ELLEN OSBORN'S LETTER.

Gowns and Wraps for the Breezy Autumn Days.

At a Word We Pass from the Tropics to Cold Siberia—Novelties in the Use of Fur—The Autumn Bride's Trousseau.

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As we toiled on through the heat of summer and tried to make believe that winter was really coming, there were men who divined it from afar. And so, at the first touch of September coolness, there leaped as if by magic from a hundred hiding places the very garb of winter—fur. And at one word we have passed from the tropics to Siberia.

Everywhere tillage so presses upon the wild life that Adam saw that fur grows more and more expensive. It is almost the one exception to the universal rule of falling of prices, and so I am sure it is pleasant to know how one can make such excellent use of a very little of it as in the handsome red cloth cape with diamond patterns in black braid, and the wide collar of black miffet, which I have been admiring. Or its companion garment, a long evening cloak of dark heliotrope cloth, lined with a lighter shade and with silver brocade; with jet ornaments, a roll collar of sable and a narrow strip of the same rich fur on the cuffs.

A DORSAL FANCY IN FUR.

The coat of sealskin lends encouragement to the little women who wear Eton and zouave shapes becomingly, for there will be a considerable run upon fur garments in these cuts this autumn. Another popular fur garment will be the cape, either of fur entirely or of cloth with a fur collar and a second, shorter cape overlapping the longer one. Slim young women will find short, loose-fronted sealskin coats recommended to them, but in longer garments both economy and the wish to avoid crushing weight will point to combinations of fur and cloth.

A FUR MODE IN TRIMMING.

A pelisse of black satin merveilleux is an example.

It has Watteau folds in the back, is lined behind with rose and black brocade, but at the sides and in the front with squirrel lock. The square collar, like a Puritan's neck - bands, only broader, the inner collar coming close about the throat, and the cuffs are lined with mink.

Sleeved or sleeveless, all fur garments have to be made roomy enough at the sides to shelter the big sleeves of the moment.

Furs are sometimes continued, as in a cape of black Persian lamb with a shoulder cape edged with sable tails, and a cascade of these tails falling down the front, even below the hem. A coat and skirt costume of Persian lamb with ermine collar is another combination. May I humbly venture the opinion that neither of these is equal in good taste or beauty to the better combinations of velvet, cloth or satin with soft fur.

These are novelties in the use of fur: Fur with an applique of velvet upon pale satin, in Paisley or Dresden designs, the satin shining beneath and between the velvet bars.

Fur over a silvery brocade with groups of blurred china flowers in delicate, faded colors.

Fur with rich green Lyons velvet, lined with old gold brocade. Fur in a huge rolling collar, in a strip down the front on each side, in the tails and paws used as trimmings.

Fur with jet, velvet, passementerie and lace, all in one garment!

Winter will be worth while that shows us all these wonders of the street. Surely never before was a material so dignified and rich as fur used in combinations with such perishable, delicate fabrics.

Is "silver-fox" offered? I have read of a dealer who says that less than two hundred silver foxes are taken in all the world in a year, and that all these, practically, go to Russia to be worn by princesses. A single skin is worth one hundred and thirty to three hundred dollars, and a fox is absurdly small. But dealers are enterprising. What will they do if the fur seal really becomes extinct? Can the characteristic fur of this long suffering beast be imitated? I doubt if it has been yet, and for this reason seal is a pretty safe fur to buy.

Green is a good rich color, not quarrelsome against others, and a key to strong combinations. A chrysanthemum green cloth walking dress I have seen which is a dream. The deep, square collar reveals a bit of mulberry velvet at the throat. The edging of the collar and of the cuffs is sable fur, and the tails are worked into the front of the bodice. The buttons are of silver repousse, the skirt is lined with mulberry satin. The toque is of green cloth and mulberry chenille, velvet roses of the mulberry hue, and an osprey's ravaged plumage. It is the very soul of somber autumn, glowing at heart.

What a gown that would be for an autumn bride's trousseau! The autumn bride demands her share of attention and perhaps a little more. In actual wedding gowns there is—well, the merest trifle of change, hardly noticeable at a glance at the big sleeves, the medallion front, the long, plain, or lace edged train. The going-away gown and the bride's reception and dinner gowns are quite otherwise, and usually represent the latest breath of fickle fashion. Certainly this is the case with a going away costume which I have been admiring in a friend's trousseau. The loose, plain bodice front buttons with big buttons, the skirt is plain, the material of all a smooth gray cloth. Over the blouse bodice, and over the big sleeves falls almost to the waist a triple cape with wide, embroidered collar. Beneath this piling of Pelion upon Ossa, the tightly cased arms from the elbow down look like pipestems. The return of the cape is a calamity to most figures; but it certainly has returned.

