

RECEPTION DOLLS

After the Debutante and Novice



GEORGE BAKER

COSTUME DE VISITE IN VELVET

PRESENTING THE PRINCESS MOIRE



A CHARMING COSTUME FOR THE DEBUTANTE

Where Extremes of the Mode Meet—Simplicity for the One and Elaboration for the Other—Materials and Trimmings—Some Novel Accessories.

The social season is punctuated closely with receptions, teas, dinner dances and musicales, and all of them intended for one purpose, to wit, the launching of the debutante.

Just exactly how and when and where and by whom a girl is launched upon the rosy sea of society may count much or against her subsequent career. The reception or other form of entertainment whereby she is introduced to all of her family's friends and acquaintances is really the crowning point of her education. Up to that time she is supposed to be in learning, to do as she is bid, to accept the opinion of others rather than her own; but once she is launched she becomes an active unit in the great hive of society, and her dress, her appearance, her deportment, are all subject to the criticism of her elders and her contemporaries, of friend and foe alike.

One hardly realizes how much dress counts for until such a scene as this is encountered. Just "what she wears" seems to tell for so much. And not so much, perhaps, what she wears as how she wears it. Some of us are gifted with the ability to wear even the simplest and least expensive of clothing as though they were real garments, fashioned expressly for us and costly beyond all price. Others, again, are the despair of dressmaker, corsetier and milliner alike, for nothing looks well, proportions seem askew and harmony and design and effect are conspicuously lacking.

"Gowns for the entire family" is most truly the order given when a debutante reception is to be held. More often than not there are three generations represented in the receiving line, and the charming variety in mode, in fabric, in fashion that the clever couturiere contrives for her family of customers is really admirable to behold. Here is one instance in which it is far better to instruct the entire order to one house rather than to patronize two or three different dressmakers.

Often times the artist couturiere will command a close view of the scene of the reception, a written description of the theme of decoration and a hint or two as to the more prominent guests that are expected to grace the function with their presence. Then, with her mise en scene in the mind's eye, it is an easy matter for her to plan the gowns for each member of the family, and to see them as they appear at the hour of wearing, background and entire surroundings having been taken fully into consideration.

Of course, the debutante is the central figure of the group; but, nevertheless, she is expected to be an expressive of extreme simplicity. This may be taken to indicate that she is the least expensive gown of the occasion, or by any means. Here is that brand of simplicity that is far more costly than the most elaborate gown, for it is the gown which those who lean to extravagant elaboration in dress so much covet.

The simple tulle, chiffons and tulles are that the best houses are turning out for their debutante clients. Lace robes, too, are in high favor with those to whom ease is no object, and spangled and embroidered tulles are among the very best and most attractive novelties. Although recently introduced, this latter material has sprung into popularity at a rapid rate, its unsurpassable qualities, too, its graceful and delicate texture, its softness and its ability to hold its shape, are all factors in its popularity.

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ness it will stand you as much packing and squeezing as does a good moulair or siliennne tailor made.

One does not often connect spangles with daylight wear; but some of the most charming of trimming devices employ those glittering discs to the greatest advantage. One charming robe that a debutante will wear just before Christmas, thickly beset with nacre or mother of pearl, polka-dotted in a sort of fish-scale design that is wonderfully effective. The sober effect is lightened by a deep decolette that is defined with a fringed edge in opalescent beads, several sizes being used, and the longest of the irregular strands falling to the centre that defines the short-bodied waistline. There is a yoke of filmy point de gaze that has been in the family for almost a century, the collar to this being well pointed under the ears so that the appearance of a long and slender neck—a high desideratum in the present acceptance of what constitutes beauty—is cleverly effected.

The Empire mode is a charming one for the young and slender girl to affect. Indeed, there are few styles on the current roster of fashion that are so flattering to the immature figure of the juvenile as this old-time mode. A willowy slenderness of build is all that is required, and bust and hips are both supposed to be suppressed rather than emphasized in the silhouette.

