

FIRST SIGNS OF SPRING IN THE NEW FASHIONS.

BY DAISY MAY.

EVERY day is now a red letter day at the shops where exclusive imitations of spring fabrics first appear. The light, and "white sales" are on. Great, billowy heaps of laces and fine crepe, while at another, yards high, are piled filmy stuffs to swathe our dainty "summer girl," who blossoms companionably some months hence with June roses. A few years ago an enterprising shopkeeper concluded that he

are to be made of panne, which pretty idea I heartily endorse, as it is deliciously soft and pliable and lends itself admirably to modish collars and crush belts. Velvet always seemed a trifle heavy to adorn the sheer stuffs, yet nothing save a like firm material could supply the character touch needed for diaphanous gowns. Persian borders for muslin frocks are also novelties above reproach. The lingerie of the moment is so

and picturesque collar and cuffs of pale Indian blue cloth embroidered in the same dull gold. One of the prettiest little astrakhan coats I have seen anywhere was embroidered at the edge in black and white, while the coat could be opened to show a vest of mouseline and lace embroidered in gold, while this again could be turned back to form the prettiest of soft revers. A little sable cape was almost tight fitting, and the front was made quite like a coat. Then upon the beautiful opera cloaks I feasted my eyes and noted that one was a loose picture coat in pale blue cloth lined with ermine and kilted mouseline de soie, while the yoke was mauve velvet, with knots of mauve velvet ribbon finishing the scarflike ends.

On New Year's day I made a few calls, and in my journeying I met some beautiful theater bags and smaller portemonnaies for carrying on the wrist made in the pastel colored suedes, with real silver, flexible chains to form handles. Cardcases are, of course, also made in these pastel suedes and in crushed morocco as well, and the very smart girl will be delighted to know that she can have a walking stick to

SKATING AS A SOURCE OF GRACEFULNESS.

IF YOU would learn to be graceful, learn to skate. Dancing is the exercise supposed to be best fitted for the acquisition of grace, but in practical value it does not equal skating. There is really no more wholesome exercise than that of skimming over the ice balanced on iron runners. Very seldom does one see the devotee of

of the best English people. I remember several years ago being invited by an English lady to go with her one afternoon to a west end rink, where I was told I should see some very beautiful skating. The rink was a semiprivate affair, I believe, only members and their friends being admitted at certain hours. It was considered very smart

that the tall, willowy, slender woman makes the best skater, for it is easy for her to acquire that graceful glide which is so necessary a part of the carriage of the good skater. It is a general rule that the graceful waltzer will be an easy and graceful skater.

The muscular work of skating should be done from the hips down, and to accomplish this the limbs must be very elastic. The woman who has skated regularly all her life is not likely to be troubled with stiff joints. I have seen an easy skater who was a woman of 60. All her life she had been in winter a devoted skater and a follower of other athletic sports in summer.

In skating the chief aim should be to acquire an easy movement. The body should be allowed to relax and the lower limbs permitted to do the work. The circular movement known as the "out edge" is good for imparting flexibility to the limbs. The active work, such as scrolling and racing, will start brisk circulation. Overexertion, however, will weaken the heart and should be guarded against.

Dancing the quadrille on skates is also good for starting up the circulation; it is, moreover, a good brain exercise, as it makes constant demands on memory and attention. Skating on one foot at a time will strengthen the muscles of the limbs, for this in turn throws the weight on each foot.

I should recommend skating as I should walking for developing grace. Every young girl should learn to skate. Eight years of age is about the proper time to start them out on the ice. Some one should hold them up until they are not afraid to go alone, for falls are sometimes dangerous shocks to heavy children. Should the head strike the ice, a shock to the base of the brain may be very serious effects.

In making suggestions for the benefit of women who skate, I should say, do not skate until about an hour and a half after a meal. Exercise immediately after eating should be avoided, as well as exercise on an empty stomach.

The hygienic superiority of open air over rink skating is apparent to any one. The oxygen which the lungs take in outdoors is in itself a distinct advantage in addition to the exercise of skating, which has its own value. The difficulty with rinks is that the air is not likely to be fresh and pure, even though it is cold. An hour or two is long enough to skate in the open air on a cold day.

Should the skater feel unusually cold on coming into the house I should advise her to drink a cup of hot coffee, ammonia or lemonade, and put the feet into hot mustard water. Should any part of the body be frost bitten it should be rubbed with snow or put into very cold water as soon as possible. One should not stay out to skate after beginning to feel cold. On coming into the house, presumably the skater is somewhat in a glow after the active exercise, and a draft must be avoided, as it would be under any circumstances when the body is unduly overheated.

