The New Modes in Odd Skirts and Blouses

"I THOUGHT I used remarkable judgment in my trousseau," said a bride the other day, whose wedding finery had, indeed, seemed to include everything that taste and beauty and comfort demands. "I had gowns and coats and tailored suits and morning dresses and negligees and all the rest of it. But in my rash young foolishness I absolutely tabooed any odd skirts or waists. And would you believe it, my dear, but there were scores and scores of times when I needed nothing in the world so much as just a separate skirt and waist—times when I didn't care to wear my suit skirt, because you know how much more quickly they begin to show signs of wear, anyhow, than the coats; times when the little wash morning dress is too informal and the foulard frock too dressy, or when everything else in one's wardrobe needs a stitch here or a fresh ruche there. Take my advice and stick to the odd skirt and blouse like a sister."

There you are. There's no getting away from it, these trig, practical, comfortable garments are here to stay apparently till the crack o' doom. So let's see what new ideas the shops are offering us this season for wear during spring and summer months.

Perhaps there is just one thing a woman won't do to be in fashion, and that is break her neck (though, indeed, some of them have almost hobbled away to join the angels) so that on account of this fussy notion of hers the newest skirts are considerably wider about the bottom. They are by no means voluminous, however, 2¼ to 2½ yards being the favored width. They must above all be cut on straight lines and allow the wearer to present the narrow silhouette that is the keynote of the present styles.

Into some of the skirts are cleverly introduced a couple of small pleats in the back or front panels or in the side gores which give added freedom of movement without in any way affecting the style of the garment.

Many of the skirts are trimmed with wide folds of the same material put on four or five inches from the bottom, and some models show a revival of the high waistband, with the waist line about two inches above the normal. For later wear the silk skirts will be much worn, but just now the worsteds, serges, voiles and panamas in black and blue, particularly, are in demand. Quite a few nobby styles are shown in grey mixtures, and the hairline stripes are also returning to favor.

The veiled effects that were so universally employed for the winter blouse have been carried over for the spring, with only slight modifications in materials and styles. Lighter weight fabrics of course are desirable for the foundations of these dressy little blouses, and silk mull, net and china silk, with chiffons, marquisettes, net, or any of the transparent materials for veiling them, make up most attractively. They are often very simple in design, the only ornamental touch being in the lace collar and, perhaps, tiny undersleeves. One charming model intended to be worn with a blue tailored suit was made in the popular and becoming style with sleeve and blouse in one. Over the foundation of white china silk was laid a flowered chiffon with a white ground over which were scattered tiny nosegays in soft shades of blue and green and rose color. Over this again was chiffon matching the blue of the suit, which was also used to form narrow pleated frills about the white lace collar and at the elbow above the narrow lace undersleeve. In the more elaborate blouses are seen rever effects and many sailor collar developments carried out in colored chiffons contrasting with the waist material.

The lingerie waists are filmy with lace—two, three, as many as five kinds of lace are sometimes used on a single model. Lawn, batiste, marquisette, and voile are the favored fabrics. The comfortable and youthful Dutch neck will be much seen this summer, while the peasant sleeve, in three-quarter length, takes precedence over all others.

Pleatings give a chic touch to the semi-tailored waists. These are often edged with narrow lace and outline the front or side opening of the waist. One waist had a frill of real lace that not only outlined the front closing, but followed the yoke outline on the left side from the shoulder to the middle front.

The tailored models show no radical changes. They are made usually with pleats down the front and back, and sometimes with broad pleats over the shoulders. Invariably they have long sleeves with the straight, stiff cuffs, though now and then one sees a soft turn-back cuff on some of the embroidered waists. Hand embroidering is in very good style. It may be most elaborate and carry out a variety of designs on the collar, cuffs and front pleat, or it may be a simple scalloped finish for the side or front fastening.

RENE BACHE'S BUDGET.

POISONS FOR THE FARMERS

GOVERNMENT EXPERTS DISCOVER SOLUTION OF A PUZZLING PROBLEM

Why Some Soils Have "Worn Out"—Reason Is Simply That Poisons Have Accumulated in Them. Strange Chemic Substances Which the Scientists Have Put Up in Bottles.

WASHINGTON, D. C., March 18.—When one sees it in a bottle—a white, crystalline stuff rather bright to the eye—one grasps to better advantage the idea it represents. It is (the scientist explains) the principal enemy of the farmer—a chemic poison which deprives his land of the power to bear crops.

The discovery for which it stands is an epoch-maker. Since time immemorial the farmer has been puzzled to find that his land had a tendency to "wear out" after awhile. In particular, it would not produce the same kind of crop many years in succession—on which account he has been driven to adopt the plan that he calls "rotation." But he has been wholly unaware of the cause of these troubles.

Find Cause in a Fly.

