

PANNIERS CONTINUE IN FAVOR; NINCHE HAT NOT SO POPULAR.

By LA RACONTEUSE



PARIS, April 4.—I often think Fashion has a subconscious mind, and that her sensibilities guide her in many quarters to the one issue. Her intent will have travelled through several channels which finally unite, and then, behold, a conscious and deliberate change of scene.

The effort the milliners are making to launch the Ninche hat has been giving me some concern. Will the pannier feature of fashion have enough influence to bring in its train the form of hat which was certainly its historical accompaniment?

Some of the best authorities among our milliners, although they are showing the Ninche, shake their heads over its prospects. As one of them said to me the other day, "The Watteau type of face is almost nonexistent." Parisian hairdressers are showing their pretty waxen ladies with their hair drawn high on the head over a cage, and they look charming enough, but waxen ladies are generally faulty features.

"Your establishment is nothing less than a wonderful kaleidoscope!" said a well-known Parisienne to her milliner a few days ago, as she entered the latter's show-rooms near the Madeleine.

The term *kaleidoscope* is not exaggerated if we bear in mind how quickly the shape of our hats changes. Every ten days there is something new to chronicle in headgear, either at the faces, the "atomes" or at the conferences *a la mode*. Numbers of elegant women seem much in favor of the flat hat in straw, taffeta or moire, worn tilted at one side. There are, in fact, two camps in the millinery world, one that advocates the before-mentioned style, and one that remains faithful to the cap or toque drawn tightly over the head. The former, with its binding and strings of narrow comet velvet ribbon, discloses the hair to every advantage. It is, however, never used for walking purposes.

The flat hat has found its proper place at the afternoon receptions, where it completes most elaborate gowns in chateaux stamped with dull gold Venetian medallions. Certain milliners trim these plateaux, as they are sometimes called, with tiny bouquets of many-colored anemones or primroses.

A popular hat of the moment is the black or dark blue model in the finest straw, fitting the head like a cap. It has a wide brim surrounding the crown and held in its place by six pairs of wings to match, which are placed two by two, in front, at the side and at the back. These three groups of wings are sewn at such a slanting angle that they appear to touch one another all around the hat. The cap is most becoming if coquettishly tilted like the typical *bonnet de police* under the French Revolution. Some of these pretty hats are completely covered with small wings sewn in every direction, but there is already a fear of their becoming too general.

Another exquisite trimming for these straw caps consists of a group of three large single poppies, in their natural coloring, made of feathers, and placed above the right eye. It is understood that the brim is caught back, all the way around, and fits the low crown tightly.

THE PANNIER TRANSFORMED.

For the last couple of months there has been a slow transformation in the shape of the fashionable tunic and Louis XV. panniers. The former, in many cases, are cut shorter on one side than on the other, and the pannier is placed either at the back or on one hip. Though both the Eastern kilt and the eighteenth century drapery have lost their typical outline, the dress-makers are still persevering in adapting one of these trappings in some form or other to their spring models. And here is a curious fact worth noting. The gradual modification of these two styles has resulted in an interesting amalgamation which we will term the double pannier. The double pannier, such as is worn to-day, was unknown in the time of Mme. de Pompadour. The material forms a double puff reaching half-way to the knees, and as many of our bodices are still high-waisted the effect suits most women.

This graceful trimming must not be confounded with the puffed tunics sewn one above the other, alternating with wide kiltings of tulle, that a well-known couturier launched on the stage about a month ago without any success. The style in the new double panniers lies in the draping of the puff and in the floral garlands that

help to keep the material in the right place. At a recent evening reception there were two pretty dresses in pale green and lemon-colored taffetas respectively. Both were evidently designed by the same firm, for their draped panniers had a similar trimming of large full-blown single roses in silk separating each puff, and a similar pair of long, narrow straps buckles upon the shoulders. The green toilette had the double panniers in tulle of the same shade and Parma-mauve and violet roses. Two garlands of red and pink flowers trimmed the yellow gown, which, with the exception of the chiffon sleeves and bodice drapery, was in taffetas.

Thus far, these novel panniers have only been worn at night. It yet remains to be seen whether they will be adopted for the daytime with equal success.

TAFFETAS COMING BACK.

In the all-prevailing desire for dull, soft texture that is such a characteristic of fashion just now, it is rather interesting to see that taffetas are having a "look in," notwithstanding. Whether that "look in" will lead to very much more is doubtful. The most expensive and the most beautiful qualities of taffetas have a soft bloom which does give a charm of texture unknown to the cheaper qualities. Acutely dependant on quality is this particular silk. I remember a frock at Autenil that was a sort of luminous blue, the blue of blue-black ink when one has spilt it, and on a petite woman the result was very agreeable, but the material was of the most expensive weave. It is painfully easy for a taffeta garment to be an atrocity. To be a success it demands all the right conditions of quality, shade, texture and design.

