other European country, England and Belgium having a 2.5 years higher than the corresponding figure for the male sex.

The women of all classes take an interest in politics, and there is a strong and increasingly powerful suffrage party in the country. The press is on the side of the suffragists and magazines give friendly accounts of their doings. One reads that "with the exception of England the suffragists of Sweden have without doubt worked more indefatigably during the last year than those of any other country. Their work has been characterized by intelligence, patience, courage, dignity and unyielding determination. The campaign has been a grand one."

That is likely to be a successful one as well is proved by the fact that six bills dealing with women's suffrage were introduced last session in the Swedish Parliament. The bills are in the hands of the committees exist in the country, all being affiliated to the National Association for Women Suffrage at Stockholm. The members are indefatigable and give up their spare time to travelling over the country, holding meetings, distributing literature and organizing generally. One woman, a board school teacher, recently covered 40 miles on foot in the most isolated districts, where she addressed public meetings and spoke privately to the women in outlying places.

WOMEN BUTCHERS.

An Unusual Feminine Occupation Followed in Paraguay.

From the New Orleans Times-Democrat. The butchers in all parts of Paraguay are women. In the public slaughterhouses the cattle are despatched by men. This is the only part of the work done by men. The animals are skinned and otherwise prepared by women who are dexterous in the use of the saw and knife. It is served out to the customers by women—not generally by weight but by the piece—and the price is very low.

Women of all ages act the part of butchers. Some are young and pretty, others old and wrinkled. The women are great businesswomen and keen to pull a new arrival almost to pieces in the hope of securing his custom. These women butchers earn good wages, and many of those in business on their own account acquire a modest fortune.

The cause of this state of things is the heroic war waged by Paraguay more than thirty years ago against the overwhelming forces of Brazil, the Argentine Republic and Uruguay combined. This war, which lasted five years, bore many singular points of resemblance to the recent Boer war. It ended in the almost total annihilation of the able bodied male population of the country.

When the war was over the people had been reduced to the most abject poverty and were on the verge of starvation. Worse still, owing to the destruction of the male population, perfectly sane, vigorous, and all the work formerly performed by men fell on the fair sex. They rebuilt the houses which had been burned down, tilled the fields and wove for themselves rough homespun clothing from the cotton grown in their own fields.

Mink, Sable and Marten. From Fur News. American mink is the finest in the world, while Russian sable is the most highly prized of its kind, although the variety of the animal which is found in the Hudson Bay country commands a high price. It is more popularly known in this country as the marten, which is a brother of the sable from Mexico.

Dealers assert the marten is fully the equal of the sable in the richness and color of its fur, but the reputation of the Russian variety has acquired so much prestige from that most respected of all qualities, old age, it is impossible to persuade the public of the former's merits.

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