

Fashion Letter

New York, April 14.—The latest issues of the fashion journals received from Paris state that in the spring gowns tiny strips are seen in great profusion. These come in the taffetas and voiles, and they fall into the most graceful lines about the figure. Skirts are bare of overskirts and paniers, but they employ so much trimming that an overskirt would be a relief. A great deal of cording is used, running the skirts in waves. It is not light cording, either, but the largest and heaviest kind.

In describing the genre of costume the word *directoire* would perhaps best give an idea, and yet it is by no means *Directoire*, except about the ceinture. The pouched front has altogether disappeared and with it the exaggerated point in front. Yet another kind of point has made its advent—one which is the result of the long corset. This extends down so far that sometimes it is almost a caricature. The short waist effect in the back—the back that was fashionable in America seven years ago—is again in vogue. Gathers have given place to plaits. One violet ninon was a study in tucks about an inch wide, laid flat, and extending about half a yard down from the belt, to be repeated on founce and on top of sleeves and yoke. Plain tucks are entirely passe, but the kind which resembles little plaits is again in vogue.

Many, many buttons—brass, boutons de style, and the old fashioned button forms covered with goods—help to adorn the robes and frocks of serious kinds.

Each dress, if it is expected to be the least dressy, must be touched with white, and very strongly touched, too. As for the length of skirts, they are round, with very little train, but the kind that covers the feet in front has never departed. Another style that is again repeated is the taffeta mousseline. Some of the cotton materials resemble the American cheesecloth, having not the slightest body. The sleeves are fully as short as were expected, and the woman who has not round, white arms will be at a great disadvantage. Some of the sleeves barely extend to the elbow, while others extend half way down.

The linen frocks are "frocks" no longer, but are much betrimmed, decorated affairs that have long since lost their unconventionality and everyday effect. To all appearances the summer girl of 1905 will be a studied always "dressed-up" young woman, whose gowns, while lavish in style, will suggest a lavish purse also. She will be frivolous in effect, also, and underlying it all, the dollars and cents will cry out. True, the materials of frocks cost no more than heretofore, but it is the great amount of goods, and something to cover it all—the immense variety of handwork that will characterize the whole.

Fancy braid is seen, but it makes little rosettes and the centers are caught together in cobweb work. Everyone knows that machine work is more expensive in France than that done by hand, but this spring things in the French capital are exaggerated. Little knife platings of taffeta trim some of the cashmeres and voiles. The draped corsage is now so attractive that it has won over those who were indifferent to its charms last winter.

Directoire lines are also followed in the cloaks and coats of the new season. They are chic but not warm, some of

the sleeves being caught almost as high as the shoulder in a series of folds and gathers. The pongee cloaks are beautiful, but they would be little protection unless the day was warm enough to dispense with wraps. Wraps unfortunately, have become as coquettish and frivolous as everything else in the feminine field, and if one wishes to get any service out of a coat, one must modify the models that are being exhibited.

A coat that has been taking ultra-fashionable Paris by storm this season there is little danger will become obnoxiously common. It was shown at a recent opening in this city and excited more comment than many a more graceful garment there. The coat was part of a snuff brown taffeta costume—the color of all others that lends itself to ungraceful effects. It was a sacque shape, of long hip length, and had a pinch shirred yoke effect which supplied fullness to front and back. Then imagine this fullness gathered in at the bottom of the back of the coat under the wide band of tiny frills and bouillonne that bordered all the edges. The back dipped, as do many of the new coats. The fashionables are welcomed to the style without encroachment from the multitude. On a tall woman of fine figure it is said that even this ungainly style is becoming. There is a number of newcomers among the suits this season and all of them are plays on past styles. Last year 1830 types reigned in the world of gowns. This season 1830 fashions are again here, but in evidence in wraps more than in gowns.

The flowered sash ribbons, the delight of the girls for their summer frocks, are expensive, but the length required for the up-to-date sash is far from extravagant. In the days when two big loops and two long ends were wanted one had to look hard at the price. The fashionable sash is only half the length of the skirt and is sharply slanted, rounded, pointed or mitered at the ends. By preference it has the sharp slant. It is joined to the girdle of the same ribbon in a variety of ways, but always so that the ends shall spread apart as they fall. When the ends are slanted, the short sides should both come at the inside. A girdle made in this way is plaited close at the top and held to the girdle by a flat rosette of picot edged ribbon centered with a shirred mutton of the same. Above the rosette is a squared bow of the flowered ribbon like the girdle and sashed ends. The ribbon of this girdle and sash has half its width covered with little rose-colored flowers on a white ground and the other with a stripe of pale blue. The slanted ends are cut so that the rose color of the flowers comes on the inside. The ends flare fan shape from the girdle.

Another girdle and sash of flowered ribbon also has half length slanted ends. At the bottom of the back of the girdle is an oval cut steel buckle and above it a square bol of the ribbon. In this case, the ribbon ends are plaited into the girdle at each end of the buckle, being separated by it. The ends of these sashes are the same length. Sometimes three short ends are used and sometimes very short tabs below the girdles. There are so many possibilities in these ribbon fixings that all sorts of economies may be practiced with little detriment to effects.

ESTELLE CLAIRMONT.

the work of the Northern Pacific car service department have been worked out under his direction. Few railway lines have been able to make such a department do more for the public and the organization of 55 clerks required to transact the business of the department seems to be perfect. Each desk has a number which appears on each bit of correspondence originated or handled by it and which enables a rapid distribution of the thousands of letters arriving daily.