I should have said that this fashionable in the extreme garment was crowned by a hat which can only be described as an hour glass crown on very wide brim, with huge plumes and bows, all in black. The steeple crown is robbed of its full effect by the wide brim, reminding one of the contending and mutually nullifying principles of Ormuzd and Ahriman.

And speaking of hats, it may be well to add that the steeple crown, though quite advisable, is to be by no means common. Far more usual is the hat with no crown at all, or the mere faint indication of one, scarce rising from its enormous brim.

For the brims are enormous. A tiny close-fitting crown, shallow as a saucer, insecurely supports a structure two feet wide over all and with an enormous sail area. Cock's plumes, ostrich feathers, steel or rhinestone ornaments, velvet and satin Dresden ribbon are in favor as garnishes.

As to the bodies of these aspiring creations, count felt and chenille in the lead, and add that velvet is a favored material in millinery, as it is with dress and cloak maker and even with the furrier.

There is absolutely no change in the knickerbocker situation. Plenty of moral, intelligent and good-looking women are wearing bicycle bloomers, but I have yet to hear of one society leader following the Paris pointer.

The bloomers may be none the worse for that. ELLEN OSBORN.

STRIKING manners are bad manners. —Robert Hall.

THE SILENT SISTERS.

BY I. ZANGWILL.

They had quarreled in girlhood, and mutually declared their intention never to speak to each other again, wetting and drying their forefingers to the accompaniment of an ancient childish incantation; and while they lived on the paternal farm they kept their foolish oath with the stubbornness of a slow country stock, despite the alternate coaxing and chastisement of their parents, notwithstanding the perpetual every-day concourse of their lives, through every vicissitude of season and weather, of sowing and reaping, of sun and shade, of joy and sorrow. Death and misfortune did not reconcile them, and when their father died, and the old farm was sold up, they traveled to London in the same silence, by the same train, in search of similar situations. Service separated them for years, although there was only a stone's throw between them. They often stared at each other in the streets. Honor, the elder, married a local artisan, and two and a half years later Mercy, the younger, married a fellow-workman of Jane's husband. The two husbands were friends, and often visited each other's houses, which were on opposite sides of the same sordid street, and their wives made them welcome. Neither Honor nor Mercy suffered an allusion to the breach; it was understood that their silence must be received in silence. Each of the sisters had a quiverful of children, who played and quarreled together in the streets and in one another's houses, but not even the street affrays and mutual grievances of the children could provoke the mother's to words. They stood at their doors in impotent fury, almost bursting with the torture of keeping their mouths shut against the effervescence of angry speech. When either lost a child, the other watched the funeral from her window, dumb as the mutes.

The years rolled on, and still the river of silence flowed between their lives. Their good looks faded; the burden of life and of child-bearing was heavy upon them. Gray hairs streaked their brown tresses, then brown hairs streaked their gray tresses. The puckers of age replaced the dimples of youth. The years rolled on, and death grew busy among the families. Honor's husband died, and Mercy lost a son, who died a week after his wife. Cholera took several of the younger children. But the sisters themselves lived on, bent and shriveled by toil and sorrow even more than by the slow frost of the years.

Then one day Mercy took to her death-bed. An internal disease, too long neglected, would carry her off within a week. So the doctor told Jim, Mercy's husband.

Through him the news traveled to Honor's eldest son, who still lived with her. By the evening it reached Honor.

She went upstairs abruptly when he told her, leaving him wondering at her stony aspect. When she came down she was bonneted and shawled. He was filled with joyous amaze to see her hobble across the street, and, for the first time in her life, pass over her sister Mercy's threshold.

As Honor entered the sick-room, with pursed lips, a light leapt into the wasted, wrinkled countenance of the dying creature. She raised herself slightly in bed, her lips parted, then shut tightly, and her face darkened.

Honor turned angrily to Mercy's husband, who was hobbling about impotently. "Why did you let her run down so low?" she said. "I didn't know," the old man stammered, taken back by her presence even more than by her question. "She was always a woman to say nothin'."

Honor put him impatiently aside and examined the medicine bottle on the bedside table.

"Isn't it time she took her dose?"

"I dessay."

Honor snorted wrathfully. "What's the use of a man?" she inquired as she carefully measured out the fluid and put it to her sister's lips, which opened to receive it and then closed tightly again.

"How is you wife feeling now?" Honor asked after a pause.

"How are you now, Mercy?" asked the old man, awkwardly. The old woman shook her head. "I'm a-goin' fast, Jim," she grumbled weakly, and a tear of self-pity trickled down her parchment cheek.

"What rubbidge she do talk!" cried Honor, sharply. "Why d'ye stand there like a tailor's dummy? Why don't you tell her to cheer up?"

"Cheer up, Mercy!" quavered the old man hoarsely.

But Mercy groaned instead, and turned fretfully on her other side with her face to the wall.

"I'm too old, I'm too old," she moaned. "This is the end o' me."

