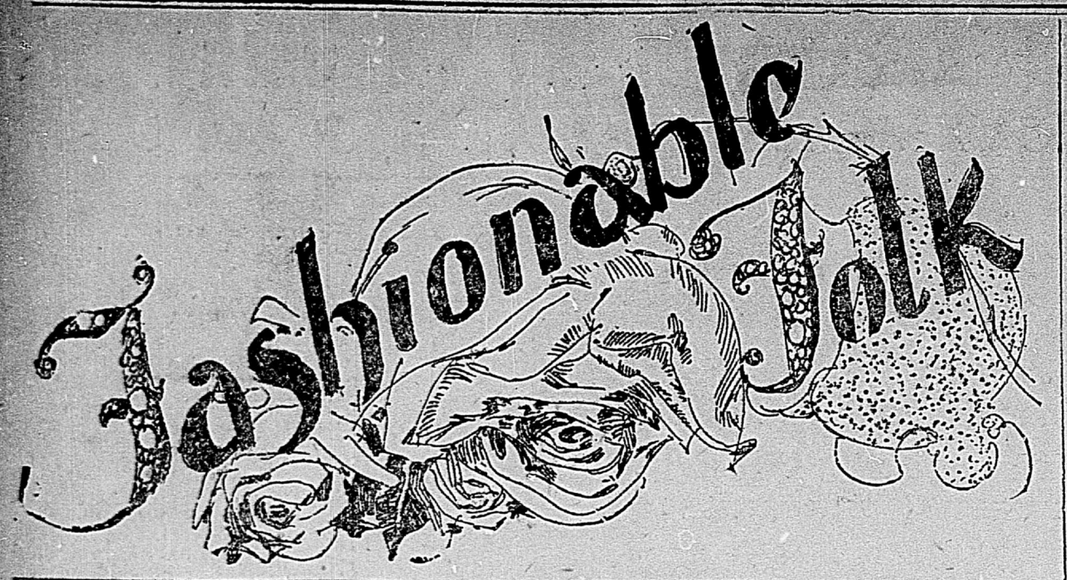


OUR WOMAN'S PAGE.

THE GATHERED SKIRT FOR THE INDOOR GOWN.

IT IS THE VERY LATEST MODEL.

A Decided Change in Our Outlines—A Ribbon Waist and a Dainty Breakfast Jacket—Other Points of Fashion.

(Written for the Dispatch.)

I am told by one of the very best authorities that the gathered skirt is the very latest model with Felix and Worth in Paris for house wear. At a private opening this week I saw one. It was of lustrous black taffeta made over a gored drop skirt of white taffeta about three yards wide. The black taffeta skirt itself must have been six yards around and it was not very much gored either. The front was plain, but at each side of the space about seven inches wide, half-inch pleats were laid turning toward the front. These were not stitched or pressed. They continued at intervals around to the centre back, where full gathers replaced them. The skirt had a moderate train and was trimmed with rows of black ribbon velvet to the knees. The lower row was about an inch and a half wide, the upper about a quarter inch. The waist of this distinguished looking novelty was of accordeon pleated white chiffon over white taffeta. There was a half low bolero worn over this that was made of white silk gauze thickly striped with black velvet ribbon. The round neck was filled in with a little yoke of gauze appliqued with cream guipure. The collar was a combination of the ribbon striped gauze and cream guipure. The sleeves were like every other detail of this model, the very latest, that is they were half of the striped gauze and the lower half of guipure.

Yes, there is a great change in dress right here at our doors. Looking back over what has been during the last two or three years, it now seems inevitable that the present reaction should have come about. We are getting distressingly into stereotyped sets and grooves, a tendency that has of late induced a little unpleasant exaggeration as the only means of asserting and lifting ourselves out of the common ruck of things. The merely fashionable woman, therefore, is not the pleasurable sight she was a short time ago, since we now demand that there shall be in the style adopted some characteristic touch. The too, too familiar spectacle of the skin-tight skirt, surmounted by a short coat variously basqued, hair bunched out over a frame, and an exaggerated toque, has had its day, and happily indeed it is so, for there was material irresistible to the caracaturist's pen. It is the cult of the moment to rather affect ignorance of the latest decree of La Mode, and to hint at deep historical research into the archieves of old for original and becoming models. This of course, in reason is well enough, and a procedure to be highly commended; but, alas! it has limits.

