

A SHORT CHAPTER ON FURS

BLEAK December days are prophesied, and woman is making ready to war successfully with the elements in enveloping furs. It is to be a fur season without precedent. Not only is the appraised value of skins higher, but labor thereon has reached the top notch in trade circles, and modistes have embraced the opportunity to schedule fur garments among the elaborations of dress. Russian sable is the most fashionable as well as the most expensive fur. Blended sable is an acceptable substitute for the genuine, presenting a little less beautiful, brown, silk surface at one-fourth the cost. Seal skin is on the upward trend, enjoying more prestige than broadtail, which is mentioned third on the list of furs of the moment. Black fox, in point of extravagance, queens it over all, but could scarce be classed as fashionable, since its price puts it beyond the reach of any but wives of multimillionaires. Two skins, sufficient only for a yard long boa and a giant muff, were last week sold for \$5,200, which conveys some idea of the enormous prices demanded for skins renowned for beauty and rarity. The two in question were splendidly matched and brought the highest known figure in the London fur mart. Black fox is an extremely decorative variety, having long, silken hairs, tipped with silver.

Undersleeves appear on the smartest coats. These are made of panne velvet or soft silk, but never of lace. The liking for the rather incongruous association of lace and fur or, as one of our girls termed it, "the wedding of the north pole with the south," is a thing of the past. Tucked fur made its debut at the horse show, and I at once named it the smartest trick turned by sartorial experts, which opinion is being daily verified by the exquisite garments confronting one on the promenade. A seal coat, getting its sleeves attuned to the latest notions, is provided with a pink panne sleevelet, which marks a deviation from the ordinary by introducing colored velvet, a scheme never before exploited. Fur lined coats of silk and sable are useful both for day and evening wear. The long kind are luxurious affairs and exponents of elegance not otherwise obtainable in clothes.

A lovely embroidered coat brought over by Mrs. Clarence Mackay had borders of caracul and faingis of fox. The fur coat is immensely interesting this season because of the delightfully chic touches in embroideries, jeweled and crystal buttons and cloth effects. The boleros, especially those of seal skin, are quite bewitching in their decorations. Time was when a coat had only to be seal skin in order to be all that fashion demanded. With the seal skin or bolero of today it is quite another matter. One doesn't consider that all has been said when just value is conceded. Madame permitted me to peep at a charming bolero of seal skin belonging to no less a personage than Mrs. George Jay Gould. It might be worn open or closed and has a fascinating arrangement of gold galleon at the waist.

Novelties in the trimming line have invaded the forest of furs. Leather tabs and gold buttons fancifully and freakishly decorate some of the short fur coats in which the high collar is omitted. After the really superb furs are considered, the next most important is bearskin. It lends itself beautifully to the long boas so much in vogue. Muffs to match are largely proportioned. Bearskin sets are very popular, whether they be grizzly or black.

Sable and seal skin form an effective combination. Shawl revers and an ample collar combine in a new way of calling attention to this modish alliance.

The spirit of advancement has pervaded the bonnet shops, and one finds more swagger headgear with foundations of fur than of silk, velvet or cloth. When a seal skin chapeau is beyond your purse limit, pin your faith to furs light in color, as no other dark variety has the same pleasing result, others being too clumsy for either comfort or style. Baby lamb is the one exception, as it is akin to moire antique in appearance and is equally pliable and no weightier. Little trimmings is needed on a fur hat, in fact, anything that detracts from the exquisite simplicity of it must be avoided. Velvet leaved in shades of green arranged in a cluster on one side is Virat's favorite method of beautifying. He wisely contends that it is useless to paint the lily. In this connection flee from feathers as you would from the plague, and let no designing modiste persuade you to do the "chou act" as a matter of economy. Better mortgage your allowance for the next six months to buy pompons and buckles than be guilty of the chou atrocity.

After the jacket and hat, the skirt suitable to don with ermine, as it were, is considered. Shaggy but soft and handsome cloths are on the market for just such a purpose. Red, reseda, plum, sage and violet are the favorite colors, and camel's hair suitings is the favorite fabric. The acme of cloth elegance and style is reached in these weaves, which resemble the babe skins of finest furs. Skirts of almost any cut may be called fashionable. So numerous are the models shown that selection is merely a matter of individual taste. If the plaited model fails and the plain untrimmed one, which must be cut so exquisitely that it is a picture in itself, is not obtainable, then a great deal may be said for the trimmed and dounced variants. Simple bands of spotted silk, plain panne or embroidered velvet disposed round the skirt have their charms. These are increased if the bands be in some way differentiated from the ordinary run of their clan so that attention is called to them and rewarded when attracted. Then, too, I claim for the formed flounce a new and



Photo by Reutlinger, Paris. A STUNNING DIRECTOIRE TOILET.