Then, the other day, I noticed a delightful taffeta frock, in a costly quality, *tete de negre* in color, delightfully draped, and cleverly arranged on the bodice with black tulle and a hint of jet at the waistline.

MUSLIN COLLARS.

The success of the fine look muslin collar is another outcome of the desire for the dull texture as distinct from the smooth, and, incidentally, it does not do to fix those collars into the neck of a bodice; they set differently and give altogether another air when they are fixed on a net gimpes or bodice slip, which, by the way, must have its base run on a tight elastic so that it is held well down and gives the collar no chance to ride up or set badly.

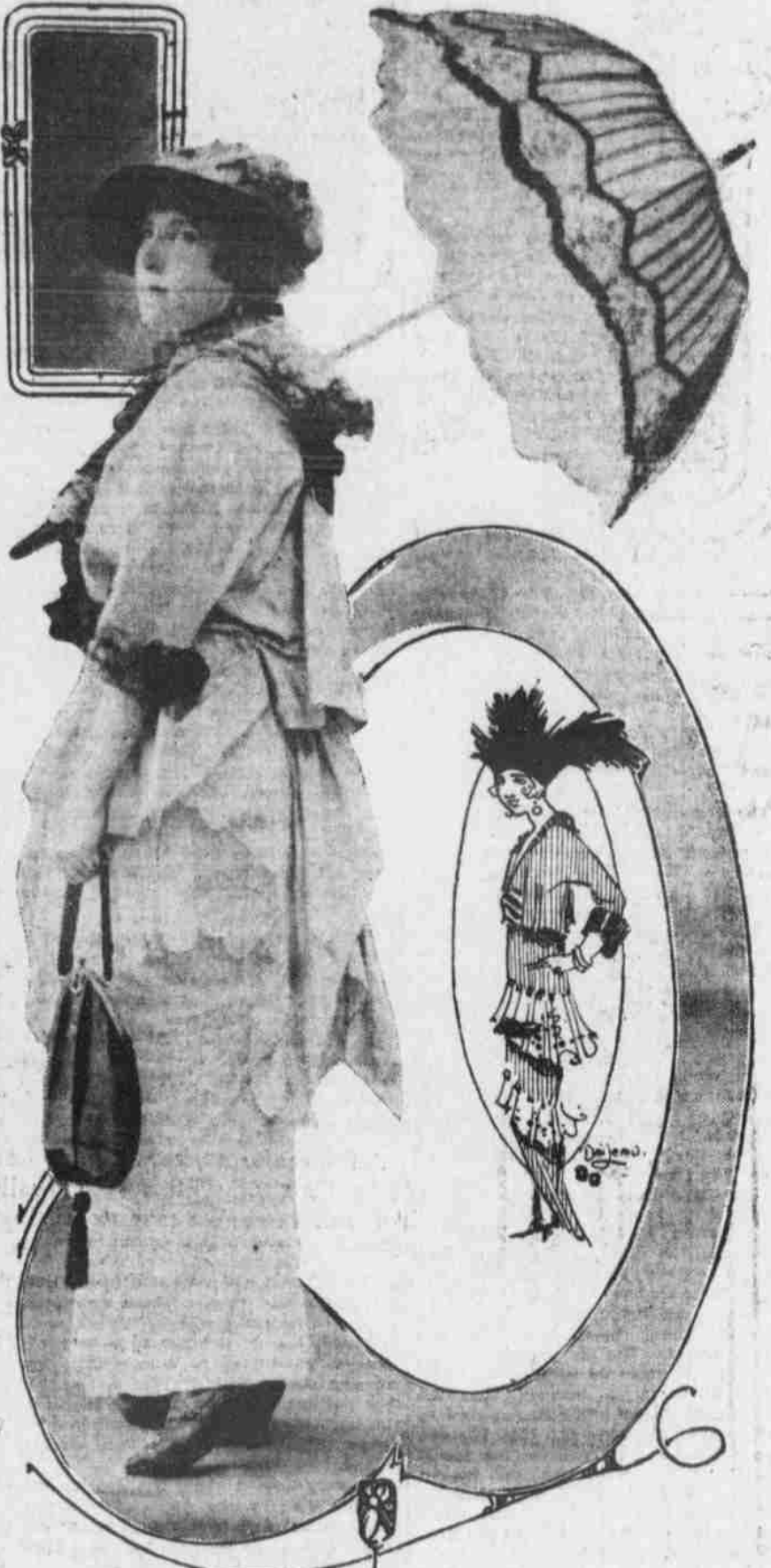
But, of course, this proviso applies to all lace collars. I saw a girl the other day in a navy serge frock with a gaily-striped silk wash, cuffs, and noticed with what ease and grace her embroidered white net collar framed the "V"-shaped neck-line. The "V" of her net gimpes was less deep than the "V" of the serge bodice. It was perhaps an inch and a half higher, and made a very pretty opportunity for a diamond bow brooch, on the net where the collar met, to show itself in a half-revealing, half-concealing sort of way.