A quite delightful departure, and one the individuality for which I can vouch, is a skirt and coat in two shades of the same color. Thus a skirt of nankeen tan looks well with a quaintly fashioned, rather long basqued coat of tabac-brown, opening upon a vest of dull red cloth that closes with small gilt buttons. The whole conception, coloring, construction, everything, is decidedly charming.

Of course just now the pleated skirt holds the field. It is seen on three quarters of the new models. These are all made over a drop skirt and are very elaborate, not so much, perhaps, in the actual materials used—though these are bound to be of the very best quality—but in the designing of the toilette and the arranging of its various colors and decorations. Machine-stitching does not flag in favor one iota. It is absolutely ubiquitous, so that one wonders vaguely how one wore clothes in ancient days without the addition of these parallel lines. Certainly the recognition of the machine as a thing capable of ornamentation as well as of strict utility, has been a long time in coming, but it has no possible chance of complaining of a half-and-half popularity now that it has once attained this proud position.

As I write I am gazing at a house gown of automobile cloth that is really a marvel of stitchery, though it is made quite plainly. Right down the front from throat to hem run some dozen rows of white stitching, whilst from the shoulders curving to the waist, are more rows of stitching, and round the hips, dipping slightly in the front, are they again to match. The sleeves are machine stitched for quite a couple of inches at the top. The belt is of a lovely shade of green velvet, and made almost in Swiss fashion, save that it is rucked and fastened on the left side with two chou bows.

There is a decided tendency to broad belts again. I do not mean the wide swathed waist-bands of which I have already written, but belts of material, from four to five inches wide and variously shaped. This should be hailed with delight by stout women, as narrow waist-bands do not lessen the apparent size nearly as much as those of a wider kind. Particularly belts which are wide under the arms and dip sharply to the waist line back and front are happy for women who are inclined to embon point. All the beautiful jewelled belts and hundreds of varieties in silver and steel which are to be met with seldom look as well when in wear as the humbler ceinture of fabric. That is, always excepting when seen upon a loose tea-gown or tea-jacket. But then they are allowed to drop considerably, and this lengthens the waist in a very becoming fashion. Never can a richly enamelled or filagree silver belt be better worn than on any one of the filmy robes in which we delight to take our afternoon tea. There it is exactly in its right place, which proves with certainty that it is successful in every way. There is not only the law of the "survival of the fittest," but also that of placing the "fittest" in its right position.

But to return to the burning question of the hour, that is, skirts. The "wedge-gored" skirt is one of the new things that has come into being. It is made perfectly plain in front and on the hips, and has four gores in it, the seams of which come either side of the back, the two central ones meeting at the waist and gradually sweeping away to the base; it is betwixt these seams—which are usually "strapped" or machine-stitched—that the well-named "wedge" gore is arranged. It is undeniably smart, and is vastly more becoming to the figure than the flat single box-pleat, which is apt to give a disastrously widening effect. These box-pleats are nearly all stitched down with three or four rows for some few inches from the waist, and this makes them prettier than they were originally. In this case many of the front seams are also stitched with three or four runnings.