The handsome directrice gown in the photograph is one of the latest designs from a famous modiste's atelier. Sorel, the French beauty, posed for the picture. The gown is of panne velvet and very fine soft cloth. The panne overdress is trimmed with lace and opens over a soft, fluffy mass of lace and chiffon. The side tilted picture hat, lined with plaited chiffon, and the gold mounted staff are characteristic of the directrice mode.

well merited approval. It is capable of expressing so well the attenuation that should mark the upper portion of a skirt and the wide billows that succeed it about the ankles that none sees it but to admire.

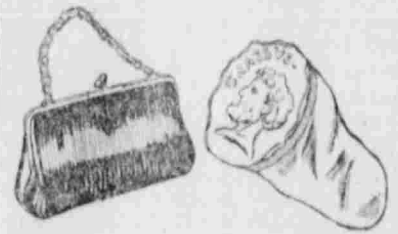
Bodices are repeating the sloping shoulder experiment with more or less success. When of the same material as the skirt, the long line is desirable; when of different fabric, an epaulet suggestion is du mode. The sloping shoulder when it can be becomingly worn is demurely picturesque, but she who dislikes the long, drooping line need not fancy she must wear long seams and flatly inserted sleeves.

"Our push," as we have this winter dubbed a coterie of congenials, have revived an old fad and have found the subject surprisingly interesting when earnest thought is given. We now meet twice a month to study palmistry, and once a fortnight we have a "palmistry ory," which is recognized as a most novel and entertaining amusement. Invitations are in demand, I assure you, and not all the readings of our fair and unfair guests are flattering. Seriously, though, palmistry—be it a fad, a superstition or, as its students assert, a science—is a subject which has interest for everybody from the grave man of letters to the laughing girl in her teens. Those even who scoff at it hold out their hands and listen with bated breath to the reading of the lines, and among those who refuse to believe in the revelations of the palm lines are many who find interest in chiromony. In these twilight hours, with the launching of a new century, interest is attaching itself to every form of occult study, and the body, as illustrating the truth that "souls is form and doth expression take," is receiving attention never before accorded it. Students of physiognomy make startling revelations concerning the form, position and size of eyes, ears, mouth and nose, and an adverse opinion recently formulated against a suspected criminal from the shape and position on the head of his ear was later verified by facts.

But no part of the body is so truly the expression of the individual as is the hand. One need not watch for gestures or look for lines to tell the character of its owner, believe me. Merely observe the hands of those you meet, and you will speedily get a rather correct impression of the individual. Try it. Join the faddists with

TWO NOVELTIES IN PURSES.

Every year designers are cudgeling their brains to invent new pocketbooks. This season the Viennese purse bags and the antique coin purses seem to lead. The Viennese purse bag is a long, narrow receptacle, made of the finest Vienna patent leather, mounted in gold and intended to be worn suspended from the waist by a short gold chain. Some



of these are ornamented with painted designs. In fact, hand painted patent leather is one of the fads of the season. The antique coin purse is quite a different thing. It is a small, pear shaped bag of soft, tanned leather or suede, mounted in silver, and the lid is an exact representation of an old Roman coin. A denarius of the reign of Calligula, Nero or any other Caesar you may prefer.

PEANUT VINES IN HOMES.

Few persons are perhaps aware that a thing of beauty is a common peanut plant, growing singly in a six or eight inch pot and grown indoors during the colder months. Kept in a warm room or by the kitchen stove, a peanut kernel planted in a pot of loose, mellow loam, kept only moderately moist, will soon germinate and grow up into a beautiful plant. It is in a similar way that the peanut planters test their seeds every year, beginning even early in the winter, and the facility with which the seeds will grow in this way has suggested to many southern flower lovers the possibility of making the useful peanut an ornamental plant for the parlor or sitting room window.

As the plant increases in size and extends its branches over the sides of the pot in a pendent manner there are few plants of more intrinsic beauty. The curious habit of the compound leaves of closing together, like the leaves of a book, on the approach of night or when a shower begins to fall on them is one of the most interesting habits of plant life. And then, later on, for the peanut

is no ephemeral wonder, enduring for a day or two only, the appearance of the tiny yellow flowers and putting forth of the poducules, on which the nuts grow impart to this floral rarity a striking and unique charm all its own. There is nothing else like it, and florists throughout the country might well add the peanut plant to their list of novel and rare things.

THE FINGER NAILS.

