

Our Sketch.

Our sketch represents a quiet tailor-made costume in black and white striped charmeuse, the severe line of which is only relieved by velvet collar, revers and cuffs, and fine buttons. This rather long jacket is made double-breasted, with side pockets, the narrow skirt is perfectly plain and ornamented on one side



with six black long buttons. The soft face jabot, without which few really "well finished" women seem nowadays able to face a "wondering" world, adds a chic finishing touch. The hat "turns quickly" off the face, and the whole silhouette is rather neat than flowing.

Neckwear.

Appropos of neckwear and jabots generally, naturally there is a flood of coarse models fashioned upon the general lines of the fine neckwear, and the fad for frills and ruffles has brought about a distressing exhibition of pretensions and very unattractive things of this sort, but even when you cannot afford to buy the loveliest of the stocks and frills, it is possible to find models which are dainty and chic without being expensive if you will but exercise discretion and taste.

A good face and fine embroidery are performance expensive, and the woman who cannot afford to pay high prices must content herself with neckwear that does not boast these accessories. Better a pleated frill of net or lawn untrimmied, than a frill trimmed in coarse lace, or pretentious machine work, and luckily there are many of the simple dainty models from which to choose, if you have but the judgment to choose wisely. The cleaning and laundering qualities of neckwear are also to be taken into consideration by the woman who must economise, and it is often true that an expensive frill or collar is cheaper in the long run than one which costs much less at the start, because the more expensive may be laundered again and again, while the cheaper sort, when it loses its freshness, is useless.

The Voltaire collar and cuff sets are appearing in great variety, and are of all grades of elaboration, some of them being marvels of exquisite hand embroidery. Some dainty sets which present laundry difficulties are finely pleated with narrow lace edging the frills, and little embroidered dots scattered over the lawn. The prettiest of all these Voltaire sets are, in my opinion, those made of finest mill, hemstitched and untrimmied. They add such a delightfully fresh appearance to a dark gown, and the satin or silk cravats with which they are sometimes accompanied are such a becoming finish. You will be pleased to hear, I am sure, that you may wear this year with impunity all the lace you have tucked away in lavender and soft paper for so long.

The lovely fabric, beside which even the finest of embroideries somehow look so commonplace, is going to be very much the fashion. Already the *rus de la Paix* is using it on nearly every one of its creations, and there is immense and pleasing latitude as to its position.

All About Buttons.

"When is a button not a button?" This sounds rather like a conundrum, I know, but I only want to say, that these play an important role in the decoration of the new summer frocks. But they are a delusion and a snare. Nearly all the tailor suits are profusely trimmed with them. In prehistoric times—long ago, buttons were made to button. But now, nous avons change tout cela! The buttons are there, many, many buttons, also many, many button-holes—holeless button-holes, whittled sepulchres, all of them! "This all very well to say, 'I like the fashion—I'll have it—voilà tout!' Alas! Alas! 'tis not 'voilà tout' by any means. 'Buttons have to be lived with.' The period of repentance is long, and dust and ashes endure many days. Reflect, mesdames, that buttons have an unhappy knack of falling off, and think of the monology of rows and rows of buttons repeated on every twentieth woman met in society! How wearisome and—but even to think of it, makes me feel giddy. I feel a sort of nightmare coming on. So—I'll 'head myself off,' and apologise.

Polygamy Rampant.

MARRIAGE SYSTEM IN ZULULAND.

Mr. Fred Niblo, of the "Get Rich Quick Wallingford" Company, has travelled extensively in Africa. His studies of the Zulus revealed an extraordinary marriage system, which he recently explained to a reporter.

"Polygamy is practised entirely among all the natives of Zululand," he said, "and the old Labola custom of buying and selling wives is still flourishing in all its hideousness. Women are a chattel and their market price, like their products, is governed by the supply and demand. At present 61 per cent. of the population of Zululand is female. Fathers raise their daughters to sell; therefore, as the price he receives depends upon her physical condition and appearance, girls are pretty well cared for until they are married, and then— presto! her life's romance ends, and from the courted, coquetish maiden she changes to practically a beast of burden. The number of a man's wives is only limited by his purchasing capacity, and as they are more than self-supporting, it is readily seen that the first cost is the only expense, and they are a profitable investment.

