

ELLEN OSBORN'S FASHION LETTER

Beautiful Costumes Worn at Midwinter Dances, Delight in Which is Somewhat Dimmed by Perplexity as to Where to Receive.

NEW YORK, Dec. 29.—Since London set the fashion of receiving one's guests upon the stairway landing, New York, whose stairs are built, as a rule, upon a less generous pattern, has been more or less puzzled.

In old-time houses the reception rooms are usually on the first floor, and even if they are not, the stairway is long and straight, unbroken by landings. Unwilling to refuse obedience to a fad, some hostesses living in houses of this description have been receiving of late at the head of the stairs. But there is a certain

other, and occasionally hopping into the air in the jiveller movements of the dance is a spectacle that of late has exposed to irreverent youngsters.

Unless one has abundant locks or very secure pins, it needs but the change of a word to make it still sadly true that, "un- easy lies the head that wears a crown."

Evening dress both for debutantes and matrons is more regular this winter than last. That is to say it is the fashion to have two sleeves alike and not to attempt clownish contrasts between the sides of one's bodice. The result is greater dignity and elegance of dress, with now and then a slight sacrifice of picturesque-ness. A wilderness of transparent stuffs is in vogue, especially for the young girls. December introduced into society, Miss Mary Crocker, who as benefits a multi-millionaire, is credited with wearing an evening dress but twice before discarding it, she appeared in a lovely gown of two sorts of lace over two petticoats, one of chiffon and the other of satin.

The upper part of the dress is of an exquisite creamy silk net draped at the corsage to give a clinging, jacket effect, and then falling in a graceful tunic. Upon this exquisite background leaves and flowers, some of cream gimpure lace and others of black gauze, are applied, and these are flecked here and there with turquoise.

The lower part of the dress is made of a deep flounce of black lace over white silk, and the long, narrow train flowing out from the waist at the back is again of the net with cream and black applications.

The bodice is cut very low, as is now the mode, and is sleeved, a large bow of black and turquoise blue velvet being placed on each shoulder. Turquoise blue velvet studded with turquoise is introduced also among the lace folds of the corsage. This lace and jeweled robe is mounted over white chiffon and this in turn over white satin.

SIMPLE GOWNS.

Simple gowns of white spotted net are worn by many of the season's debutantes, with dainty garnishings of lace and ribbon, ruchings about the low corsage and tulle. Coral pink velvet ribbon encircling the waist and tied in a snood in the hair is a favorite finish to such a toilette. Often it happens, however, that the girlish net dress is made to gleam and glitter with spangles that rise in brilliancy an entire league's. Single sequins are not heavy enough, so they are sewed on double or triple, and the brilliant embroidery designs really cover a robe from neck to hem.

Miss Marie Winthrop, one of New York's famous beauties, wears such a dress; hers is of faintly tinted yellow satin veiled with fainter yellow chiffon finely plaited and flimsy and all agleam with silver spangles. The low bodice is trimmed with tulle and lace, and from under this trimming peep out pink and yellow velvet roses. A useful evening dress made for a woman, who, though no longer young, is charming and much admired, is made of a wear-resisting, black dotted-silk gauze, trimmed with endless ruffles of black chiffon. The bodice also is of chiffon, with a lovely piece of old application sur tulle frilled on the right shoulder and caught with a knot of pink roses, the lace crossing to the left hip. The other side of the bodice is outlined with roses, and below the flowers an intricate embroidery in fine steel beads forms beautiful flower designs which surround the shoulders and are carried down upon the bodice and then on the skirt, where they make the richest and most beautiful decorations.

In the hair a pouf of three roses, finished with a black gauze and steel-embroidered butterfly, fastens a triumphant black spray. The gloves and shoes are of black suede, and the fan of hand-painted black gauze with a drooping trail of roses and tiny steel spangles. An altogether desirable dress where black, rich and not too brilliant is called for.

I might add, perhaps, that although designed to be décolleté, a gimpure and sleeves of delicate black lace have been provided to adapt the costume for dinner and informal wear.

SEA-GREEN SILK.

A pretty dress worn by Miss Anna Dodge, who is a tall, graceful girl, is composed of the softest sea-green silk and chiffon. The skirt is of chiffon finely plaited, over which falls a tunic short and square in front but trained in the back. Of delicate green silk covered with applications of rare lace. The draped bodice is of the plaited chiffon applied with an edge of lace. The very short sleeves are of lace and chiffon.

