

FASHION LETTER.

The great majority of human beings are tremendously gregarious creatures. Not only do they dearly love—like the proverbial birds of a feather—to flock together, but they also dearly love to watch other birds of other feathers flocking.

There you have the secret of the continued existence of the big show of man and his beast, and, incidentally, of woman and her gowns, now on at the Madison Square Garden.

Interest in the horse may wane; interest in the gowns may wane; but the interest that people take in people—especially some people in some other people—will endure forever.

To flock, to be seen flocking, and to see others flocking are what appeal to the crowd, and send it surging in and out of the big amphitheatre for six days and six nights.

The trouble with the American public is that they are only just beginning to understand the pleasures and amusements of flocking. Abroad it is an old story, thoroughly well read, which accounts for—but that's yet "another story," and has nothing to do with my describing the gowns that some of the women who are always of interest, sartorially, to other women wear at this queer foregathering of the town's fashion and riff-raff.

I confess I have gone about it in rather a roundabout fashion, but with such an "embarras des richesses" it is a bit difficult to begin at all.

Let me see—yes—Mrs. "Stuyve" Fish it was who wore one afternoon a blue—light French blue—cloth gown. The coat was simple in outline and braided all over in black braid. It was not a bolero—for which relief, thanks!—but was cut several inches below the waist line. The skirt was braided about the bottom in a design that was some ten inches deep.

With this gown Mrs. Fish wore a black hat, with black ostrich feathers.

Where is the hat without ostrich feathers just now?

Cloth gowns in color are much worn. Mrs. Foxhall Keene is wearing a brightest red cloth, with the bolero embroidered all over in lighter red. A narrow band of the embroidery runs all around the bottom of the skirt, which is laid in flat stitched folds to the knee, where the fulness is allowed freedom and the skirt falls gracefully about the feet.

Day gowns are certainly considerably shorter, so far as the train is concerned, though they keep long in the front and sides. Evening gowns are deliberately fitted with the linings fully two inches on the floor at the front and sides.

Miss Evelyn Burden has a very smart snuff colored cloth gown. The skirt has bands of the same cloth—stitched on it, and the bolero also has stitched bands of cloth for its only trimming.

Miss Burden still affects the bow of white tulle at her throat.

These tulle bows had a tremendous vogue, as we all remember, a short time ago, but Miss Burden and Miss Anna Sands are about the only women who still wear them. Nothing half so becoming has been devised to replace them.

Mrs. Burden is wearing a vivid blue velvet gown this season, and it is quite as smart as the purple velvet gown she wore last season. Mrs. Burden's velvet gowns are noted for their beautiful coloring and their severe simplicity.

Many of the women, of course, wore black. After all is said and done, there is little that is smarter.

There is the usual "model" gown that appears at the beginning of each season, and is so smart everybody has to have it—to their undoing, be it said, for it is not pleasant to see your frock sitting

all around you at the same luncheon table.

The present over-popular model is a simply built affair, the skirt being absolutely plain, with some fulness naturally and skillfully disposed. The bodice is also plain, with the exception of a square hole that is cut twice in cloth—once just at the base of the neck, and again some four inches below.

These holes are filled with chiffon or some contrasting material of whatever color best pleases you. Three large eyelets appear at either side of the hole and are laced with satin ribbon an inch wide and ending in a bow with falling ends that are spiked in metal or jet. The sleeves are slashed and eyeletted and laced up to the elbow, showing the same bit of color as on the bodice. There is a belt of satin that is narrow in front and three inches wide at the back, where it is laced together in the same fashion as the rest of the bodice, only without any color showing.

This gown I have seen innumerable times done in black with white; in white and gold; in red panne and white—any and every combination you can fancy. But the ones done in black cloth with holes outlined in white embroidered line and filled with white are the smartest.

Mrs. "Ollie" Harriman, Mrs. Francis Stevens and Mrs. Norman Whitehouse were all wearing this model the other day—but then, so were many others.

Another over-popular model is done in black cloth and black velvet.

The bolero is formed of alternate stripes of velvet and cloth, the stripes being so arranged there are but two of the velvet and the rest of cloth. The collar is a straight, standing band of velvet embroidered in gold. The skirt, which was very ugly in the original, is varied to suit the wearer, and is usually simply made with or without a wavy band of velvet that appears at about the line of the knee, and from which a circular, very much stitched flounce of cloth falls.

Mrs. George Widener and Mrs. Reeve Merritt are two of the women who are wearing this model, which, by the way, comes from France.

Now that smart women dress more and more elaborately, it is a natural consequence, perhaps, that their dressing should be more brilliant at the Show.

A good many people seemed to think that many of the women dressed too brilliantly for such a "sporty" affair, where so many of the demi-monde rub shoulders with the women of the grand-monde. But "chacun a son gout."

White gowns are much worn at night at the Show.

Mrs. Lee Tailer wore a perfectly fitting gown of exquisite lace, with no furbelow of any kind to mar its beauty.

With it she had on a large flat hat of pale blue velvet encircled by one blue ostrich plume.

Mrs. "Clary" Mackay wore a most elaborate white panne gown covered with entre-deux and flouncings of Irish crochet lace. Mrs. Mackay's hat was quite large, with a high crown, and was entirely made of white gardenias and their glossy green foliage.

Mrs. Prescott Lawrence wore an exceptionally good gown of the light pearl colored gauze.

With it she carried a diaphanous ruff of white, with long pearl-colored chenille ends. Mrs. Lawrence's hat was velvet, of the same color as her gown, and it, too, was adorned with the inevitable ostrich plume.

Mrs. "Fred" Neilson wore one of the smartest gowns of the week on the first night of the Show.

It was done in Cluny lace, deep cream in hue, and mounted over a slip of cloth of gold.

There was a bit of black tulle on the bodice and a sash of black tulle, with

long ends, worn a trifle on one side at the back.

Mrs. Neilson's hat was a flat black tulle toque with touches of transparent gold.

Mrs. Duncan Elliot wore, the same night, a black crepe de chine gown embroidered in gold thread applied on black lace. The top of the bodice was

transparent, as well as the sleeves—a style that grows more and more in favor for theatre gowns.

But of all these smart frocks, the smartest of all—through force of contrast with all the glitter and color that surrounded it, perhaps—was Mrs. Hildreth Bloodgood's severely and absolutely plain gown of black velvet.

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