It is better to walk home than to ride home, for in a street car or carriage there is danger of taking cold. The skater should wear woolen underwear, or a combination of cashmere and wool, and over this heavy woolen tights, and a heavy woolen sweater. Over the sweater a chemise or pretty, loose blouse can be worn, while the skirt should be a warm one and lined with silk. Outside a little cloth jacket may be donned. If in the rink the jacket is too warm, it may be removed in case a pretty blouse is worn. The most suitable thing for the head is a light fitting cap or turban, one that has not too many flying feathers. The body should be comfortable, and as the corset has so much to do with feminine comfort, a short one, laced very loosely, should be worn. The shoes should be stout, flannel lined ones, made of calfskin and with soles about a quarter of an inch thick. Gray flannel

and very exclusive. The building looked like a theater, the interior being handsomely decorated and fitted with private boxes and balconies, cushioned most luxuriously for the use of spectators. Down stairs the walls were upholstered in red plush and paneled with mirrors. In the evening at this rink matches are held and exhibitions of skating are given, the fashionable world doing its skating in the morning and afternoon hours. The gowns of the skaters are often very beautiful. On the first day that I attended Mrs. Lily Langtry was one of the skaters, and I must say I have never seen her to better advantage than in her sable trimmed, tight fitting green velvet skating habit. The costume was made with a short coat and a comparatively short skirt. Under the electric lights the wearer looked daintily lovely. Her graceful head was crowned with a little toque of velvet and cable, the bottle green of the costume being a hue that a woman of less perfect coloring would have dared to risk. Mrs. Langtry seemed to float over the ice; she glided along with a slight swaying movement

MODISH MIDWINTER HATS.

match her gown and fitted with a beautiful plain gold handle. I might add that this is the newest of fads.

Writing of gold reminds me to touch upon the subject of chateaines. Every one knows how pretty and decorative they are and how useful, too, since pockets will take a long time to regain their former popularity, even though we are going to wear household skirts containing plaited ones. I always had the impression that a gold chateaine was far too expensive for the ordinary woman to amass, but this is not the case. Twenty dollars buys a thing of beauty, and in silver it is half as much, while pretty, though much less elaborate, ones are to be had for \$5.

The gold waist buckle or a riding whip is a favorite wedding present where there is not an unlimited bank account. I also discovered a primitive fad which bespeaks a return of needlework. It is no less a craze than that of collecting samplers. People are collecting them diligently. But while some of them talk a great deal about their acquisitions and show just one or two as treasure troves other more advanced hunters have already devoted wall space to these curious "pictures" in their boudoirs and are banishing former cradles to make room for more and more samplers. Novelty itself is always very charming, but I understand that there is a peculiar and particular joy in samplers.

The newest notion in perfumes comes ribbonwise—a dainty ribbon shaped like a little bag or bookmark, delicately embroidered and impregnated with a most delicious perfume of carnations. It has been named after the Infanta Eulalie. These little ribbons are most admirably adapted to being sewed into dresses or cloaks or even corsets, as they take up no space at all and keep their fragrance for an indefinite time.

The lace frock is to the evening what the velvet gown is to the day, and one of the most exquisite models I've encountered appears in the illustration, a glory of simplicity, which queens it over all.

New York.

A rabbit carved in ivory, mounted on a black stick handle with gold, is one of the novelties in umbrella handles.

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The renewed interest in skating is of course due to its being taken up by fashionable folk. For a time it looked as if this admirable sport was to be the pastime of children alone. Fortunately there has been a revival, due, I should judge, to the athletic importance which our foreign cousins have been found to attribute to the exercise. Nearly all

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A TYPICAL SKATING SCENE.

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LACEMAKING AMONG THE PEASANTS OF RUSSIA.

Russian peasant women make their lace in winter, for during the summer time they are too much occupied with agricultural duties. Lacemaking is entirely a home industry, for the peasants even produce their own materials. If they have the seed, they grow the flax, spin the thread and weave the lace; or if they have sheep to yield them wool, they spin and finally convert it into the celebrated and beautiful Orenburg shawls. Sometimes a woman makes her lace from the very beginning to the end, from the sowing of the flax seed, and she may even sell the lace for herself, but that is not always the case.

It often happens that some women raise the flax and spin the thread and then exchange with the lacemakers, but the whole thing is done by the peasants among themselves, and it is entirely a peasant labor, the men even making the spinning wheels and the looms for weaving.

The women set up very early in the morning, it may be at 4 or 5 o'clock, and they work on until 11 or 12 at night. But for all that they are a gay people, and in the evening a great many will assemble in one house and will sing as they work. Occasionally they will stop for a little while and dance, and then start working again. They are happy, and as they all work for themselves and have no masters, they are at liberty to use the designs they like working best and to labor or rest according to their own convenience.

