ELLEN OSBORN'S LETTER.

Lenten Austerities and the Great "Dressmaking Fast."

Ladies Who Make Their Summer Dresses in March Are Studying the Prophets of Styles as Well as the Preachers.

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"But it's Lent now, you know."

Ah, yes: Lent is a name and a distinction. These things must then do, and these things not, runs the decalogue of the dowagers. Thou mayst not marry, nor hold a grand ball, or give more than a reasonable number of dinners

MERELY A SUGGESTION.

to too many people at once, nor be too frivolous.

But what is frivolous?

Oh, that each person must decide for himself. It is a question of conscience. So the "slackening of the pace that kills"—that's a phrase the editorial writer usually finds it convenient to employ on Ash Wednesday morn—isn't so radical as it might be. One dresses in low key, which is excellent taste at any time, for early church possibly once a week. Oftener would be more than one's health would permit. For there are social duties.

The opera is a social duty. It comes into the scheme of Lent, also as a relaxation. One needs amusement after the season, and it is very amusing to hear Calve as Santuzza bewailing in high B flat and a Zingari apron—just the thing for a masquerade, if it were not Lent—the perfidy of her soldier lover. A canter or drive in the park is a duty, too, and the afternoon tea is permissable with modifications. Thus, as of course it always is. And it is excellent taste to wear subdued costumes. And extremely convenient to procure fresh spring and summer goods from the shops and indulge in a forty days' fast of dressmaking. As for mere literal fasting, the idea is, of course, preposterous, except for the one hundred thousand or more who must.

And the martyrdom of the flesh? Well, I have seen lately one or two little boys of fortunate birth who might exemplify it better than their mammas, whose tortures are at least self-inflicted. Into our American climate, with its sudden and abrupt changes, and into our overheated, stifling houses, it has pleased not a few modish mothers to introduce the British style of dressing their little ones, regardless alike of pneumonia and Comstock. But, to be serious, the most censorious moralist could not object to such an angelic spectacle as a dear little blue-eyed boy of four, in short black silk stockings, black shoes, black velvet kilt and jacket and white ruffled waist, over which now his sunny, baby curls, even if the baby knees are entirely bare and white in the heat, or red in the draft, as may be. When in this garb herself, poor hopeful has need of the long yellow leather leggins which he wears out of doors, and would often like to wear indoors too.

The girl of three or four escapes this exposure. Even the most Anglomaniac of American mothers are only half Anglicised. The little girls herein and here cross in a dress nearly long, picturesque, but decidedly in the long. The rule for a girl of three is that the skirt must be as long as that of a miss of sixteen or seventeen almost ready to "come out." Between three and sixteen there are wide gradations, but here again our new world conservatism asserts itself. The child's skirt is never quite so short as in English examples. Nor are low necks and short sleeves here as much in favor. Perhaps we are coming to that—don't you remember, in the old photograph album that funny picture taken of Aunt Mary, when she was a little girl and her chubby arms and plump neck were well displayed by a shirred frock of leaped dimity? Dear such tiny Aunt Marys one sees today in an English home, and may yet see in our own multitude establishment.

The velvet-clad boy and his sister in her simple ruffled frock of white recall the fact that boys are more decorative than girls when equal attention is paid to their attire. The "serviceable school suit" is almost unknown to the son of the Four Hundred. He is fed on plain, wholesome food and keeps fairly good hours—so much has fashion sensibly decreed—but upon his velvet and his laces, his curls and his patent leather shoes, his ribbons and his picture hat, mamma lavishes her—money and her care.

The result is instructive. So beautiful is the boy of to-day, in his best array, that he must warn those enthusiasts of the gentler sex, who are always wishing grown men to resume the velvets and the laces and the nodding plumes and all the bravery of a hundred years ago. Give up the crusade, dear sisters. The men would outshine you!

Two sober gowns I've seen which seem to have caught the Lenten spirit, but are good all the year round, if one fancies sad colors and subdued effects. One is a composition of dark gray with wide black satin ribbon sash. At the skirt bottom is a wide, smooth flounce, slashed up at intervals and bordered with narrow black embroidery. Wider embroidery is at the waist and neck, the sleeves and collar are of the usual sort. The other Lenten austerity is in the wardrobe of the same pretty widow. In one sense it is less austere, because very smart and English; but more austere in that it is horribly ugly, with its long black lace at neck and sleeves and skirt and its bedeckment of black satin ribbon. Such a tea gown one wears when it is necessary to suggest severity and talk about the poor—who don't wear tea gowns. Some time I must write an essay, a volume, a magnum opus, on the use and abuse of lace. But not now.

A lively interest in the styles of the coming season always comes with or a little before Ash Wednesday. The great movable dressmaking fast of the year must have its prophets as well as its preachers, and they say that 1894 will be another year of blouses, of waists, of frocks. There will be soft waists of silk and masculine-appearing waists, with blissfully uncomfortable starched collars and bosoms. Tennis will be played in a pink silk waist and gray cloth skirt and undress sailor hat of white straw trimmed with the pink silk; vary these colors to suit the case, of course. The modified Eton jacket with or without strap and button will be made in dark blue, with a blue skirt and a white silk waist, be accounted a chic yachting or boating suit, or a longer jacket for those who prefer it, with the usual immaculate white bonnet and little pockets. For the full bicyclist, divided skirts or baggy trousers will become more and more common, and may even become nearly smart. In the gymnasium such suits are already worn. Of course. For all out-of-door purposes, frocks, blouses or jackets, or what not, will have plain puff sleeves, and be very big.

