

SHOP TALK—BY AMY ARMSTRONG

IT'S not going to be such a very long "spell" now until the sweet girl graduate is a thing of the present not of the future and it behooves us to give her—yes, and the boy graduate, too,—some concentrated attention, not just a hit-or-miss casual mention in passing. Graduation is less than a month off and the buying of gowns with their accessories, of gifts and what-not must begin to be considered, at least, because no doubt many visits to the shops will be necessary before any final decisions can be made.

War prices can be talked until the cows come home but personally I cannot remember a year, and at that my own graduation was less than a century ago, when there was such a choice of beautiful materials at reasonable prices or when, if a girl and her mother were pressed for time such wonderful creations in the ready-to-wear, either expensive or inexpensive, were at hand for her approval. It seems to me that this year manufacturers have realized that while to them a high school graduation day, yea, even a grammar school graduation exercise not to mention college and university commencements are of little moment unless perchance there is a youth or maiden in the immediate family to attract notice, yet this event of the year is a factor to be considered in the mercantile world and by no means to be ignored by the wise shop manager or owner. When one thinks of the numbers of boys and girls in all the schools who are in some way concerned in a graduation, either as a star or an understudy the season assumes a magnitude of considerable proportion. Everybody may not be ready to be graduated but there is scarcely a person who does not have to give at least one gift to a friend or relative.

One of the shops has a unique scheme which will interest every mother and girl graduate who is counting the cost of a commencement frock. Counting the cost is an important business with most every one, too, because however fat the pocket book, when there are flowers to purchase, the graduation outfit and a party or picnic frock to be included the expense list runs up like the beanstalk of Jack and naturally the young miss is at best only a sub-deb (to quote one of our popular writers) and cannot expect to have the entire family income expended upon her.

This shop is to have carefully figured up just how much it will cost to buy materials for a graduation frock, bearing in mind the different fabrics and estimating the cost with the use of the different kinds of goods. The idea was suggested by the plan in some of the schools, particularly the domestic science branches, to have the girls make their own commencement dresses and to have them not exceed a certain sum, everything included.

With the help of this particular department store a mother and daughter can put their heads together, read the store's advertisements which will explain the various estimates and give descriptions and prices of materials, including threads and trimmings, and know just exactly how much they will have to ask father for in order to have ready for the eventful day a dress which is altogether satisfying, girlish and pretty. Father will be so pleased with the practical scheme that he may donate voluntarily a little extra sum which can easily be made use of. This is for those who have agreed or who desire to make their own dresses. A little further on in this story there will be a discussion

of many kinds of fabrics which are popular this year with mention of a price or two.

All of the shops, of course, are talking and advertising gifts for graduation. Indications are that among the best sellers this year will be the ivory toilet articles which can be purchased either in sets or by the piece. There are comb and brush sets, manicure sets, powder boxes and countless other things which delight the soul of a girl, most especially if she is leaving a lower grade school to go away to college in the fall. She will want many pretty things to fix up her room in the sorority house, at the boarding home or in the dormitory, and this should be borne in mind at the time of selection. Silver articles are equally as pretty and many speak in favor of them although it seems to be the case that ivory is now the favorite. And these, too, will please the young woman who is leaving college for she will have more time to devote to her room at home and will be taking much more pride in it than ever before.

It is a splendid idea for several friends of a girl graduate to get together and buy her a number of pieces for a dresser set. In this way each does not find the cost of the gift a tax and at the same time the one who receives it gets a present which is really worth while. There are so many "pretties" that it is difficult to make a choice. There are always fans, to be sure, and they are a time-honored graduation present. There are novelty favors, rose vases, pocket books designed for girls and quantities of things in the jewelry line, most any one of which will be gleefully received.

It is well to remember, and I think one is apt to overlook this fact when

one grows older, that such a thing as novelty jewelry is often the one present for which a girl longs. When the years have taught us the lesson of the practical we are inclined to feel that money spent for fanciful things, neck chains, even earrings, perhaps, is simply wasted. If we cannot afford karat diamonds we want nothing. But not so with the girl. She has not gone so far from the age of the barbaric. Civilization has not yet entirely tamed her. She likes to adorn herself and the latest fad in earrings or in chains or pins is a strong desire with her. Since this is the beginning of the end of her playtime, why not give her what she most wants? Some of the shops have splendid lines in this jewelry.

For the "boy graduate" mentioned before it is a difficult proposition to settle on a gift which he will truly enjoy. The stores show novelty ties which attract the youth just out of grammar school or the lad who is leaving high school. There are fancy handkerchiefs, too, and half hose of the season's latest design. There are scarf pins and pretty shirts. A silk shirt will make a (very) young man who is a graduate your friend for life. Particularly if you give it to him a wee bit ahead of time so he can wear it when he takes his best girl to the class festivities.

One of the shops specializes now in nobby clothes for young men. Par-

ents especially can do no better than to give the son an extra suit or a hat for his commencement present. Young lads in many families have to be satisfied with just enough suits to "get by." They are not considered much in the scheme of things and many of them get a new pair of trousers only when patches the size of a silver dollar become necessary from excessive sitting. To be the proud possessor of a nifty summer suit will increase their manhood several per cent.

There are plenty of practical things to give the girls, too, if one is inclined to foster that side of a young woman's nature. Wonderful undergarments in the silks or sheer materials, may be a course of lessons in fancy work can be had at some of the shops, dress patterns or pretty blouses. Or one might give part of the commencement outfit with perfect propriety even if one is not a relative, say for instance the slippers. The shops are showing some in the satins but the really nice thing about shoes this year is that the ones which are being worn on the street and for general wear will be just the thing for the graduation day and afterwards altogether fit for the rest of the summer.

Now as to the fabrics for commencement frocks and for other summer gowns. Organdies and voiles are exceedingly good, the former priced from 39 cents to \$1.25, the latter from 35 cents to \$1 in one of the shops.



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