

Bellefonte, Pa., Feb. 9, 1900.

FARM NOTES.

Asparagus is the earliest luxury that appears in spring, and if the ground will permit of so doing work should begin on the bed this month.

The fluffy type of woman can be kitted gracefully, but let the tall severe style resolutely turn her back on any temptation to gambol in frolicsome girlishness.

There is a liking this season for a distinct "note" in the belt, just above the belt line. A waist carefully designed to be worn with a smoky-gray cloth skirt, shows a combination of light gray satin, dull gray beads, and for the "note" a narrow girle effect from smoke-gray and white velvet.

The girl who wears shoes that look as though she had borrowed her brother's is the one considered most stylish these days.

If you prefer to have your new frocks made with a difference, that is not all fashioned with a box pleated back breadth, you may select an "inverted" back. This is not so obscure as it sounds, but merely means that the box pleats are turned inside out, which throws the folds toward the middle, instead of turning them away from it.

Belts or dress girdles will be exceedingly narrow, mostly of extremely soft ribbon, so that it may be folded sufficiently narrow, without increasing the size of the waist-line.

The mistake so many women make is building a high collar so stiff that it is ungainly. It is best to leave off oroline as much as possible in the making of these collars.

The desire with the new collar is to have its soft folds envelop the lower part of the chin and back of the ear, and you can't do this if you stiffen it. That high effect you see on some gowns is obtained by feather-boning a very wide piece of double faced satin ribbon.

Dear me, girls! Aren't you tired hearing about clothes? Let's talk about hair-fires. I am told, by one who ought to know that the brushy, baggy style is passing out. Thank heaven! Bird's nest I believe they called it, though in many instances rat's nest would hit nearer the mark.

Fashion is compulsory rather than instinctive, and I never could feel any real liking for the unkempt head, could you? If there is one thing more admirable than another it is the nicely groomed, symmetrical appearance of a well regulated coiffure, which by the law of order appeals always to a refined taste.

You may now draw your hair neatly up from the nape of your neck, withdraw the bolster from your pompadour, coil artistically and even allow a delicate fringe to soften the severity of your brow.

The beautiful little effects for evening wear, in ribbons, flowers, jewels, feathers, etc., so much in vogue, are becoming to almost every shade of face and head, and serve to accentuate the "crown of glory" simile inspired by well dressed hair.

There are not nearly as many secrets in hand treatment as people imagine. A little ammonia or borax in the water you wash with, and that water just like water, will keep the skin clear and soft.

Shoulders will be broad, epaulets and deep fichus being used to obtain the effect. In the Eton jackets—and no style will be more popular in the spring—the jacket will be cut to come out well across the chest and back, often being padded or stiffened to hold out the width properly.

Young lambs are in order now, and they will require attention. The time has passed when the farmer should visit the fields to bring the young lambs to the barn. The eyes should be kept in the barn and the lambs protected from the cold.

FOR AND ABOUT WOMEN.

The fish effect for evening waists and gowns is growing in favor. Sometimes a fish of white or black gauze is draped about the low, round neck and knotted at the front, with ends falling half way down the length of the skirt, or the scarf is brought over to one side and bunched up into a rosette, from which fall the long frilled ends.

Fichus are a strikingly effective feature on some of the new evening gowns. Their beauty consists not so much in their richness as in their handwork, which in some cases is intricate and so complex as to be almost bewildering.

On a gown recently completed in blue foulard the bodice was trimmed with a lace arrangement which in modern parlance is called a Marie Antoinette fichu. It was fully five yards long. Made of the lightest finest chiffon in a shade of pearl white, it was edged with a chiffon ruffling of white, tipped with pink and black velvet put on in the tiniest rows.

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The Origin of the Valentine.

Another Valentine day is at hand, and the shop-windows contain the usual arrays of gilded lace paper, nosegays, and spangles, true lovers' knots, and all the appropriate accessories.

We glance contemptuously at the glittering trifles, and wonder how anyone can value them, and then we recall our childhood days when the sight of a large, embossed envelope in the hands of the postman used to give us a thrill of delight—and the bigger the envelope, the deeper the thrill.

It would seem, at first sight, that there could be little or no connection between these frivolous-looking objects and a venerable bishop of the early Christian church, and yet an authentic writer tells us that Bishop Valentine was so famous for love and charity that the custom of choosing valentines took his name.

History says that Valentine was a holy and devoted pastor in the third century, and that during the persecutions of Christians in Rome, ordered by Claudius II., he went about fearlessly among his suffering flock, tenderly encouraging the timid to preserve in faith, praying with the dying, and burying the dead until his own turn came.

He was kept a prisoner for some time, and succeeded in converting many pagans, but on the 14th of February, A. D. 270, he was cruelly beaten with clubs, beheaded, and his body cast into the Tiber.

The Christians celebrated the anniversary of their beloved pastor's martyrdom, and about a century after, Pope Julius I., caused his canonization, and built a church to his memory.

Pagan Rome had long held the latter half of February (when the birds began to mate) sacred to their goddess Juno, and on the patroness of marriages and births, and on the eve of the festival the young people used to assemble for the ceremony of "drawing names." Strips of paper, each bearing the name of a young man were mixed together, and each young woman would draw out a name and thus decide who should be her partner in the dancing in the merry-making of the festival.

The Christians called the paper billets valentines, because the names were drawn on the 14th of February, the day of the gentle Valentine's death, and this is generally supposed to be the origin of the custom of sending illuminated love-letters, which has come down to our day.

It is also referred to by Shakespeare and many other poets.

Strange to say, we have no proof of the custom ever being universal in France, although the first written valentine on record was the work of a Frenchman, the gallant young Charles, Duke of Orleans, who was taken prisoner at the battle of Agincourt in 1415 and beguiled the tedium of his captivity by composing a poem which he sent to his lady-love on Valentine's Day.

In the time of Charles II. it was the custom in England for young people to draw each other's names and exchange presents on Valentine's Day.

Walter Scott writes about this in his "Fair Maid of Perth."

It would be hard to say just how the decorated "valentines" of our day originated; but we are eye-witnesses to the fact that the old custom has not entirely died out.

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