Very cleverly contrived are the skirts, which have only one visible seam, and that in the centre of the front, the back one being hidden by the two pleats which meet. On these, instead of darts being taken on the hips, there are tiny tuckings run all the way round the waist, which radiate outwards and extend downwards for about three inches, terminating in such gradual points that they allow the cloth to fit with delightful accuracy. But perhaps the skirt which best exemplifies the skill of the modiste of the moment is that which is perfectly plain over the hips but about two inches below is tucked vertically till within some ten inches of the hem. These tucks start at tiny points widening as they extend, so that the bottom of the skirt hangs in full pleats, when the tucks are suddenly discontinued. Sometimes these tucks are turned pleat wise. It is evidently from this line of thought that we get our bodices tucked upwards from the waist all the way round, the tucks spreading as they rise. They are so short that they scarcely show above the waist-band, but they manage to give a distinctive charm of their own. Skirts which are box-pleated all round will obtain further favor as the weather gets warmer and we are able to don thin fabrics, but at the present, whilst they are made in comparatively heavy materials, they can hardly lay claim to artistic merit. Even when worn by the slimmest of women, they impart a clumsy look, unless the wearer is possessed of a remarkably graceful carriage.

But now to talk of those fascinating garments, breakfast jackets and tea gowns. A charming example of the former is given in our illustration this week. It is a model at once so simple and so elegant that, to my mind, it cannot be sufficiently praised. The material is of a fine soft French poplin with self-colored silk spots. The cut is not at all a difficult one, as it has a straight back under arm gores, and straight hanging fronts with a little fulness just at the centre of the front. This fulness is laid in four quarter inch tucks on each side of the centre of the neck. The back is gathered at the waist-line into a cluster of shirring from which proceed on each side the ribbons which may pass beneath the front and tie, or over the front as in our illustration. The little tucked piece which simulates a bolero in front is sewed in with the shoulder, the sleeve and the under arm seams. This model is very high priced but one can be reproduced at a moderate cost in cashmere, foulard or any other appropriate material. I am sure you will like the tea gown with its long lines. These stole-like ends add very much to the height of a medium sized woman. On tall women who know how to walk well they are always charming.

Last year was a decided ribbon year and the next is likely to be as much so. They appear alike on dresses, mantles and blouses in various widths and kinds, but no garment would seem to be without them. Striped ribbons and striped silks and satins will be in demand this season and the mixture of color is very decided. The pretty waist, the first in the group of three which we give this week, is an example of the employment of these striped ribbons. This model can easily be made at home by cutting a flat pattern of a waist to fit the figure without fulness front or back, except where belted in at the waist. You will see that this blouse opens at the back, but it is not obligatory. There are those which open in front, but the opening is carefully concealed. The stripes of ribbon tacked on paper are easily connected by feather stitches. As the price at the high class store where this waist was sketched was thirty-five dollars, this is a very good reason for its home manufacture.

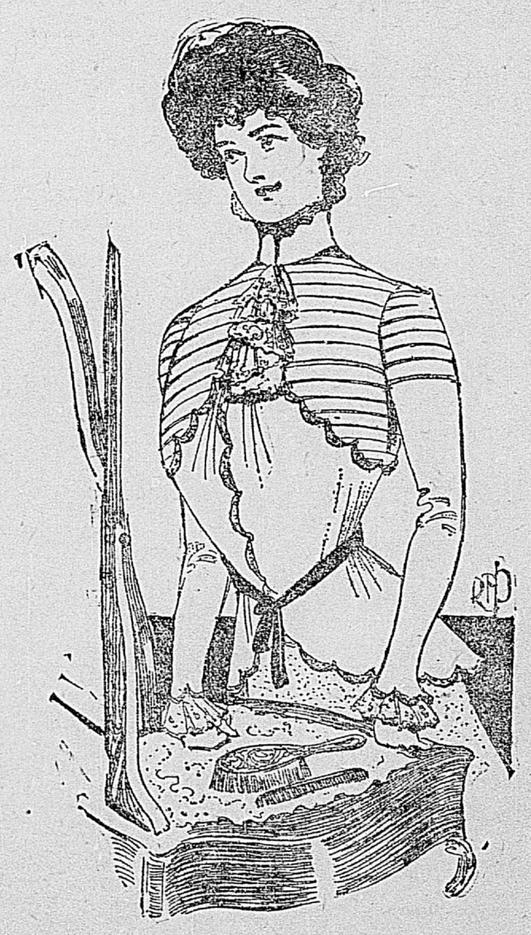
For Spring.