Many of the lace designs are very old, while others are made by the workers from things they see around them, the frost on the windows being a frequent source of inspiration.

Every thread in a piece of lace has to have a pair of bobbins. The children begin with a piece of narrow lace with about ten pairs of bobbins, and experienced workers use more or less bobbins, according to the width of the lace.

Lacemakers generally live in one place, and the women who do other kinds of work are together in other towns. Near Moscow there is a town which is filled with lacemakers, and on approaching it one can hear the sound of the bobbins.

The shawls which live in the province of Orenburg, from whence the shawls are named. They are made from the finest down of the sheep, selected from the wool. Fine yarn is spun, and then shawls are made with two ordinary knitting needles. A shawl four yards square would be the work of four months. These shawls are so fine and soft that three of them could be passed through a finger ring at the same time. It takes a woman the whole winter to make a piece of lace 10 or 12 yards long and half a yard wide, and she would sell it for about \$5. The lace made by Russian peasants is very strong and is practically indestructible.

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A TASTEFUL DRESS FRONT.
A remnant of silk may be used in making the pretty dress front shown in this sketch. It is full at the waist and the neck and is trimmed with ribbon and lace insertion, run obliquely across the front.

The high collar is filled with a deep frill of lace. Such fronts are worn with any of the short jackets made for wear with the fall tailor dresses, or they may even vary a semidress costume, now that the bolero jacket is so much worn. With a half dozen of these in her wardrobe any clever girl may deceive admiring masculine eyes into the belief that she owns no end of pretty and stylish gowns.

INTERESTING TO MOTHERS.
It will probably startle a good many persons to find, on the authority of a well known statistician, that could the infants of a year be ranged in a line in cradles the cradles would extend round the globe. The same writer looks at the matter in a more picturesque light. He imagines the babies being carried past a given point in their mothers' arms, one by one, and the procession being kept in sight and day and night the last hour in the 12 months had passed by.

A sufficiently liberal rate is allowed, but even in the going past at the rate of 20 a minute, 1200 an hour, during the entire year, the reviewer at his post would only have seen the sixth part of the infantile host.

In other words, the babe that had to be carried when the tramp began would be able to walk when but a mere fraction of its comrades had reached the reviewer's post, and when the year's supply of babies was drawn up a close there would be a rear guard, not of infants, but of romping 6-year-old boys and girls.

GIRLS AND CURLING PINS.
When a recent thunderstorm broke over London, a curious scene, it is said, occurred in a large business house in the city where nearly 300 girls are employed. The moment the first flash of lightning was seen almost the whole of the girls, as if moved by machinery, raised their hands to their heads and for a minute or two were busily employed removing curling pins from their hair. The effect of all these fingers simultaneously unrolling silken tresses in order to get rid of what might have proved dangerous ornaments must have been amusing. Anyhow, the incident shows that the science the girls acquired at school had not been wholly lost, for they still remembered that curling pins might attract the lightning too near them to be pleasant.

THE FIRST CORSET.
The first corset—not counting an ancient modification of the Grecian zone or girdle—was introduced into France by Catherine de' Medici. It was a strange affair, and fashioned after the style of a knight's cuirass. The framework was entirely of iron, and the velvet, which decorated the exterior only, served to hide a frightful and cumbersome article of torture. In the days that followed ladies of the court laced themselves frightfully and wore the dreadful prison night and day in their efforts to obtain what they considered a perfect figure.

daughters named May and December—the months in which they were born. Some of the young men think December is the best time to be born.

An old woman arrested for street begging in Marquette, Mich., had in her ragged clothing \$3,445 in bills and \$11,800 United States 4 per cent bonds. She was sent to an asylum, the authorities saying that a woman who thus made a savings bank of her clothes must be insane.

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A HANDSOME LACE DRESS.

would avoid the inevitable dearth of trade following the holidays by inaugurating "lingerie sales" in January. He knew woman's weakness well indeed, and, though each and every one had exhausted her allowance in buying Christmas presents, here was something really needed. The temptation was one she was powerless to resist. She yielded and still yields. The usual appeal to the man of the family has had the usual result, and the shopkeeper has seen his clever scheme universally adopted and in consequence reaps a harvest.

Added to the "white sales," as they are chronicled, now in the line of progress comes the spring display of washable fabrics, which is quite as alluring. The habit of laying in a supply of lingerie and summer clothes in January has grown apace and has come to be regarded as a duty in every well regulated household. Women enveloped in furs, bending low and carefully scrutinizing or fingering tenderly some dimities and corded mulls and organdies patterned in wreaths and climbing vines, are to be seen in all the stores.