In consonance with the custom of the period in which the Empire gown first flourished, some of the season's debutantes—and others, too, for that matter—are wearing those fascinating little frocks with a decidedly low neck and a very short sleeve; and this custom is followed for afternoon as well as for evening wear. Of course, it goes without saying that it is only indoors that this fall or fashion, or whatever one chooses to term it, prevails; the privacy of one's own home being supposed to be the explanation of the seeming bouleversement of accepted laws of dress.

Frocks that are princess in effect, though not veritably in fact, are much favored, too, by the young element. A pinched tuck or a shirring makes for sufficient fullness above and below the waistline, and more often than not there are a few drouces cleverly managed about the hem.

For the other members of the receiving party, especially among the matrons, chiffon velvet in some one or another of its alluring guises is a vast favorite. One oftentimes sees smart gowns in chiffon velvet—that weaver that is far more gracefully described as double chiffon—trimmed with chiffon velvet of the same tint, the folds of velvet being deftly used to show the chiffon, and make it follow the drag in artistic flutes and swirls from the knee to the foot. Where such a gown is followed the bodice is about as likely to be of the jacket variety, with a broad Directorate revers opening to display a waistcoat of some elegance, the short, effectively carried out, and the coat continued in a postillion or some such design below the waistline in the back.

While the short sleeve still flourishes, the full-length arm covering is full, as often seen in expensive gowns. Many of them present a bewitching and between effect in making a short sleeve of the dress material, to fall over a closely fitted outline of lace, this latter almost invariably chiffon lined, and carried down to the wrist in a point over the hand. Occasionally a little slit and loop are made through which the thumb is passed, a feature of fashion that has much to commend it in the way of economy in those days of extravagantly and expensively long gloves, which the short-sleeved fad demands. The elderly woman, whose arms are no longer things of beauty, and whose hands show signs of wrinkles that come with age, is bound to welcome this new fad, and to her the shops are catering wisely in having pretty sets in more or less expensive lace made up and all ready to tack into a short sleeve. One can order those either with or without the mittine effect. For one thing, when the mittine is used the rings that are worn take on a new prominence and attractiveness, the softness of the lace lending a flattering effect to the hand, throwing the jewels into a novel relief.

While the debutante is most usually gowned in white, the buds who have seen a season or two of social life lean more to the pale and pastel tints. There are several charmingly becoming blues on the current roster, and some of them absolutely defy description. Yellows, too, are prominent, and a very prominent place in the affections of the fashionables, and since this tint has been very far in the back ground for a long time it really takes on the appearance of a novelty in its new presentations.

The more elderly matrons find the lilac, heliotrope, mauve and violet tones—those last more often verging on the blue rather than the purple—most becoming in chiffon velvet, and velveteens and real laces are brought once more into high vogue for their adornment. Gray, too, in several shades, finds acceptance, while black is seldom seen at social functions.

Clever Features in Trimmings.

The Directorate Fichu Sash.

There are several features in both construction and trimming that declare the newer mode at a glance to the initiated. Of those perhaps the most conspicuous and the most readily recognized is the clever touch of velvet, most usually in a contrasting tone, which decorates so many of the imported models that grace the social season. The charming gown that is the subject of illustration is a striking example of this, and really shows it up at its most attractive best.

The gown proper is constructed of one of those dull matte finishes in white chiffon velvet, a form of this modish fabric that the manufacturers have only just presented, and at which one has to glance more than once to determine what the fabric really is. The blouse is fashioned of an allover flit lace—one of those handmade Italian laces in which a square-netted mesh is the foundation and the figure, or pattern, is wrought in it in needlework upon the mesh. Of course, it goes almost without saying that there is a backing of chiffon beneath the lace, the same method being followed with the ruffled insertions on the skirt, made from the same exquisite and expensive lace. The skirt follows the circular form, relieved by the lace entre-deux, and with clever examples of Italian polka coupe between. But the real feature of the frock is the Directorate fichu sash made of a brown brown chiffon velvet and embroidered in a grape-and-leaf design in the palest of pale green silks. One hardly knows whether to describe it as a fichu or brette, the ends forming the former impression in the front, passing over the shoulders, to meet in a point in the center of the back at a short-waisted waist line, from which depend the two long and broad sash ends that give especial character to the design.