A girl I know has ever so many of these net gimpes, to which she has numbers of different effects fixed, and she finds them infinitely useful in this "V" neck-line phase.

To hark back to the serge suit, what success is attending this striped and plaid note! How unmistakably it marks the serge suit of to-day from that of yesterday. Tassels carrying out the colors in the silk give a cheery little note—deep cerise, red, purple, or vivid middle blue, such as always occur in these plaid and striped patterns.

At the left of the page is shown an exquisite evening gown of "orchid" brocaded satin. The bodice is made of a high draping of net, passing under the arms. A band of beaded gold goes over the shoulders and is rounded above the waist at the back, holding up a rich gold lace drapery. The skirt, of the plainer shape, is trimmed at the back with a wide Watteau plait, caught up at the bodice with a gold-beaded band and falling free in a small train.

The model at the right is a charming example of the eighteenth century mantle, one of the features of the Spring and Summer "small vetements." It is made of light blue taffeta, brocaded in pink, cut in the kimono shape, with elbow sleeves. At the back is a short, modernized Watteau plait, open down the middle. The points of the material make the basques. Those in the front are rounded and draped by two folds at each side. The neck is bordered with a "crete" of black Chantilly. Small bows of black velvet are arranged high up on the back, at the waist-line in front, and are used to finish the sleeves.



Significance of the Revival of Interest in Occultism and "Witchcraft"

By Mgr. Robert Hugh Benson

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THE revival of interest in magic or occultism at the present day is a very remarkable phenomenon. Fifty years ago—even thirty—there were probably not a score of people in London (and those kept their preoccupation to themselves) who had any interest at all in the subject except from a purely archaeological standpoint. The whole affair would have been dismissed by practically all educated men as something too evidently foolish and nonsensical to deserve any attention at all.

Well, the tide has changed remarkably, owing partly no doubt to scientific investigations, partly to a real increase of knowledge in the psychological realm; partly to the disintegration of dogmatic religion; once more the whole subject of occultism, in its narrower sense, has presented itself for examination. It may be worth while to record a few observations on the fact.

First, it is necessary to remember that probably in no other realm of knowledge, real or imagined, does credulity play a larger part than in occultism, since that attitude of mind, called by some credulity and by others faith, is generally believed to be an essential element if success is to be attained. As in the realm of religion, so in that of its illegitimate sister, occultism, the law is believed to run which states that "According to your faith so shall it be done unto you." An expectant, if not confident, attitude is believed to be a condition of success. Where, then, as in occultism, the ordinary restrictions of reason are wanting, credulity remains rampant; and the very fact of this relieves those who suffer from the pre-

valent epidemic of intellectual sloth from taking any further interest in the matter.

To those, however, who seriously think about the subject a few very significant facts present themselves, and the first is the extraordinary catholicity, so to say, of occultism and its amazing power of recuperation. There are, roughly speaking, three ages of man—the barbaric, the civilized, and the decadent; and in the first and third of these occultism is invariably present.

There is no savage tribe that does not believe in it; there is no large modern society in which it is not practised. The Melanestians and the Red Indians at one end, modern Parisians and a large section of Londoners at the other, different in all else—in their vices, their philosophy, their manner of life—are united in this.

As surely as civilization is below or above a certain level—and who shall say that that level is the most perfect or clear-sighted—so surely is occultism a feature of life; and by occultism I mean the belief in, and claim to be able to use, a certain range of forces neither natural nor, technically, supernatural—a range of forces that can only be called preternatural—usually for evil or selfish ends.

There is, of course, a further claim made on behalf of what is known as "white magic," and yet a further extension of the term occultism to cover mysticism and the science of spirituality generally; but with this I am not at present concerned.

The same undoubted fact with regard to occultism (defined in this sense) is that modern psychological investigation has done a very great deal to establish the objectivity of its phenomena. Take, for instance, the old claims made on behalf of witchcraft. It was believed, without a shadow of doubt, by the majority of both educated and uneducated persons in England, until about a century or so ago, that certain people had the power of inflicting on others physical injuries of various kinds through means other than physical; and these persons, who were called witches, themselves frequently confessed to the crimes alleged against them and suffered the penalty of the laws then in force. The means used were chiefly those drawn from symbolism, of which a very

familiar instance will serve as a type—the instance, that is, of making a wax figure to represent the person who was to be attacked and of transferring, so it was claimed, the injuries inflicted on the wax figure to the original it was meant to represent.