Chin chins will be quite plain, and of moderate size. A pretty walking costume will be this: It is shaped skirt of [illegible] be gilt and [illegible], planned with a row or two of narrow braid; a blue [illegible] jacket, [illegible] buttons, with [illegible] and [illegible] vest, quite low [illegible] and a rolling collar about jacket with [illegible] and collar, braid trimmed. The skirt and jacket should be of some dark cloth, the vest lightened but not pressed to severe end. An earlier feminine walking suit, not purely as prelude to the other, will be cut with overskirt full and short at the side, with a plain, long, oval or pointed fall in front. With this should be a big-sleeved jacket tight-buttoned at the waist and furnished with a bag-like appendage about the hips. This overskirt with its full and pleated sides suggests the impending panier. Of course, too, there will be plenty of survivors of the full sleeved, wide collared types. And of course there will be capes.

As for materials there is no less novelty than usual. Moires, silks, satins for dressy effects; crepe chiffons, whipcords, worsteds, serges. You know now fabrics are much less in quantity than usual, owing to factories shut down or on half time.

High effects in hats and evening coiffures are more rampant than ever. I've seen a picture hat with brim of perky and wonderful complexity, very low in front, very high over the temples, low again at the sides and with high soaring plumes between that was really awe inspiring. And so were the high coiffures of proud dames at the pre-Lenten balls, built up quite in the colonial spirit.

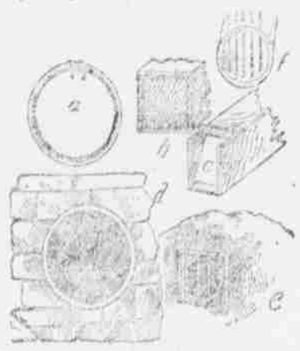
For does not every woman—every pretty woman, at least, in secret or without concealment, mourn for the days of puff, powder, patch, peruke, periwig and all the other things of century ago?

ELLEN OSBORN.

SOME TILE OUTLETS.

Excellent Device for Preventing Serious Damage to the Drain.

Unless special pains are taken to protect the outlet of a tile drain there is danger of its being badly damaged. If it is in the pasture, stock tramping about it are liable to crowd the tile out of place or break them. Where land washes very easily, heavy rains will frequently displace them. It is also sometimes desirable to so close the opening to the drain that muskrats, rabbits, etc., cannot enter it during a dry time and build an obstruction. Several such devices are illustrated herewith. It is particularly suited to a tile which has its opening in a bank of a creek or ditch some distance from the bottom. It is merely a wall of stone or brick laid in cement. This protection prevents the washing away of earth from about the outlet or a displacement of tile or earth by freezing. Where stone is abundant this is probably as practical as any. It consists



TILE OUTLETS.

simply of a wooden box made of 3-inch lumber, open at one end which is slipped over the end of the drain.

At the outer end a door hinged at the top, is so arranged that the water can readily flow out but nothing can go up the tile. It is a similar box, square at the outer end, over which iron rods are secured or a piece of strong wire netting fastened. It is simply a tile with holes in the top and bottom through which iron rods are passed. A is a tile to the opening of which a circular piece of galvanized sheet iron is so attached that the water can pass out but the entrance of any foreign matter is prevented. B is similar with a square tile for the end. These last are seldom made in the west but if obtainable are more easily fitted with a piece of sheet iron. Often a small sewer tile is used to finish the lower end of a drain. The object in all these cases is to prevent an obstruction to the flow of water and to protect the drain.—Orange Judd Farmer.

She Couldn't.

An old woman of undeniable Celtic origin entered a downtown savings bank the other day and walked up to the desk.

"Do you want to draw or deposit?" asked the gentlemanly clerk.

"Naw, I don't. Oi wants ter put some in," was the reply.

The clerk passed up the book for her signature, and, indicating the place, said: "Sign on this line, please."

"Above it or below it?"

"Just above it."

"Me whole name?"

"Yes."

"Before Oi was married?"

"No, just as it is now."

"Oi can't write." — Boston Transcript.

Lawyer—One more question: Is the defendant addicted to the use of tobacco?

Witness—I—I don't know, sir. He smokes cigarettes.—Chicago Tribune.

Felt Them Pleasantly.

Mrs. Doogood—Do you feel the hard times, my good man?

Tramp—No, ma'am; everywhere I go they tell me there's no work.—Puck.

Just the Opposite.

She—I can't endure him. He is too small caliber for me.

He—Oh, you do him an injustice. He is a tremendous bore.—Hallo.

A Permanent Trouble.

Cholly—I wondah what makes me so absent-minded?

Miss Caustique—Nature.—Chicago Record.

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