Green straw, white chiffon, and pink roses.

A Spring Gown.

This tasteful and becoming gown is composed of an exquisite pastel-tinted cloth of a pale shade of mastic, relieved with touches of a bright tomato-red. Waves of corded stitching run round the skirt, a band of tomato-silk heading the design, the fringe at the bottom of the dress and on the bolero being of the same color as the cloth, tied with red. The jacket is exceedingly quaint and original, with the scarf of red crepe de soie, which forms a distinct feature of the toilette, threaded through the revers, white jewels being introduced amongst the passementerie, which, like the frogs, closing the jacket across the chest, recalls the shade with which the neutral tint of the gown is relieved. Triple epaulettes, with cuffs to correspond, of stitched cloth, give an effective finish to the beautifully cut close-fitting sleeves.

The Latest Breakfast Jacket.

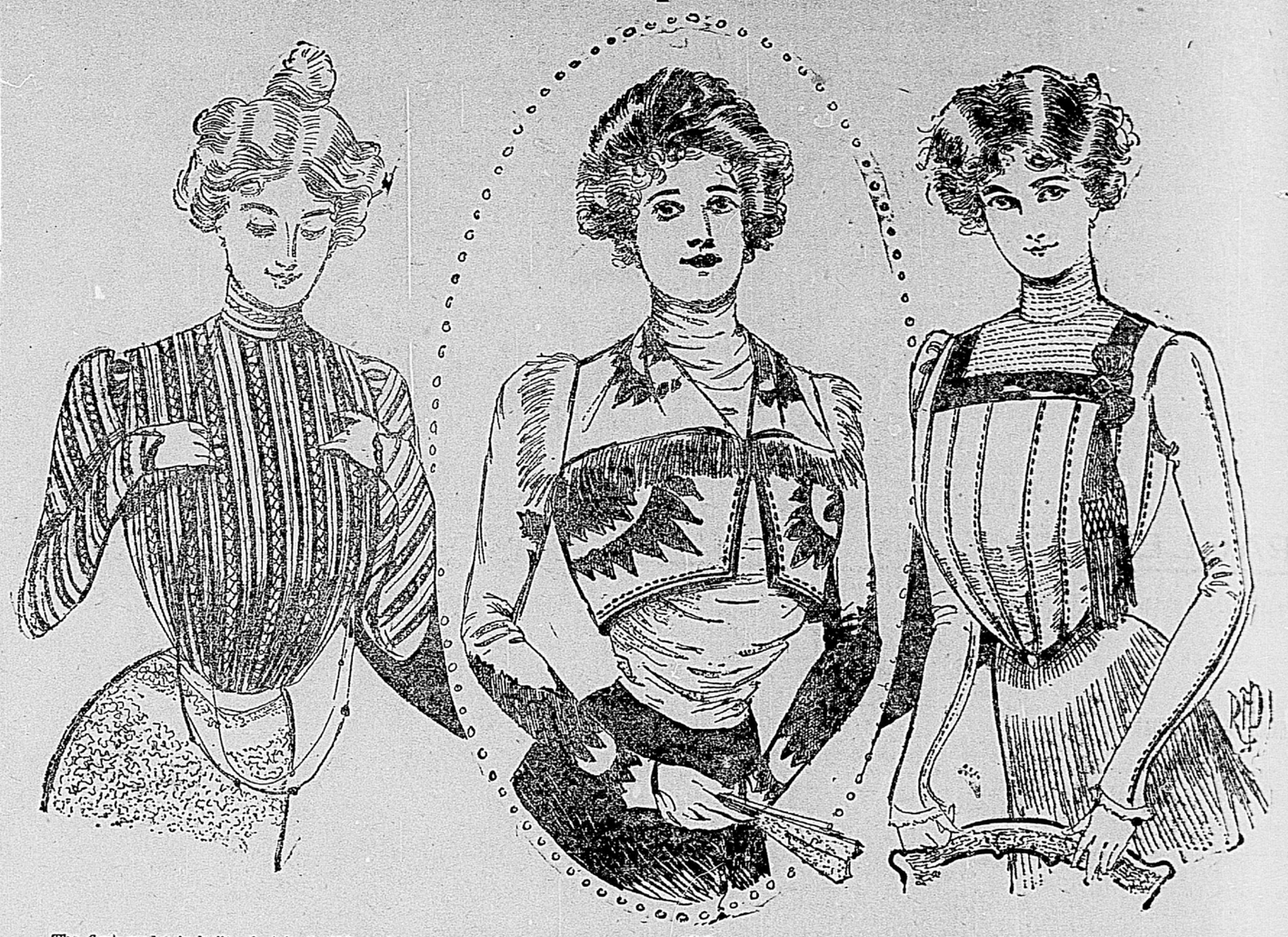


Jacket of silk-spotted pale blue French poplin, with tucked bolero front. The edges are trimmed with lace, woven in scallops.

Bon Ami

Used for all kitchen cleaning and polishing; keeps floors, paint, pots, knives, forks, tin and agate ware clean, bright and wholesome.

Novelties in Separate Waists.



The first model is built of striped ribbon, heliotrope, and white, connected by white silk feather stitching. The waist closes in the back, there being absolutely no fulness in front, except in the centre of the front at the waistband. The second model is a bolero, made from white taffeta silk handkerchiefs. The third waist has the material laid in stitched tucks, the sleeves alone making it an irresistable novelty. The guimpe is of white chiffon minutely tucked, and is edged with a band of white velvet.

MARTHA ROYAL, SOPRANO.

(Chicago Times-Herald.)

Only a mother's heart could feel as proud as that. A father's pride in his offspring is a tamer affair. At least old Mr. McCafferty's pride in his daughter did not find words of any force or great emphasis.

"She's doin' finely; she'll make money at it yit," was all he ventured.