The Northern Pacific railway has 950 locomotives moving practically day and night. It also has nearly 800 passenger cars which are handled by means of a system applying exclusively to this class of equipment, the details of which are looked after by Chief Clerk Ballou and his force. But the important task is the handling of its 34,178 freight cars and the 4,000 to 6,000 additional freight cars of foreign lines constantly moving between St. Paul and Portland.

Asked what service his department performs for the public in locating shipments moving over the Northern Pacific railroad, Mr. Richards said:

"We undertake to furnish on request complete information showing the location of any loaded car moving on our rails. We tell shipper when it will reach its destination. We find shippers consider such information valuable to them and a special telegraph record is maintained for that purpose of all cars that move over more than one division.

"Given a car number we can instantly locate the car at any station if standing or in what train if moving and the location of such train regardless of the class of freight. Also we furnish daily by wire information concerning certain loads to our general agents at their respective headquarters.

"Consignees are advised of the location and progress of their shipments.

"We figure that a shipper is entitled to know exactly what is being done with his goods. We have tried to make our records and methods conform to this idea, with a view of giving the man who pays the freight as complete information as is possible."

This relates however merely to moving cars. To know what and where these cars are is a different problem. Trains reaching destination instantly lose their identity and the 40 to 60 cars move in as many different directions.

Two thousand cars come to the Northern Pacific every day and approximately two thousand cars are sent off the line each day yet not one gets lost. The tracing and checking system has been reduced to such accuracy that errors are improbable.

In the record department there is an immense case containing 12 large books giving the history of each car the Northern Pacific owns from the day the builders delivered it to date, with every accident, repair or incident of its life carefully entered. There is also a complete record of car seals which shows when and where car doors were opened and whether or not cars were broken into en route. This enables the department to readily detect thefts.

Handling passenger cars and trains is a somewhat different question. In Mr. Richards' office there is an immense board which is apparently covered with queer colored pegs. Each peg represents a car. Color indicates class and the serial arrangement of the pegs a train or number of trains. Each passenger train moving over the system, and there are 10 "North Coast Limited's," and the same number for each of the other overland trains constantly in motion, is shown on this board. Every car is shown. If a car is dropped en route or picked up en route a peg is dropped or added. A glance gives a graphic picture of the entire passenger train situation, the location of each train and its progress. Supplemented by an elaborate system of reports by telegraph the board gives every minute detail of the days' passenger train movements. Little boxes arranged to represent a train and containing pegs which represent the cars in the train contain special information in the form of report slips.

Mr. Richards asks: "What equipment is in the limited which left Portland yesterday and where is the train?" The operator instantly gives the location, the engine, coach equipment and any fact which may throw light upon the train's movements.

Thousands upon thousands of car reports come into headquarters each week, each sifting to the proper man and finding its final resting place in the proper cabinet or record.

With the infinite variety of report and seeming confusion one wonders that anything like system is ever evolved yet the entire mass of reports moves under a simple and most firmly established system. No variations from the rule are permitted. Reports must come in the prescribed form and at the prescribed time else some has a bad quarter of an hour "on the carpet" with the "old man." Rigid discipline and simplicity underly the apparent confusion and result in herding the thousands of cars watchfully, carefully exactly. There are no strays.

The days when "maverick" cars existed have passed. Cars cost too much and lost cars are a money burden daily upon the road on which they were lost until a proper accounting is made.

Underground Waters of Washington.

A brief but very satisfactory account of the water resources of the state of Washington as represented by municipal supplies, deep wells, and springs has been prepared by Mr. Henry Landes, of the United States geological survey, under the direction of Mr. N. H. Darton, geologist in charge of the western section hydrology.

The counties of the state are taken up in alphabetic order and a general statement is made concerning the location, rainfall, and most striking topographic and geologic features of each county. This is followed by data concerning the municipal systems, deep wells and springs in the county. Information regarding the municipal water supplies is complete to the present time, as blanks were sent to clerks or other officials of cities and towns and practically all were filled out and returned. The blanks for the deep wells were not returned as generally as was desired, but almost every section of the state where such wells occur is represented, as types of their kind in each county. Springs occur so very generally throughout the state that probably only a small fraction of them is represented in the blanks filled out and returned.

The value of the report is greatly enhanced by a map of Washington, on which is shown the mean total precipitation, and 16 pages of tables of deep wells, municipal water supplies, and representative springs. This paper, which is entitled "Preliminary Report on the Underground Waters of Washington," is listed as Water Supply and Irrigation Paper No. 111. It is intended for free distribution.

New Paper for Nampa.

The Emmett-Pearl Record will move and issue from Nampa next week as the Nampa Record, and be under the proprietorship of W. F. Sinclair, a former successful Nebraska newspaper man, and W. F. Brewster, where it will be a continuance of the Emmett-Pearl Record. —Emmett-Pearl Record.

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RAILROADS AND SYSTEM

So Perfected that Chief Dispatcher can Find any Car on Line Instantly

St. Paul, April 13.—With cars coming and going every hour of the day and night constantly shifting, never more than a few hours in the same place, how does a railway keep track of its equipment? How can it ever tell how many cars it has with which to handle its business and where it can put its hands upon them?

In many respects, a modern railway resembles a ranchman with enormous herds and dozens of cowboys constantly watching to see that there are no strays.

The handling of cars is systematized. This is the simple explanation of a seemingly difficult problem. Some one at headquarters or division points is camping on the trail of every wandering bit of rolling stock and a tremendous system of records and tracers makes it practically impossible for cars to get lost.

The handling of the Northern Pacific's equipment is delegated to a separate branch of the service, the car service department, at the head of which is Ira B. Richards, formerly of Tacoma, and with many years in the Northern Pacific employ. Mr. Richards has grown up with moving cars. He knows them like a book. Many of the distinctive features of

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