

WORLDLY WOMAN

MORE nonsense is written and talked about Fashion than about any other subject in the world. Before the very "fierce light" that beats upon her, logic and common sense seem to pale into insignificance, judgment and opinion cease to count. As if by a miracle the craze of to-day is always perfection, to-morrow's an ecstasy; only yesterday's idols are fallen, and their feet are clay indeed! Who would talk sense to the devoted moths that flutter round that brilliant candle? The few who have dared to attempt it have pointed out such unattractive ways, and have made so light of what is, after all, one of the greatest powers on earth, that their gospels have been ridiculously useless. Fashion cannot be dismissed so easily by bloomers, or by a question of hygiene. She goes so much deeper than one thinks; in many of the little tragedies of women's lives, and in some of the big ones too, *cherchez la mode*.

We give her her due, but beg leave to laugh at the latest nonsense that is being preached about her "personality." Paris has been harping on *la note personnelle* for many months, and it means exactly nothing. Since the very existence of Fashion is based on endless reproduction, how can the personal note be repeated *ad infinitum* and still retain its character? Was there ever such a *reductio ad absurdum*? If Fashion encouraged individual effort, if one might choose the dress of one's fancy from the records of all the ages, then we might talk of personality. What an endless masquerade it would be, too! Can we imagine an Ascot where the fichus of the Trianon fraternised with the sloping shoulders of 1830, where the mighty fulness of the crinoline billowed past the skimpy skirts of the Empire, where the whole history of costume would be fair game, and unbridled imaginations had full play? When I think of what would happen if Fashion were really personal, I am devoutly thankful for the restful monotony of our winter models.

Of course, such a thing as individuality in dress exists; it is even the beginning of most fashions. The beauty of a Madame Récamier makes us



Size is one of the features of the new furs; muffs are as large as pillows, and stoles are even wider and longer than they were last winter. Model by Grünwaldt. Photograph by Henri Manuel.

A SABLE MUFF AND TIE

shorten our waists to-day (too often with deplorable results), the grace of a Marie Antoinette has inspired many a square-shouldered woman to drape herself in a fichu. For it is the unenviable lot of personality to serve as a model to a more or less discriminating world.

Every one of us has an individuality. It is no sort of a distinction, but to make it felt in anything, even in dress, is quite another matter. It requires brains, imagination, and the opportunity to shine. The few to whom these things are given may serve as an inspiration and a guide, but they are not Fashion, nor is Fashion for them. She is the broad, safe road for the vast majority who are not artists or anarchists, and who neither could nor would leave their mark upon the world of dress.

In spite of these facts we still cherish our illusions; we cheerfully believe in the individuality of models designed for, and worn by, everybody; we talk, too, of the fickleness of Fashion, though there is no one more distressingly constant. How long have we worn blouses, how many years had boleros, what ages since we took to stripes? All these are not things of yesterday. Her faithfulness is tedious. After many winters, velvet is still her only love. I had hoped for a change, but it was not to be. Velvet coats and cloth skirts will be our smartest efforts for afternoons, velvet-striped and spotted tulle and chiffon our best inspirations for the evening. There is an interesting rumour to the effect that these soft stuffs are to be made into tunics and ruffled draperies, and if this be true it will alter the outline. However, such a thing does not happen in a day, nor in many days. It is also rather important to notice that velvet coats, though of the same colour, will be worn several tones lighter than the cloth skirts that accompany them. It is a pretty idea. As much cannot be said of the long coats, that differ entirely in colour from their skirts, but they will be worn nevertheless. I regret to say that cretonne has not disappeared with the summer; it still survives in waist-coats. The latter have a broad black satin edge and

are fashioned with antique buttons. Their Louis XVI air is not altogether objectionable, and they are likely to be worn for some time. It is a way we have nowadays.

The vogue of purple has begun in good earnest in London, now that it has more or less died out in Paris. Bright satin hats of this colour, lined with white, and heaped with strange feathers, are the acme of *chic*. It is not a becoming shade; but then one must be prepared to pay the price of smartness. Quite plain little dresses with pleated skirts, cut-away coats, and the inevitable *lingerie jabot* are worn with these extravagant creations.

The note of black that used to be on all the frocks that pretended to a Parisian origin has been superseded by a bright blue one. It is the latest inspiration from the Japanese. Blue, altogether, is in much favour, from the classical navy to the faded pastel, but nothing is quite so popular as *bleu Nattier*.

As for furs, no new animal has been invented, only extravagance makes up for lack of novelty. Stoles are much wider, muffs larger, and coats longer than they were last year; and meanwhile the price of everything, except of ermine, has gone up. It is not a pleasing prospect. A sort of short wing-sleeve, rather like our old friend the kimono, has appeared on many little coats; but it is neither pretty nor warm, and I hope it will not last. A shawl-like effect is by far the most charming arrangement for them, and, though it sounds heavy, it is really rather graceful.

We always do everything a little too late in England. Now we have caught the Diabolo fever in the very midst of autumn. We play in enormous hats at the mercy of a high October wind, we shall play no doubt in the denseness of a November fog. We talk of the immortal game, we read of it, but we do not even now equal the zeal of Paris. True, the Press has a different portrait of the original inventor daily. But they go one better in France; they have started a paper strictly devoted to Diabolo, with accounts of matches, championships, etc. If only half the players buy it I rather envy the proprietor. L. S. R.



A design in soft purple cloth that has the merit of novelty, with its tunic or double skirt; a very pretty idea for the tall and slim. The bodice is trimmed with an embroidery of *sonache*. Model by Buzenet. Photograph by Henri Manuel.

THE NEW TUNIC



A charming frock in Nattier blue chiffon velvet; has a trimming of braid in the same colour. Stole in ermine, fringed with tails, and large "Granny" muff. Model by Mauban-Dugdale. Photograph by Henri Manuel.

VELVET AND ERMINE