"McCafferty think of the glory of it. Doin' finely? Ye might say that of old Perkins' goat. Make money, is it? Thousands and thousands she'll make, but it's to be mother of a girl like Martha that's makin' me heart jump."

The old couple were not very comfortably seated or surrounded with that pomp that Mrs. McCafferty's ecstacy seemed to call for. They were, in fact, sitting on the top step of the stairs that led to a modest flat in a modest apartment-house in the West-Side. It was after 11 o'clock at night, and the janitor had long before turned down the hall jet to a blue glimmer.

"If Martha hadn't bundled us out in such a hurry to make sure we'd be time enough at the concert," said Mr. McCafferty, "she'd have given up the kay of her flat, as well as the kay to the hall dure, an' we wouldn't be sittin' here doubled up like a pair of Injun candlesticks."

"Martha only moved into the flat yesterday, she toul yu, an' it's all upset, she said, but she'd try to make our week wid her pleasant. Pleasant as a summer's day it'll be, too, mark my words. I want to get her in me arms an' kiss her an' fondle her like I used when she was a slip of a girl, singin' like a fairy about the house when we lived at Cohoes, an' you tended switch on the railroad."

"Well, as I was saylin', it's a long six years since the colonel's wife tuk her to Paris to have her voice thrained, first and foremost bekase you saved the colonel's life, and, secondly, bekase Father Mooney had her singin' soprano in the choir of the Holy Innocents."

"Yes never tired o' that," said McCafferty a little gruffy. "I wouldn't have parted with her if I'd saved the lives of a hundred colonels that wor puttin' themselves, in front of the 9:40 express."

"Ah, is was my doin' McCafferty. You carried the colonel body an' bones off the thrack, an' he all for maxin' a suicide of himself, but it was I that let Martha go with the colonel's wife, an' see what's come of it? Wor you there beside me to-night in the big con-cert hall or wor you not?"

"An' I'm here sittin' on the stairs now, hungry as a hawk, starvin' for a smoke, an' doubled up like a shad in a pot."