The experts of the department of agriculture, however, are now able to show him the cause, in a bottle. They have extracted it by simple means from samples of worn out soils, and they are able to explain exactly what it is. Its deadly and destructive character may be judged from the name, "dihydroxstearis acid," and its specific effect upon plants is to interfere with the growth of their roots. The root-ends, coming into contact with it, lose the power to absorb food, and starvation results.

One of the interesting experiments which led up to this discovery was made with potatoes. The latter were grown in pots for a series of years, in a greenhouse, with the inevitable result that after a while the soil in the pots refused to produce any more potatoes. Was it because the plant food had been used up? Evidently not; for, when barley was sown in the same pots of earth, it flourished and bore a fine crop.

What then, was the trouble? This was ascertained by taking the earth out of the pots, passing steam through it, allowing the latter to condense, and permitting the fluid to stand for a while. When it had had time to cool, white, needle-like crystals appeared in it—the substance of which they were composed being, as later experiments proved, highly poisonous to potato plants.

Whence Came the Poison.

Where did the poison come from? This was the next question, the answer to which represents the summing up of an immense deal of painstaking research. Explained in a word, there occurs in the soil, incidentally to the growing of any kind of plants, an accumulation of waste products—largely the waste of root decay. Such wastes take the form of chemic substances which are hurtful to the plants, and which, when they have accumulated in sufficient quantity will actually prevent them from growing.

The waste products of animals are, of course, poisonous. Even the breath of human beings contains poisonous gases—whence the necessity of ventilation. With plants it is the same way; if their wastes, which are decomposition products, are allowed to accumulate, suffer. This is how it happens that land is liable after much cropping to become unproductive, or, as the phrase is, "worn out." All over New England, in Virginia, and in other parts of the United States are abandoned farms which have been deserted for this reason.

A strange circumstance in this connection is the fact that a chemic substance of the kind which is poisonous for one kind of plant is quite harmless to another. Thus for example, the potato experiment above described resulted in a large accumulation of anti-potato poison in the potted soil. But this poison was evidently not in the least injurious to the barley which thereupon was planted in the pots. Here, told in a word, is the secret of the reason why the farmer finds it expedient to adopt a rotation of crops.

Many Soil Poisons.

There are, it should be explained, a good many of these soil poisons. Dihydroxystearis acid is only one of them, though it seems to be much the worst of the lot. Another is called "uvitonic acid," and yet another "picoline-carboxylic acid." They are all what the experts term "toxins of soil fatigue," and are described as organic compounds, assuming the form of minute crystals when separated out in a pure state.

A farmer, having grown potatoes on a patch of land, plants it in the following year with peas or beans, which are not injured by the poisonous waste products of the potatoes that have gone before. Next year, perhaps, he turns the land into a cornfield. The corn is proof against the wastes of peas, or beans, or potatoes. By the time the corn crop is gathered, the patch is ready for potatoes again, because in the meantime the potato poison has disappeared through oxidation—a process hastened by the aeration of the soil through cultivation.

No Soil Is Really Poor.

One remarkable conclusion drawn by the experts is that there is really no such thing as a poor soil. Even the least rich soil contains plenty of food for the support of plants. Furthermore, the soil moisture, which is a kind of nutritious soup spread through the surface soil of the earth, and upon which the plants feed, is of practically the same composition everywhere. Nearly the same quantities of phosphates, of potash, and of nitrates are found in the sandy soils of the truck region of Maryland; in the "worn out" soils of Virginia, in the fertile limestone soils of Pennsylvania, and in the black prairie soils of the west.

As is well known, some of the finest soils for trucking seem to consist of nothing but sand. One marvels that they are capable of producing crops of any kind. But the secret lies in their loose structure, which is favorable to the passage of water—the "soup" on which the rootlets feed being normally nutritious.

Seedlings of wheat, of other plants, will grow right well in water for some weeks. Beyond a certain point they will not develop, because they need more substantial food. This may be furnished by adding to the water a little phosphate, a little nitrate, and a little potash. Then the plants will grow to maturity. Soil is not a necessity to them, so long as they get their soup; it merely affords a bed for them to stand up in.

Cereal and other plants have been grown in this way on a rather extensive scale at the department of agriculture—sometimes in pans especially constructed for the purpose, and sometimes in glass jars. These arrangements are called "water cultures," and the object of them has been to study the feeding of plants. In many cases the little plants have been grown in soil-moisture, instead of water. Invariably it was found that they prospered in moisture from a good soil, but did not do well in moisture from a "worn out" soil—the reason, of course, being that the latter contained more or less of the "fatigue poisons."

Most noteworthy, however, were the trials made with water in which small quantities of the crystals of one or another of the fatigue poisons had been dissolved. In some cases merely a stunting of growth resulted; in others the plants refused to develop at all. But in every such instance the immediate effect was upon the rootlets, which showed a greater or less lack of development. Inasmuch as these are the feeding organs of the plant, the consequence was necessarily partial or total starvation.