Never before have the materials for this lingerie reached such a state of perfection. Cotton materials are woven so exquisitely fine nowadays that it is possible to pass a width of it through an ordinary finger ring. The coloring, too, surpasses all previous efforts.

Embroidered batiste is to be a favored material for summer gowns, and the robe dress in colored pique will be first to assert its rights early in April. Silken stuffs, or even the mingling of silk and cotton, is not a feature of the displays. A liking for cotton pure and simple is apparent, which, however, must be mounted on silk to exhibit its beauty of texture to advantage. Lace, both real and imitation, is to be freely used for yokes and sleeves in summer gowns, and panne velvet is destined to supply accent to the toilet. Belts, stocks and occasionally tabs and sashes

beauteous I shall reserve comment until another time when I've space to chat a chapter on the developments of millinery and its kindred spirit this season, liberty silk.

Some one told me the other day that it was possible to buy the smartest and prettiest millinery at this time for half price and that a new chapeau really revolutionized the matter of dress to such an extent that the passe gown took on an air of grandeur. I have not indulged myself as yet, but on my tour of inspection saw some beauties which are well calculated to do the transformation at my petite friend speaks of so confidently. For instance, there was one "picture" of Russian babies, with golden pheasants' wings, and, again, a hat which reminds one of a Morland's print, made in tucked black glace silk, with lovely, sweeping plumes, held in by a Parisian paste buckle. Of course, there are the "pastel" felts which are so fashionable now, and these sometimes are darkly trimmed; but one in pale blue was made lovelier by knots of pinkish mauve and lilac panne, with bunches of violets in the same faint tints and springlike foliage of palest green. The newest thing is the all around toque of velvet, pale mauve and lilac, with a market bunch of violets as trimming, or the palest turquoise blue, with just a knot of its own velvet at one side, while a similar one of pale blue is finished by a soft bouquet of poppies in gray gauze with the palest of golden centers.

After the mizmaze of parties and the hubbub of outdoor gaieties I've taken courage to overlook my notebook, to find I've quite an array of interesting data on fashions.

As for furs this season, I've already stated they are superb. At a private race course during holiday week I saw a novel wrap which presents the unique idea of braided fur. It was a long, narrow sealskin coat, almost close fitting, yet not cut in at the waist, had the fur braided in pale gold as a yoke

with evening costumes, but there are also simple, useful ones to be worn when shopping or visiting. A small watch, set between a series of heavy, adjustable links, is one of the novelties in such things. The links are hinged and may be pressed into small corners, so that the watch may be taken off and put into the pocket-book, should it become convenient to do so.

Bracelets provided with a gold pencil, which fits into clasps across the front, are also useful for shoppers.

"Good luck" bracelets of various kinds are popular. They are very often the heavy chain bracelet provided with some sort of a dangling charm.

Not only are these bracelets seen

The chain seems to be the most popular bracelet because it usually is a broad band which will successfully conceal the lack of curves at the wrist. Few women can wear a bracelet of the narrow wire band variety, since few wrists are perfect in form. It is very difficult to know when a bracelet is or is not in good taste, the best rule to follow being to err on the side of simplicity rather than that of display. It is very seldom that bracelets are proper for schoolgirls, and in view of the present popularity of these ornaments it is just as well to state that they are not worn by young girls.

EDITH LAWRENCE.

cupboard and drawer in her house. It was suspected that she had many interesting letters from Victor Emmanuel and Cavour, in whose employ she was during a part of the second empire, and the Italian government did not intend to let these fall into irresponsible hands.

Women novelists, particularly Ouida, rarely allow their heroes and heroines to partake of a substantial meal, while in the pages of the men writers feasts

abound. Compare Dickens and Thackeray. Each is fond of feeding his characters, but Thackeray tells of his feasts with an epicurean touch, an appreciation of the delicacies of the table, while Dickens' written meals are always hearty, plain-boiled beef and greens and meat pies ruling.

Queen Victoria has five maids to assist at her toilet—namely, three dressers and two wardrobe women. The senior, who has been many years with her

majesty, is especially charged with the task of conveying orders to different tradesmen—jewelers, drapers and dressmakers. One dresser and one wardrobe woman are in constant attendance, taking alternate days.

The United States government has highly honored Miss Lizzie E. Wootter, formerly of the Kansas State Normal university, and now a teacher in the Topeka public schools, by adopting her primer and reading and number boxes

for use in the Indian schools of the country. There are at present 35,000 Indian children attending government schools.

Mrs. Sarah D. Marden, who was admitted to the Paul Jones chapter of the D. A. R. in Boston recently, is a real daughter of the Revolution. Her father, Richard Marden, was a sergeant of the 1st New Hampshire Regiment, the Bonhomme ship.

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