McCafferty always resented any reference to his heroic deed. It was a very simple thing to him, and as the colonel drank himself to death in Paris a couple of years later he never could see that it was a highly successful salvage. But the colonel's widow (poor woman) was as grateful as if the switchman's act had given her a lifetime of happiness instead of two additional years of fear and anxiety. She had also learned to love Martha and it came easy to her to encourage and second the girl, now growing into magnificent womanhood, in the development of the extraordinary voice that has been singing its way into the highest rank of the lyrical artists of the day. Neither McCafferty nor his wife knew that the unexpected death of the colonel's widow had sent their daughter into the battle for recognition without a penny to her name. She had come to New York unheralded. Assiduity alone forced an opening for her. In three months she had made her way. She was no longer fearful of failure, but the finances of artists even of great name are not always as sound as a bank. In her flat (hired furnished) she thought she could indulge in a week of love for father and mother at her ease and unknown to the world. Once this idea came to her she sent for the old people, heedless, as we see, of many things that might have been insistent on anyone with less of the "artist soul" or less plunged in artistic preoccupation.

Then a bit sullenly: "I wisht it was Martha McCafferty, not Martha Royal, so-prano, that would give us the supper that's waitin' so illigant an' fine for us."

It was a sore point for his wife, too, but she was full of apologies for Martha. "Maybe McCafferty would'n do for a so-prano."

"An' why not?"

"Well, there do be some McCaffertys that are stonemasons an' saloon-keepers."

"It's the name of kings!"—this almost defiant.

"Well, maybe," said Mrs. McCafferty with a slight smile, "maybe that's why she took the name of Royal."

"It was the colonel's name, an' his wife's name, an' now it's Martha's name," said McCafferty, putting away the flattering explanation.

"Oh, don't be talking about names. What a queen she looked to-night!" The thin, worn hands were joined palm to palm as she contemplated the vision she had conjured up. "My child, my Martha, in satin white as driven snow with gold flyutins on it, her hair a shower of red gold, her beautiful neck an' arms, an' white gloves up to her elbow, an' her voice quivering like an angel's, clear above the fiddles an' cor-noplous!—Oh, McCafferty—I was in heaven, an' I was prouder than the mother of any queen! I saw the tears chasing each other down yer old face, so don't be makin' mock of me. An' it wasn't only that, but wasn't all the thousands there as mad over her as our two selves? McCafferty," she ejaculated, suddenly, "we wor the only two people in the concert hall that wasn't clappin' for her. McCafferty, you never clapped."

"No! I cudn't, nor cud you," said the old man.

"Oh, Tim, dear Tim, dear—I cudn't for in my mind I had my mother's arms around her."

"Don't cry," said McCafferty; "she'll be home soon. Put ye head here, Alicia," as he stole his arm about her and drew her to him gently. "She got all her beauty and all her voice from you. I saw you once myself with the red gold in yer hair, and the queenly look upon you, and you singin' 'The Dear Irish Boy' at the weddin' of the Hoolihans over Knockawn. Do ye remember Alicia, an' how proud I was that day? The blackbirds wor like corncrakes when you wor singin'. Rest here Alicia."

And the gray head rested on his breast and the minutes ticked along, and at last the gentle breathing told that she was sleeping. McCafferty had kept his eyes fixed on the older vision of long ago. There was a smile on his old face as he, too, followed in the land of dreams.

It was after one when a carriage rolled to the apartment house. The was a moment's chatter with a woman within an exchange of "Merry Christmas" and a run up the steps. Then a leisurely ascent up three flights of stairs. It had been a jolly supper at which artists and impresario had assisted. She was tired. Tomorrow she would be a girl again.

"Why, father! and mother, too! Locked out! Oh, how could I be so stupid!"

"Hush, Martha," said McCafferty in a whisper. We've been on a weddin' journey to Ireland, an' yer mother's list'nin' to the black birds at Knockawn."

Martha wondered.

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