The ugliest hands can be improved if a little careful attention is given to the nails. The paring of them is important, they should be brilliantly polished and, of course, the appearance of the milk white crescents is one of the chief features of a pretty finger nail. The shape in which the nails are cut should depend to a certain extent on the shape of the finger tips, but fibert shaped nails are generally considered the most beautiful. Manicuring will do much to beautify the hands, and if but one hour a week is given up to the care of them excellent results may be expected. Every day, after washing, the flesh at the base of the nail should be pressed back. Lemon is one of the best mediums to use for removing stains from nails, and orange wood sticks should be employed for cleaning the skin beneath the nails. Rough hands will be improved by being rubbed with a soaped nailbrush daily. Brittle nails need the application of a stiff toilet cream nightly.

After the nails have had their daily brush and clean they should be polished with a chamouis pad. Rouge powders are sold for the purpose of giving a pretty pink tinge to the nails. When these are used, they should be sprinkled over the nail before it is polished with the pad.

ONE TOUCH OF NATURE.

Several years ago the Princess Louise, duchess of Argyll, was holding a reception in Holyrood palace, in Edinburgh. One of the guests was Dr. John Brown, author of the famous "Rab and His Friends." Going up to the princess, he shook her heartily by the hand and gallelessly asked, "And how is your mother?" The princess was both amused and touched, saying it was the first time she had ever been asked at such ceremonies how her mother was. Usually the question was put with all formality as "her gracious majesty."

SHOULD PERSONS OF GENIUS MARRY?

ONE of the wisenesses of a big Chicago newspaper wants to know whether men or women of genius should marry? Are they by habit and disposition adapted to married happiness?

Men of genius are as varied in temperament and habits as the veriest blockheads, and even the wives of men of notoriously small intellect are often extremely unhappy. The stupid brute beats and scolds his wife and makes her life quite as miserable as does the nervous, erratic man of brains.

Genius is of many different sorts. A great mechanical genius will differ considerably in temperament from one who is a great literary genius, while geniuses in mathematics, in art, in architecture, all differ in manner of life and thought and in disposition.

The trouble with the average men of letters, for it is against their sort that one most frequently hears the charge of making the home unhappy, is that they live such unwholesome lives that they are nervous dyspeptics unable to achieve happiness.

Most literary artists are slaves to artificial conditions, and in modern Bohemia the pangs of the last hastily gobbled late rabbit are mistaken for the promptings of genius. One cannot but think that Parnassus would be sadly depopulated if dyspepsia specifics were in more general use.

Many men of great literary talent have made their wives notoriously unhappy. For instance, Carlyle made of poor, patient Jane Welsh one of the most miserable of drudges. Rousseau, Byron, Shelley, Addison, Dante, Shakespeare, Socrates and hosts of others are mentioned as among those who have proved that the muse demands the whole of a man's affections.

In contrast are the men who have been happy in matrimonial harness. Disraeli, Longfellow, Lowell, Sheridan, Gladstone, Tennyson and a host of others have been model husbands.

The fact of the matter seems to be that the man, and not the genius, has much to do with the question of happiness. A man of brains, if he attains celebrity, is naturally more in the world's eye than a nobody. If his domestic affairs do not run smoothly, the world makes much of it, and his divorce court is appealed to his reputation as a brute or a Lothario is firmly established.

Men of genius are probably about as happy in matrimonial bonds as other men who are too unimportant for the world to take interest in their domestic intricacies.

Rudyard Kipling, who wrote the much quoted

Women of genius are, however, another matter. There are few women with tastes for a profession or a career who are likely to care for the humdrum life of a home. When the glamour of first love wears off, they are very likely to hanker again for the idols which they have nominally renounced forever. It is all very well for a man to talk about marriage being a partnership. When the final and irrevocable words are said, he is usually found to have had reference to a limited partnership in which the wife is the silent partner.

Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Browning have been pointed to as notable examples of happily married geniuses. A woman in the household, and the woman who goes out into the world to struggle for success has no time and little sympathy to spare for another. So unless the husband is content to let the wife be the head of the family and sink to the role of housekeeper, the chances are that they will drift apart. Women of genius are usually tied to dependent men, but that is no evidence that they do not despise them. In the struggle for place and fame a woman has not the strength to divide her interests between husband and work, and one or the other must suffer. It depends on which is dearest to her heart. No matter how much the woman may intend that marriage shall not interfere with her career, she will find her husband's interests and her home cares encroaching more and more on her time, until she must sacrifice either her own ambitions or her husband's welfare. If the husband is generous, he sacrifices himself, hurt all the time that the woman whom he believed loved him prefers herself to him, and thus they gradually drift apart in heart, if not outwardly to the world. The woman, if she is the dominant intellect, soon learns to feel contempt for the man who is willing to be thrust aside and trampled on or is willing to be supported by her earnings.