"As the men are not bound by the same conventionalities that govern, or are supposed to govern, the white benedict, his matrimonial condition does not hinder him in the least from having as many 'affaires les coeur' with the dusky debutantes of the tribes as his cattle kraal may justify from time to time.

When the suitor (whether he be married or single) sees a girl he fancies, he strikes up a violent flirtation, much to the amusement of their hilarious and none too delicate mutual friends. At first the maiden, with the instinct of her sex, receives his advances coyly and coldly, but soon warms under his persistent and ardent wooing until she finally yields a favourable response to his Tamba-Mantoba (glasses of love), and then straightway the proud swain goes to her father, where the terms are agreed upon and the wedding day set.

"Five cows is the usual price for a desirable healthy girl of from fourteen to twenty years of age, though a few may be valued a little higher than that. If the suitor can pay the price at once the wedding takes place in a few days, and all the friends and relatives of both parties are invited. The marriage ceremony itself is simple, but the feast and dance which immediately follows is a glorious affair, and lasts for several days.

"If, however, the girl is purchased on the 'instalment plan' (a common system), she remains with the father until

paid for in full, and then the wedding is announced.

"Many odd rules regulate the marriage customs." For instance, if a wife proves unfaithful or is otherwise declared unsatisfactory to the husband, he may return her to her father and "demand his money back." She then becomes a rather second-rate article from the marketable standpoint, and is either disposed of at reduced price or put to work on her father's land.

"Again, if a wife dies during her first two years of married life, the husband may go to the father and demand her next younger sister as an equivalent. This demand may be made regardless of the fact that this sister may already be engaged to another.

"When a man dies, his wives, daughters, and other chattels revert to the ownership of his nearest brother, and he can marry them, sell them, or work them—at his discretion. I heard of a recent case where a young widow, with the aid of friends, purchased her liberty by paying her estimated value (in cows) to her late husband's brother. This, too, is very unusual, as wives never own anything in their own right, anything they may have belonging to their husband or master.

"The Zulu people are noted for their magnificent physiques. The men are tall, straight, and well muscled. The women, especially the young women, are gracefully proportioned, with well-curved forms, but the hard work makes them age quickly, and the supple beauty of today is the wrinkled hag of tomorrow.

"The Zulu is neither inventive, studious, nor ambitious. He is a fairly clever imitator, a cheerful worker, if constantly and strictly managed, but with no thought beyond his next meal.

"Where he is not yet tainted with civilization he is honest, upright, and truthful, and loyal and generous with his fellow tribesmen."

Stoical Unconcern.

The Chinese were ever a race much addicted to suicide, points out Mr. C. J. J. Gibson, in an article in the "Dublin Review." In spite of a marked scepticism with regard to the prospect of a life hereafter, they meet death with stoical unconcern. High officials take poison in their yamens at the bidding of imperial edicts. Criminals are led to execution talking pleasantly with their friends. The writer knows of a case in point, of a long string of victims to be beheaded in that terrible potter's yard that the tourist can see in Canton, one of whom asked serenely of the executioner that he might be placed at the end of the line in order to have leisure to finish his cigarette. There, enjoying his final smoke, unmoved and scarcely interested, he witnessed the death of his comrades. To the Chinese in bondage life is no more than a series of troubles, a riddle that is barely worth the guessing; and death, the shortest and simplest solution. There are many native proverbs to that effect, of which "every man must be possessed of lice" is highly representative. Only to those who understand—as far as they are comprehensible to the Occidental mind—Chinese temperament and character is it credible that the payment of compensation for lives lost on the railway became, to many, an immediate inducement to commit suicide. Nor were these suicides confined to the inhabitants of the northern provinces of Chili and Shangtung, but men walked hundreds of miles in order to get themselves killed that their families might thereby profit. Thus the initial expense of the railway company became tremendous. The directors were obliged to stop payment for lives lost, and the suicides immediately ceased.

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