

New York Fashion Letter.

A writer in Town Topics says: All the smart people of the gay world who could possibly manage it have gone across the water to extend the "glad hand" to the gracious lady, who for sixty years has been so wisely ruled by various prime ministers.

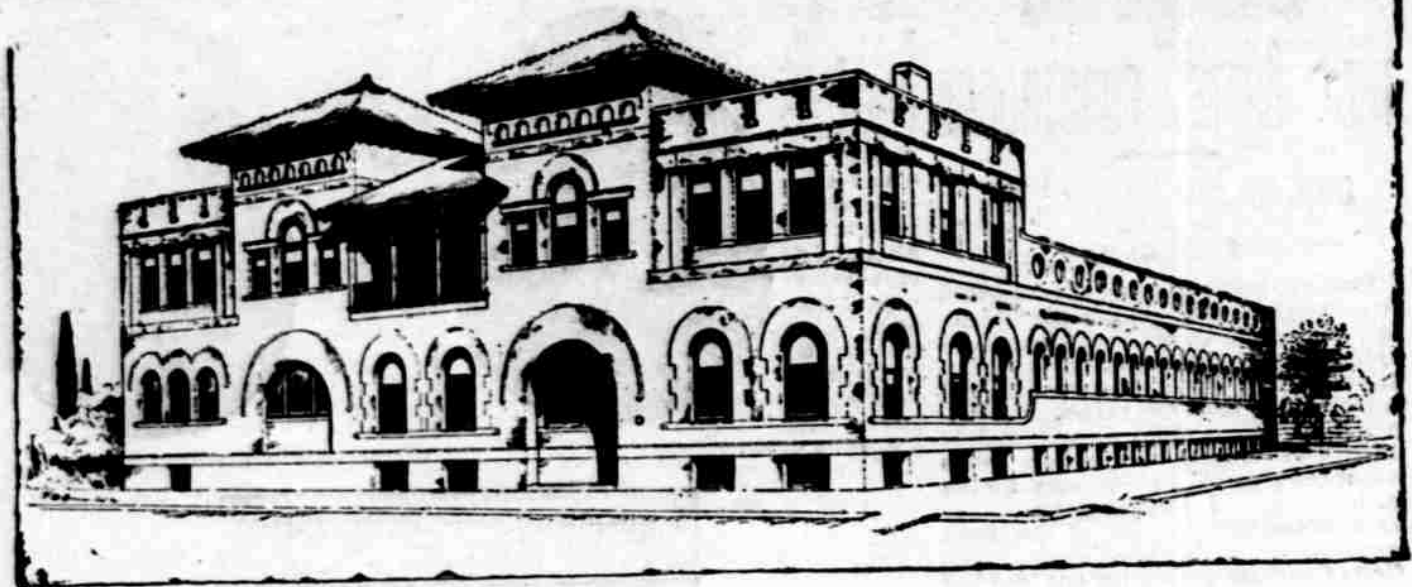
Those of the *monde*, however, who could not cross the water, are turning their thoughts to the near approaching time when they shall go into the water, while their busy and desisted husbands and brothers stay in town, keep office, and perhaps get into hot water. Bathing suits, therefore, are rightfully matters of interest at present, and, for all the cheap slurs cast upon them, they afford an opportunity for the exercise of taste and judgment, as well as that priceless jewel, discretion. Accordingly as these feminine faculties are called in to play in their construction they vary from hideous nightmares to dainty, fetching costumes, or to the outrages upon decency which are to be seen at certain near y resorts of the half-world. The usual stuffs for their construction have been serges, flannels, stockinette and mohair; the newest stuffs are black taffeta silks, surah and satins. These are the latest smartest and natiest. The silk does not shrink, sheds the water and is light as a feather. And it does not stick (or adhere, if you prefer the word), and in consequence, fewer angelic tempers are ruined in the privacy of the bath houses. Still it must be admitted that white taffeta, while charming in appearance and delightful in other respects, has a tendency to go off color if worn too often in the briny sea.

A writer on this subject says, "the abbreviated skirt still holds its own," and I can only add that it holds very little—not half enough. The skirt should come several inches below the knees, and, of course, knickerbockers are essential. Everything ultra is to be carefully guarded against, and this length of skirt still leaves full freedom to the limbs for swimming. I may as well confess it right here, speaking for my Naiad sisters, that the modern woman wears corsets during her dip in the surf. They come from Paris and are both dainty and comfortable, 'tis said. Made of flannel and as carefully boned as the day corset, they are much shorter, and, as I was told by a woman who has adopted them, afford the greatest support while not hampering the wearer in swimming, floating or skylarking in the tumbling seas.