The road to fame is a very narrow one, and few there be that walk therein. Those who aim for the great rewards of genius have with each added domestic responsibility something to hold them back in the race, and in proportion to the fretting of an ambitious man or woman under such burdens is happiness endangered.

And, after all, how many people, married or single, are really happy? It is a question that is asked of the man in his search for perfect felicity, was in the end compelled to admit that no man is happy until he is dead. Perfection is far from humanity, and the disappointed bachelor is as saddening a spectacle as the disappointed or disappointing Benedict, be he genius or doit.

LAURA FIELD.

ONE WAY TO GET MARRIED.

If a girl wants to get married in Russia and cannot manage the business in the ordinary conventional way, she gets herself raffled for. The modus operandi is simple. She issues, say 500 tickets, at \$2 each, and the drawer of the lucky number not only secures her fair self, but the \$1,000 as well. If the winner declines to marry the girl, he is permitted to dispose of her for a consideration, of course the "doit" going with her. If, on the other hand, the lady refuses to accept the winner, then the money is equally divided between the two, and she starts again.



Photo by Reutlinger, Paris. PLAITED COAT FOR EVENING WEAR.



Photo by Edgewood Bros., New York. IMPORTED ETON SEALSKIN JACKET.

The fashionable sealskin of the winter is cut in the shape of an Eton jacket, the high collar and extended revers being faced with sable. The jacket in the picture, posed for by Miss Eleanor Burns of "The Belle of Bohemia" company, is one of the latest importations from Paris.

TOPICS OF WOMANKIND.

Vaiete Bergere, the popular actress, was formerly a special writer on the San Francisco press. She had a rare gift of mimicry and declamation, which on one occasion caused the dramatic editor of her paper to advise her to go on the stage. He was joking at the time, but nevertheless she took his advice and scored a prompt success.

Switzerland's universities are still the most popular educational institutions in Europe for women students from all parts of the world. Of 569 students at the University of Zurich 218 are women. One hundred and twenty-five of these are studying medicine, 58 philosophy, 11

board of the Woman's Keeley Rescue league recently. It was declared that thousands of Chicago women, including many of high social standing, have been and are resorting to the Keeley cure and other treatments to free themselves of the ruinous habit.

The bishop of Liverpool has issued a new code of rules for confirmation. He desires that girls should refrain from the use of long pins in the hair, as the presence of such pins frequently results in the bishop's fingers being lacerated during the "laying on of hands."

Miss Caroline Wetherell, whose syndicated serials of children's stories, "The Jobbernows," has made a big hit throughout the country, will soon bring

out a child's book embodying the work she has a delicate humor and quaint fancy which entitle her to a position alongside of Lewis Carroll and Palmer Cox.

Marie Corelli has protested against the proposed erection of a bust of Helen Faucit opposite the bust of Shakespeare in the chancel of the Stratford-on-Avon church.

A marvellously long and beautiful plait of golden hair has been much admired at the Paris exposition. This wonderful hair belonged to a young Normandy girl who, to pay a family debt and save her father's good name, sold it to a hairdresser for 200 francs. He in turn sold it to a Parisian coiffeur

for 1,000 francs, and now it is the property of a lady who desires the strictest incognito to be kept and who paid 3,000 francs for it.

The ladies of Wurtemberg recently hit upon a novel plan of raising funds to be used for the sick and poor. They discovered a hairdresser in Stuttgart who made invisible hair nets and struck a bargain with him whereby the hair combings of a band of women were to be exchanged for coin.

When an old Paris hawk named Mme. Jean Jacques was trying the other day to dislodge a mouse which had sought refuge in the chimney, she disturbed some bricks and discovered a hiding place containing bills to the val-

ue of \$8,000 which had belonged to a former tenant of miserly habits.

Diamonds for the new art jewelry seem to be increasing. The gold is tinted to harmonize with whatever jewels are used, so the effect of color is desirable. Belt buckles are especially usual variety of brooches and trinkets.

Women miners have the rule in Colombia. No self respecting man can be induced to engage in this pursuit because in the time of the Spanish rule it was the work of slaves.

The wife of Li Hung Chang has the most magnificent collection of furs in the world. She has a wardrobe filled with 2,000 or 4,000 garments. A large part of her husband's income is derived by the annual payment of furs by people in the northern provinces of China.

Mrs. Beate, an old lady of 60 who is nearly blind, is the owner and manager of one of the largest pickle factories in Ireland. She is still an indefatigable worker, and it is to the quality of energy that she owes her success and great wealth.

A foreign manufacturer has invented a new hat for bad weather. It is made of spun glass, like the famous dress of the Infanta Eulalia. Of course, there can be no danger in wetting a creation made of this material. It has besides the advantage of being light weight and of shedding dirt and dust.