A Charming Debutante Costume.

There is a charming simplicity to the lines of this chic little gown that cannot fail to impress the fashionwise. Not that it is at all inexpensive to turn out. Rather is it the charm of that expensive simplicity of which we hear so much, but really see all too little in these latter-day frocks and furbelows. A soft ivory white orked silk, an allover embroidered net, and several bolts of imitation Mechlin lace, both the edge and the insertion of this latter being used, go to make up the smart little gown.

The corsage is of the allover net, this liberally shirred and backed with a soft white chiffon. The sleeves are of the silk puffed and ending above the elbow in a soft and narrow double frill. The well-boned corsage presents a special feature, taking, as it does, the characteristic lines of the corset and defining the svelte waistline to perfection. The skirt is made of a light fabric at the edge, this to withstand the wear and add in the smart hanging of the skirt when in wear.

Costume de Visite in Velvet.

For general afternoon purposes, for luncheon, for calling, and especially for reception occasions there is nothing on the fashion catalogue that can even remotely take the place of velvet or velveteen. Where the wardrobe must of necessity be a limited one, the velvet gown is far and away the best investment that can be made, and the handsomest in design the more striking the success of the costume. Few fabrics display even the smallest attempt at trimming to better advantage than does velvet, and the same is true of its less expensive cousin, the chiffon velveteen. The coat and skirt plan is followed in the smart costume that is pictured herewith, falling in loose artistic folds from the hips, and with a ribbon roche topping a shirred drouce at the foot, this weighty skirt hem after the desired style. The sleeve is disposed in a double puff, and presents the modish three-quarter length, embroidered lace making a smart dash above the wrist.



COMBINING THE PRINCESS AND EMPIRE MODES

Corsets and Corseting.

The Changing Figure - Lines Demanded by the New Fashions - Hints and Suggestions as to the Selection, the Adjusting, the Wear and the Care of Fine Corsets.

"And, above all, don't be careless of your corset!" was the parting injunction of Madame. The advice was delivered euphatically, and with inspiring gestures. Madame was addressing the back of her wealthy client, just entering the elevator, and when the accuser had dropped out of view, she turned to the waiting customer with a bright smile.

"If you only knew all that we have to contend with on the part of our clients," announced Madame, still smiling, "you would count it cause for thanksgiving that you are not a dressmaker. Now, there is Madame XX, who has just left. She is one of my best, and, yes, I'll say it, one of my worst—customers, at one and the same time."

"How can she be at once best and worst, you ask? Well, perhaps, it does need explanation. She is one of my best in that she orders liberally, keeps her appointments promptly, never gives excuses or craps at either the gowns or the bills. All that is the best side of her. And she is one of my worst because nothing ever looks well on her. In spite of her wealth and her position she is no credit to me whatsoever. In deed, it is quite the contrary; for she wears her clothes so badly that it really seems to be more my fault than hers, and it does seem a pity that after spending so much money and having such really beautiful things, she is never mentioned in the list of well-gowned women."

The customer made some murmur of sympathy and understanding. But Madame was in a mood to talk, and since her words are ever wisdom, the scribe listened also.

"And it is all because she will not employ a good corseter," said Madame. "No, no," said the client in anger. "I do not know why it is that English and American women—oh, the one is just as bad as the other—never seem to think the make and shape of the corset have much, or even anything, to do with the success of their gowns. I often think that I shall induce some good corsetmaker to establish a branch right here in my saloon, just for the benefit of those obstinate clients who simply refuse to consider the corset question from the sensible point of view."

"Now, take Madame XX, who just went out. You can see that, although she is still on the sunny side of thirty, she has let her shoulders drop forward, her chest sink in and the abdomen protrude. There is simply no end to her waistline in the back, while in front it is so overshortened that it can hardly be said to exist at all."