There are fascinating collars for these suits, either attached or separate; the latter I prefer, and if made of serge or pique they may be laundered with little trouble and in a short time, thus enabling the nymph to appear all fresh and attractive every morning on the beach.

I have seen, too, some swell little caps and canvass bathing hats, but I am old fashioned enough to prefer the oil silk caps. They are neat, and in some instances almost becoming, and, at any rate, a bathing costume must make some sacrifices of beauty to utility, and the oil silk keeps the hair dry. Some smart young girls who can afford to play tricks prefer the silk handkerchiefs tied bandanna fashion, and so long as they are kept out of the water the effect is piquant. As to the cut of the dress, I recommend the square low neck and short puff sleeves. Black stockings and bathing sandals are, of course, essential adjuncts.

Now as to costumes for dry land. The smartest tailor suit shows the tendency to very short coats, extremely short, "bobby," in fact. With these tailor suits are worn lovely soft chiffon and silk fronts. Lace, chiffon and tulle bows are worn at the throat, and are very becoming.



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The revival of white mull is to be welcomed. It is softer and cooler in summer than satin or taffeta ribbons.

There are no gowns more useful or more difficult and trying to get up properly than the simple percale. I saw several the other day worthy to be described here, and copied by those who appreciate good taste combined with simplicity. One was a dark blue percale, with small pin dot in white, the skirt of the usual seven gores, in clusters of tucks at the back, and with five-inch hem at the bottom. The waist was made over a tight fitting mull lining, and was boned—a moderately deep yoke in fine tucked nainsook. The blue percale met the yoke, headed with a fine cord of white lawn; the back tight fitting, drawn well into the belt; the front was blouse effect and perpendicular; buttonholes two inches long and spaced an inch apart ran across the bust and over the shoulders around the back; through these was drawn a white satin ribbon, which was tied with a bow and ends in front. The collar, made of the tucked nainsook, was made separate so that it could be changed—a very practical idea. The sleeves were small, and fitted tightly, with a finish at the wrist of white cord like the waist. A narrow belt of white satin and short ends.

Another refreshingly cool frock was of dimity, white ground with a black stripe and yellow figure—plain gored skirt over a white lawn petticoat. The waist, made over a tight boned lining, was just a mass of dainty ruffles one over the other, edged with narrow Irish lace; the sleeves tight fitting with ruffles over the shoulders, violet collar and ceinture.

Nothing can ever take the place held by the fresh linen lawns—they launder so well and are so crisp and cool. They are suitable both for matrons and maids when made up with lace and embroideries; they are always dainty and almost a necessity for our heated terms, when silks and stuffs are intolerable.

I know there are misguided women who think they are not dressed unless in silk and laces, but they are distinctly mistaken. Wash dresses are worn at the ultra-fashionable watering-places, by women whose taste in dress is beyond question, and who, in such matters, have the courage of their convictions. They may be met at church, or on even more exacting occasions, in dimity, lawn or percale, and I pronounce them sensible women and hold them up as examples.

For a time fashion decreed that the backs of bodices should be plain and tight fitting. Now, Felix says otherwise—says that backs must be draped and lavishly decorated. To most women this would be unbecoming, having a tendency to produce a round-

shouldered effect. For a tall, slight figure it might prove advantageous, but for shorter people, or those with any tendency to *embonpoint*, never!

Wasp waists have gone out. The Venus de Milo is the present fashion model. Perhaps the disappearance of the balloon sleeve has checked the tendency to exaggerated contrast between shoulders and waists. Whatever the cause, the result is one to be devoutly thankful for.

It is the proper caper nowadays for women to keep their hats on in their homes and in the summer hotels. They serve as head-dresses, hence the revival of toques, some of which are dainty in the extreme, fashioned in tulle and lace, with jaunty wings and jeweled aigrettes.

By the bye, blue veils are more at the front—and dark blue at that—good for the complexion, perhaps, but awfully frumpy in effect. I don't think they will have much of a run unless for special occasions, such as yatching and beach parties, when the glare is such that both the eyes and the skin suffer unless guarded in some way. Still the news has reached me and I tell it. You might as well, perhaps, throw a blue veil into your trunk. It will be fashionable, it may be useful, but it won't be pretty.

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