For informal evening wear and for such debutantes' receptions as have been postponed until January, a number of very pretty white cloth and silk costumes, trimmed with lace, have been prepared. In these the gimpure effect is preserved very generally, with a collar of Berlin lace about the shoulders. In many cases the gimpure is removable, making the dress, if need be, décolleté.

For theatre wear light cloth skirts with fancy waists continue to be worn. Often the theatre waist is half-décolleté. One that does not stop with the half is a white silk muslin blouse with a scarf of exquisite white lace drawn about the shoulders and fastening with a diamond buckle over the bosom. The ends of the lace are caught with a second buckle at the waist and fall thence almost to the ground. The skirt is of pastel-blue cloth, with a narrow black velvet waistband, while about the low corsage, above the face scarf is arranged an edging of black velvet, framing the shoulders and studded with diamond ornaments.

The accessories of this dainty toilette are a flower box of crushed velvet blossoms and a large gauze fan. Great numbers of black tulle blouses beautifully embroidered in jet are seen. One of these, slightly cut out at the neck, is worn with long, transparent sleeves of white lace, which are circled with bands of black velvet ribbon fastened with tiny steel buckles.

A showy combination to help out the usefulness of a black silk skirt is of black net covered with jet sequins which are sewed very close together and finished with a band of pink velvet well covered with embroidery. The long sleeves are of pink chiffon crossed with bands of jet and gold trimming.

A half-décolleté bodice of lace and chiffon has jabots of lace falling down upon the skirt and effectually uniting the two parts of the costume.

ELLEN OSBORN.

The Queen's First Doll Dinner Set.
A pretty story respecting the Queen's first visit to Bristol, sixty-nine years ago, is told on apparently good authority. With her mother she entered a china shop in High-st. to buy a doll's dinner service. The one that captivated her fancy was too dear for her childish purse, but, in spite of early lessons of economy, she still wished to purchase it. Thereupon a consultation took place between her and her mother, ending in a triumph for the young Princess, the Duchess of Kent consenting to lend her the amount wanted until her next allowance should be due. Our future Queen carried off the precious tea set with great joy. The shop was kept by Miss Elizabeth Ring, a Quaker woman, a relative of whom is responsible for the story.—The London News.



A LONG DRIVING GOWN.

SHE WILL WEAR THE LONG COAT

The Fair Feminine World Has so Decided This Winter.

ENGLISH BOX AUTOMOBILE.

Then there is the Paletot Which has No Shape at all and the Princess Which is Prettier—Expensive Goods Made up in These.

PARIS, Dec. 29.—After three months of uncertainty, during which time the feminine world has wavered between the short jacket and the long cloak, fashion has finally decided in favor of the latter.

These long cloaks are known as the box, the automobile and the Princess. The latter is tight-fitting, but is open in the front with rounding shape. The box coat is very loose and absolutely without shape, being inclined to set out from the figure rather than follow it. The automobile cloak is longer than any of these and is principally distinguished by its color and material. The former is very bright and the latter is rich.

As an example of the automobile may be mentioned a cloak worn by Mrs. Astor in Paris not long ago. It was an automobile cloak of red, of the color that takes its name from the style of cloak. It was put together by strappings of the same cloth heavily stitched, while the collars outlined the pocket flaps and indicated the epaulettes. A maroon collar-ette with stole ends was worn with the cloak.

THEY ARE NOT PRETTY.
This is the first season that the tasteful French woman has allowed herself to be carried away by a new vogue to the exclusion of its prettiness. The long cloaks are new and striking, but it can not be said that they are pretty. They are English in style rather than French, yet they have struck Paris with a force and fury that are indescribable. At a reception at the house of Madame Louber a few days ago I overheard a woman say: "I wonder if any person really admires those long, loose cloaks."

To which her stalwart companion made reply, "I am sure no man likes them." Yet, as Lady Teasdale says: "Lady would you have me be out of the fashion?" And so the long cloak is worn. Yet this may be said for it that it hides an ugly figure, as well as a pretty one, and clothes all in its enveloping mantle of voluminousness.

Now that the long cloak has been attacked and defended, it has no equal, for it protects the figure so well that a woman can wear her lighter and prettier gowns all winter in the street without danger to her health. With a handsome hat set over a pretty face, with smart furs and gloves, there is a smartness that is very fetching.