"But," interrupted the scribe, "is not all that owing to her faulty carriage, the wrong way of holding herself, of standing up and sitting down?"

"No, no," said the little French woman. "It is not so. If she but had the correct corset she could not do any of those things. The well-cut cor-

set, made especially for her by one who knows how, would never permit her to hold herself in that way.

"And, by the way, did you ever know two women to absorb in the same room, and not have to make some apologetic remarks about their corsets? Well, if they be English or American women, they have to do so nine times out of ten. Just because the corsets are not on public parade, like their blouses and parasols, they seem to think that almost anything will do, and they cling to corsets, and keep them in wear long after they have become shabby and well worn worn out, have lost all of their shape, to say nothing of the charm of freshness."

"However, we were talking of what the corset can do. Now here," she said, taking up a dainty corset of white moire, brocaded with moss rosebuds. "This has been made for a customer to wear with an Empire gown. She is a large woman and a trifle inclined to be fleshy. She imagined that because of her size she would look out in such a style. But with the correct corset she can wear it to delightful advantage, and fully as well as her more skinnny sisters, whom the Empire modes are supposed to favor so especially."

"Now, you will notice that the laces are extremely long. Do not imagine that this indicates the possibility of tight lacing, for you will be wrong. It is merely to assist in the adjustment of the corset. Widened out to the limits of the lacing, the corset is put on, and when the waist-line of the garment is drawn to the natural waistline the back lacing is pulled a trifle to hold it in place. Then the jarretelles are caught to the stockings, the underwire pulled up in front and under the arms, the lacing is then drawn in and tied at the comfortable notch."

"And right here," said Madame, "I want to tell you that all this talk about 'pulling up the stomach,' as they call it, is just nonsense. Why, just think, how could you pull up your stomach inside of a corset? It is a physical impossibility. Anyone who knows even the rudiments of physiology will admit that. As for the abdomen, that may be drawn up a little; some support for the abdomen is always a good thing."

"You will notice that in this Empire corset the bust-line is quite low, the waistline short and the hip contour continued and strapped by means of the jarretelles. It is important that the hips be suppressed as much as possible with this style, and that the bust be made as inconspicuous as is consistent with the build of the wearer."

"Quite the contrary is the effect aimed at in the princess model. In this," and she reached for a pale pink moire antique creation, fashioned altogether of ribbons, several widths being employed, "you can see that the bust-line is made quite prominent, the waist is cleverly lengthened, the hips are well sloped and the appearance of a plump and well-rounded figure is aimed for."

"But those dear little ruffles across the back—what are they for?" queried the customer.

"Oh," said Madame, with an airy laugh, "that is to give the new back. Didn't you know that? Really, I suppose that it was the princess mode that brought it in; but all the corseteers are giving the new shape. You see, these are the very revealing princess mode, there being no fullness or sash or drapery below the waistline in the back. If the figure happens to be a little flat there, it needs something to fill it out, just to give a little suggestion of a graceful curve. Hence those fascinating little silken ruffles on the corset, that will afford just the right amount of spring and curve, there."

"Oh, didn't I tell you that a good corseteers could give a smart figure, to even a bronchitic, and that without any clothes on it, either?"

All-Black Gown.

The all-black costume is never out of style. There is a charm about it which, when worn by the right woman, cannot be exceeded by the most beautiful colored costume. And particularly is this true of the black lace gown. There is a well-boned and tightening princess silhouette of soft taffetas, over which a foundation of black tulle is mounted, making a background for the open meshes of the exquisite black silk Renaissance lace robe. The bodice is a simple affair, in which the lace is simply draped over the shoulders and drawn easily into the high grille of black satin, which describes the fashionable empire line, this some three inches in width and fastening in back beneath a low, narrow buckle of beautiful cut jet. The neck is cut in a shallow V and filled in with a high feathered collar and a low roll of black tulle finely tucked. Full puffs to the elbow make the arm covering, and these, like the bottom of the graceful circular skirt, are trained several inches all around, are finished with a frill of black Valenciennes lace made by posing four rows of edging one over the other, each row slightly folded.