Fertilizers Kill the Poison.

It is now believed, as a result of this new discovery, that fertilizers are of value chiefly not to furnish plant food, but by reason of their power to destroy the fatigue poisons, or to convert them into harmless forms. Potash attacks some of the toxins, nitrate others, and phosphate yet others. Green manure and stable manure probably are useful in the same way. But the farmer is advised that, when his land shows signs of being "tired," he should try liming and draining. The former destroys the poisons by combining with them and causing them to assume new forms; the latter washes them away and gets rid of them by oxidation.

When land is allowed to "lie fallow" for a while, the poisons are graduilly oxidized and disappear, the productiveness of the fields being thus restored. Here again is an explanation of what has hitherto been regarded as an agricultural puzzle. Another mystery incidentally made clear is that which relates to the common absence of grass under trees. Always it has been supposed that the grass was killed by shade, but the fact is that it is poisoned to death by waste products from the trees—the leachings from the bark and roots. It will be noticed in such cases that death of the grass is invariably most marked in the direction of the surface drainage. On the other hand, and for a like reason, grass is deadly to young apple trees, and peach trees are harmed seriously by oats, tomatoes, or potatoes.

Rene Bache.

OPIUM RAIDS ARE MADE IN ARIZONA

Information Given by El Paso Office Causes Two Seizures.

The United States customs inspectors have had a busy time raiding the opium dens throughout the cities of Arizona during the present month. The raids were made on advices from the El Paso office and were under the supervision of customs agent S. H. Creighton, of Nogales, Ariz. In Phoenix, the inspectors seized 36 pounds of opium and nine pipes. The raid in Prescott brought out 15 pounds of the weed and one pipe.

Five arrests were made in Phoenix as a result of the raids and three arrests were made in Prescott. All of those arrested were Chinamen. They were bound over to the federal grand jury, their bonds being placed at $250 each.

MOORE PASSES THROUGH.

Edward S. Moore, of Chicago, Ill., vice president of the Rock Island lines, passed through El Paso, in his private car, the "Rockmarge" on train No. 1 Friday morning. He is enroute to California.

BOY IS HELD.

Lester Burnett, a 9yearold boy, is held by the police pending an investigation. It is charged that he attempted to sell a pistol for 25 cents which a negro watchman says is his property.

SALE OF LOTS AT BALMORHEA ACTIVE

New Texas Town in Toyah Valley Is Growing Rapidly.

Balmorhea, Texas, March 18.—Local land companies have had many prospectors in tthis place during the past week, and several sales have been reported by the Swenson Land Co., the Gold Bond Co., and the Toyah Valley Land Co.

Plans are being prepared for a new brick or rock building to be erected in the new townsite. It is to be 100 by 140 feet and will be modern in every respect. It is to be occupied by the Balmorhea Mercantile Co., the Johnson Drug Co. and a new bank for this place.

The upper story will be offices and large hall to be used for the Woodmen and the other gatherings, also a room space for the Commercial club is to be fitted up.

Mr. Rector has reported a sale of his residence lots to Mr. Kirkpatrick who, itis said, will start the erection of a residence soon.

The cattlemen are contemplating moving their cattle from the alfalfa in the valley soon, and that will give the farmers a chance to have an early crop. Some farmers begin to cut the first of the next month.

The Groves Lumber Co. is making a new fence around its yard here.

Bradley & Fonville have purchased the livery stable formerly owned by E. B. Conger, and are making extensive improvements.

The erection of the new station will begin in a few days. It will be a modern one.

It is reported that Mr. Manning has sold his Davis mountain ranch to Tom Duncan, who willl take charge in a short time.

A. W. Albertson has completed a cottage for Mr. Godfrey, who will occupy it soon.

Charles Montague, secretary to Col. W. C. Greene, is here from Cananea on busine

FIND BABY ON DOORSTEP.

Amarillo, Texas, March 18.—A baby girl, two weeks old, was found on the doorstep of Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Jansen, left by some unknown person. The Jansens intend to keep the child and raise her.

TO ADVERTISE FOR RECRUITS.

Sergeant C. C. Burgess and Private H. J. Clarkson, of the local recruiting station, left Saturday morning for Las Cruces, N. M., on an advertising trip for the United States recruiting service.

SMALL FIRE FRIDAY.

A gasoline explosion caused a small blaze at 1027 Magoffin avenue at 12:30 Friday. No damage was done.

DR. COOK, OF POLAR FAME, TO LECTURE IN PHOENIX.

Phoenix, Ariz., March 18.—Dr. Frederick A. Cook, the famous Arctic explorer, has been secured by the local Chautauqua to deliver a lecture before a meeting which they will held in Phoenix during the latter part of April. He will talk about his experiences in the polar regions.