Now, it may seem a far cry from this apparently gross superstition to the cultivated observations of a modern psychologist; yet, if there is one single law to whose existence the modern psychologist is pledged it is to the principle that by thought alone, properly directed, without any other known physical means, the thought of another, and hence his whole condition, may be affected.

Hypnotism is, of course, an extreme development of the power of thought, assisted by other means.

Personal influence, as it is called, is another; but all such developments, whether extreme or not, witness to the underlying force of thought in communicating itself to another by other means than those known to us as certainly physical. It is a matter for philosophy to decide as to whether the medium, so to say, through which such thought acts should technically be called physical or not. The fact remains that, without external words or signs, the force of thought can be conveyed from one mind to another.

To return, then, to the witch. Our witch surrounds herself with every incentive to prolonged, concentrated, and malevolent thought. She believes with passionate pride in her own power; her victim believes in it, too, with dismay no less passionate. The witch places before her a small wax image, made to resemble as closely as possible the person she desires to injure; and, helped by this aid to a state of fixed and malignant attention, inspired by her subconscious apprehension of the very strange and mysterious law of symbolism, she further materializes her spite by each separate action of driving a pin into the figure, or of watching the fire melt its features.

There is present practically every circumstance that the modern scientific psychologist would demand for success in an experiment in telepathy. Is it any wonder that the experiment should, pretty frequently, succeed? That the victim, that is to say, should be affected first in thought and then in body;

and that, in extreme instances, his consequent sufferings should coincide remarkably, as the evidence in witchcraft trials goes far to show that they did, with the pulsations of evil will focussed and concentrated as each pin went into this unhappy dummy in the witch's chamber—even, in very exceptional instances, that he should actually die in agony as the last pin goes through his heart?

And this is but one instance out of the whole series; but it is an instance that will serve very well, since it is an excellent type of the rest, in all the old malevolent occultism the principle is the same. Sometimes it takes more intimate forms, sometimes less; sometimes a part of the clothing of the victim must be obtained, or, better still, something that once formed part of his body, such as his nail-pairings or a lock of his hair; sometimes the letters of his name combined into a monogram are taken as the focus of attention; sometimes other aids are called into requisition—things such as dew gathered on certain nights and at certain hours, or the droppings from a gallow— and all these must be combined and used in particular manners with a set ritual.

But the principle throughout is the same, that certain material things, themselves highly suggestive and exciting to the imagination, gathered or used under circumstances equally suggestive—suggestive, that is to say, in the sense that they all aid in the concentration of the agent's attention—that these material things so used may be the means of setting in motion certain forces connected with the laws of thought—laws perfectly recognized at the present day as effective in the very direction in which our forefathers believed them so.

Now, of course, a whole host of further questions immediately suggest themselves, on which we have not, it may be, sufficient data to form any opinion. There is first the question of symbolism, itself. Is there, or is there not, a power in symbolism beyond that of its direct effect upon the mind of the observer? Is there, that is to say, immediately beneath the surface of what we call nature a kind of network of laws of which we know, explicitly, very little—laws of which symbols are not merely symbols, but actual and effective instruments, in such a sense that by using the

symbol we set in motion the law? Or is it merely that visible and audible symbols affect the mind and that the mind does the rest?

Again, is it or is it not necessary, or, if it is not necessary, is it or is it not reasonable to suppose the presence and aid of disincarnate personalities—such as those which the occultists for the most part believe in—for the carrying out of occult operations?

These, however, are quite separate questions, and it is not in the least necessary for one who accepts the objective phenomena of Black Magic, in the present stage of psychological knowledge, either to affirm his belief in symbolism as a law external to human thought, or to accept the theory of Satanic intervention. If he already believes in these things he will almost certainly feel that here, if anywhere, is an obvious realm for their activity; if he does not believe in them he can still, for the present at any rate, accept a reconciliation between the phenomena of Black Magic and the conclusions of modern psychologists without any grave mental discomfort.

There is, after all, only one mental attitude to-day really impossible to the educated man—that of blank incredulity with regard to the whole subject. Certainly he has every right to reject the reconciliation proposed as insufficient and to demand far more evidence before he makes up his mind. No less certainly he has a right to accept the reconciliation as one that, on the whole, seems to him to meet the claims made on either side by the scientific psychologist and the occultist.

But he cannot any longer reject both these claims as evidently absurd. They coincide far too remarkably to be dismissed as unworthy of serious attention. When such men as Sir Oliver Lodge think that subjects such as these are worth investigation at all; when, on the modern psychological side, discoveries are made in continuous succession, corroborating no less than occasionally contradicting the guesses made in less exact ages of thought, a man stands convicted of simple ignorance who treats the whole matter with derision.

And, at least, he has to face the fact that, after religion itself, occultism in some form or another is the most widely diffused instinct of humanity.