Take a long Princess cloak of pearl gray cloth. It was tight fitting at the back and sides, and rather clinging in front. Such a cloak as this was worn at a reception given not long ago by Mrs. Orden Goelet. As the family is in mourning it was not a gay affair, merely an afternoon at home, yet very elegant from the wealth and station of the family. Miss Goelet is the heiress of whom so many engagements have been announced, and her mother is the lady so much gossiped about as the possible fiancée of William Waldorf Astor.

The guests called in long cloaks. While the long cloak is not a dressy garment, it is worn for calling. Being so elegantly made it has acquired a dignity not its own, and, though little better than the ulster from a general point of view, it becomes by its aesthetic materials a thing of elegance.

THE MAKE-UP.
This cloak was of pearl gray cloth with satin finish. It was as fine as satin. Pearl gray satin laid in folds formed a rich border and the same trimming extended in curious patterns from the hemholes downward. A narrow band of chin-chilla extended around the entire cloak bordering the high collar and the front, and following the edge of the cloak around its entire boundary. The cuff was formed by a novel ar-

with a deep ripple around the foot, the ripples being appliqued with various designs.

A panne velvet skirt was applied with figures of Russian lace. This lace is coming greatly in favor. It is effective, elegant and very durable. It is used upon the large family of satin-faced goods.

The paletot is another cloak that has not been mentioned. It is three-quarters long and hangs perfectly straight around the figure without a suggestion of end or shape.

Three cloaks, two of them of the paletot variety, were so beau-moish as to claim attention. One was of castor gray buttoned down the front with big white pearl buttons of a pearl so clear, yet shading to blue, that you knew the buttons to be as costly as any semi-precious gem.

The lapels were scalloped and were heavily stitched with white satin. The standing collar was also scalloped and finished in the same way. Strappings of the castor gray were used for a neck-let was attractive from the fact that it was hand painted, with petals of daisies, all in white and trimmed with the finest sequins of steel. A narrow trimming of milk supplied the note of eccentricity to the costume.

A box coat was remarkable for its eccentric back. It was of café au lait satin faced cloth, very heavy. The seams in the back were stitched and an odd Grecian irregularly marked the back of the waist line. The square tab-like proportions were stitiched and upon each square there was a button.

A MISTAKEN IDEA.
An effort was made this winter to revive sincerity in woman's dress. No buttons were to be used unless they actually buttoned something. But this was found impracticable carried out to the letter. Yet it might be followed in a cloak like this which could be perfectly straight and plain in front—however ugly—and could open down the back. The object of this would be nothing more than novelty, yet in dress matters novelty is often a great desideratum.

To warm the cold tone of the café au lait there was a very French lining of ciel blue taffeta which extended throughout the long coat and was visible in the lining of cuffs and collar. The buttons which were of dull gold were set with a turquoise in the middle.

A coat which was graceful in length and cut was a double-breasted three-quarter length. Its material was melton, similar to a man's coat. It might have been a little lighter than winter melton in weight or it could scarcely have supported its heavy linings of Pope's purple which was used throughout.

Since many of the long cloaks are of bright colored hues, indeed nearly all are so, this one was of so bright a purple that it might have been called heliotrope. It was double breasted, buttoning with flat buttons of sterling silver, of the sort that can be sewed through and through.

Its only trimming was a heavy band of stitched cloth of Pope's purple like the lining, the bands being put on in fancy design, in points and swirls and arranged in curves upon the sleeves and upon the back.

The hat was an English walking shape of white felt trimmed with heliotrope and smoky gray, those two shades which combine so well.

In the hat there is often noticed a strange note; and, if carefully chosen, this sets off the costume as nothing else could. With the entire chapeau in harmony, it remains only for the aligrette, the ruche-esse, the pompon or the coque of sharply contrasting color to dash it and make it perfect. A touch of red breast upon gray. A flash of blue in the depth of bronze brown!

Panne velvet is much used for a hat trimming; and upon the velvet there are applied the fashionable paillettes. Sequins are seen upon the velvet and cloth crowns that top so many hats, and these are hand-painted, appliqued and braided crosses galore.

Separate waists have not gone out in spite of the effort to drive them forth, but the separate hat may be said to have done so. You do not see a hat of odd variety. The headgear matches the coat in color, if not in material, and the hat

of contrasting color is not worn, unless it be the all black or the all white hat.

It is to be regretted that the taste feminine has turned so decidedly toward the extravagant things in dress. Satins and silks are worn now as cheaper materials, for the cost of the new satin-faced cloths is fabulous.

The Blue Bird.
A FRAGMENT.
(Written for the Times.)

There's a dear little bird that comes in the Spring
That always is constant and true,
There's joy in his warble, and hope in his wing,
And he's dressed in a jacket of blue.

He follows the good ploughman all through the day,
Now up and down the long rows;
Singing his song, but not over-gay,
And the world grows bright where he goes.

I pray little bird in your jacket of blue,
As through life I travel along,
That I may be like you, honest and true,
Modest in manner, but sweet in my song.

N. J. W. LE CATO.

Russian Girl Students.

If a Russian girl wishes to study at any of the universities which now admit women, etiquette does not allow her to do so until she is married; so she goes through the civil ceremony of marriage with a man student, whom very probably she had never seen before, and this marriage is quite legal, though, perhaps, they may never speak to each other again. On the other hand, if they are married for life, if they don't, the marriage is dissolved when their university course is run, and they are free to marry.

The celebrated mathematician, Sonya Kovalevski, whose autobiography attracted so much notice a few years ago, through the civil ceremony a Russian girl as Maria Bashkirtseff, went through one of these marriage ceremonies with a student whom she saw for the first time, and who afterward became her husband.—Buffalo Times.

How to be Beautiful.
"You advertised, I believe, that you would tell women how to be beautiful."
"I did."
"Well, I'd like to know how."
"Certainly, certainly. Two dollars. Thank you. The surest way is to be born beautiful. Call again some time."—Chicago News.

Hard Luck for the Children.
Little Johnny—I'm glad I ain't no preacher's son.
His Sister—Why not?
Little Johnny—Just think how many slippers a preacher gets for Christmas!—The Bonnie.

Why She Refused.
Dorothy had never seen any pumpkin pie until her first visit to the country, and to her grandmother's asking her if she'd have a piece the little girl replied: "No, I thank you. I never eat pie without a roof on it."—Judge.

"Why, children, what are you crying so for?"
"I'm cold, mama, and want you to cover me up!" replied Gertrude.
"But Ulla, what are you crying for?"
"You didn't hear Gertrude, mama, so I'm helping her cry!"—Humoristische Blätter.

Merely a Hint.—He (as the clock strikes twelve)—"This is the hour that graveyards yawn." She—"Well, they have my sympathy."—Chicago News.

Her Natural Rights.—"Mamma—I don't see where you get your red hair; you don't set it from your papa, and you certainly don't get it from me."
Little Dorothy—"Well, mamma, can't I start something?"—Puck.



THE NEW COATS ARE LOOSE AND ARE MADE OF THE MOST EXPENSIVE MATERIALS HEAVILY LINED WITH RICH SILK.



OF SEA-GREEN SILK AND CHIFFON.

awkwardness about this expedient which will cause it to be ridiculed out of possibility.

In the modern city house the entrance is almost invariably on the ground floor, and the guest is inducted into a hall occupying, in many cases, the entire width of the house and pretty nearly its entire length, the magnificent stairway being quite at the rear. The second floor of such an establishment is devoted to the ball-room, music-room, conservatories and parlors, the living rooms of the family being on the third floor. These living rooms and the ball-room are reached by means of a daintily upholstered elevator.

Right here, when entertainments are in progress, appears a difficulty. In the words of a hostess whose fairy palace was thrown open for the first time during holiday week:

"If I stand on the stairway I shall never see half my guests, for they take the elevator. Now, ought I to be at the foot of the lift or at the top?"

At the top has been the general decision, and in spite of London, guests are received much as they were last winter, in the parlors that admit to the ball-room.

That other London custom according to which a guest goes first to the dining-room to partake of champagne and supper and then—or never—seeks his hostess has not yet been transplanted. American social life is still a little more courteous than that of the English metropolis.

DANCE COSTUMES.
The dances of holiday week have afforded a chance for the display of many beautiful costumes and have brought to light at least one necessity:

In these days of the multiplication of jewels more than one matron has felt the need of a more secure fastening for her tiara. To see a circle of gems slipping in rakish fashion from side to side, now perching over one ear and now over the



WHITE SPOTTED NET AND WHITE SILK AND LACE.