"Did you ever hear the like?" Honor asked angrily, as she smoothed his wife's pillow. "She was always conceited about her age, settin' herself up to be equals of her elders; and here am I, her elder sister, as carried her in my arms when I was five and she was two, still hale and strong, and with no mind for underground for many a long day. Nigh three times her age I was once, mind you, and now she has the imperence to talk of dyin' before me."

She took off her bonnet and shawl. "Send one o' the kids to tell my boy I'm stayin' here," she said. "And then just you get 'em all to bed—there's too much noise about the house."

The children, who were orphaned grandchildren of the dying woman, were sent to bed, and then Jim himself was packed off to refresh himself for the next day's labors, for the poor old fellow still soldiered about the workshop.

The silence of the sick room spread over the whole house. About ten o'clock the doctor came again and instructed Honor how to alleviate the patient's last hours. All night long she sat watching her dying sister, hand and eye alert to anticipate every wish. No word broke the awful stillness.

The first thing in the morning, Mercy's married daughter, the only child of hers living in London, arrived to nurse her mother. But Honor indignantly refused to be dispossessed.

"A nice daughter you are," she said, "to leave your mother lay a day and a night without a sight o' your ugly face."

"I had to look after the good man and the little 'uns," the daughter pleaded.

"Then what do you mean by desertin' them now?" the irate old woman retorted. "First, you deserts your mother, and then your husband and children. You just go back to them as needs your care. I carried your mother in my arms before you was born, and if she wants anybody else now to look after her let her just tell me so and I'll be off in a brace o' shakes."

She looked defiantly at the yellow, dried-up creature in the bed. Mercy's withered lips twitched, but no sound came from them. Jim, strung up by the situation, took the word. "You can't do no good up here," the doctor says. "You might look after the kids downstairs a bit when you can spare an hour; and I've got to go to the shop. I'll send you a telegraph if there's a change," he whispered to the daughter; and she, not wholly discontented to return to her living interests, kissed her mother, lingered a little and then stole quietly away.

All that day the old women remained together in solemn silence, broken only by the doctor's visit. He reported that Mercy might last a couple of days more. In the evening Jim replaced his sister-in-law, who slept perforce. At midnight she awoke and sent him to bed. The sufferer tossed about restlessly. At half-past two she awoke, and Honor fed her with some broth as she would have fed a baby. Mercy, indeed, looked scarcely bigger than an infant, and Honor had the advantage of her only by being puffed out with clothes. A church clock in the distance struck three. Then the silence fell deeper. The watcher drowsed. The lamp flickered, tossing her shadow about the walls as if she, too, were turning feverishly from side to side. A strange ticking made itself heard in the wainscoting. Mercy sat up with a scream of terror. "J-im!" she shrieked; "Jim!"

Honor started up, opened her mouth to cry "Hush!" then checked herself, suddenly frozen.

"Jim," cried the dying creature, "listen! Is that the death spider?"

Honor listened, her blood curdling. Then she went towards the door and opened it. "Jim," she said in low tones, speaking towards the landing; "tell her it's nothin'; it's only a mouse. She was always a nervous little thing." And she closed the door softly, and, pressing her trembling sister tenderly back on the pillow, tucked her up snugly in the blanket.

Next morning, when Jim was really present, the patient begged pathetically to have a grandchild with her in the room, day and night. "Don't leave me alone again," she quavered; "don't leave me alone, with not a soul to talk to." Honor winced, but said nothing.

The youngest child, who did not have to go to school, was brought—a pretty boy with brown curls, which the sun, streaming through the panes, turned to gold. The morning passed slowly. About noon Mercy took the child's hand and smoothed his curls.

"My sister Honor had golden curls like that," she whispered.

"They were in the family, Bobby," Honor answered; "your granny had them, too, when she was a girl."

There was a long pause. Mercy's eyes were half-glazed, but her vision was inward now.

"The mignonette will be growin' in the meadows, Bobby," she murmured.

"Yes, and the heart's-ease," said Honor, softly. "We lived in the country, you know, Bobby."

"There is flowers in the country," Bobby declared, gravely.

"Yes, and trees," said Honor. "I wonder if your granny remembers when we were larruped for stealin' apples?"

"Ay, tha' I do, Bobby, he, he!" croaked the dying creature, with a burst of enthusiasm. "We was a pair o' tomboys. The varmer he ran after us, cryin' 'Ye! Ye!' but we wouldn't take no gar. He, he!"

Honor wept at the laughter. The native idiom, unheard for half a century, made her face shine under the tears. "Don't let your granny excite herself, Bobby. Let me give her her drink." She moved the boy aside, and Mercy's lips automatically opened to the draught.

"Tom was wi' us, Bobby," she gurgled, still vibrating with amusement, "and he tumbled over on the heather, he, he!"

"Tommy is dead this forty year, Bobby," whimpered Honor.

Mercy's head fell back and an expression of supreme exhaustion came over the face. Half an hour passed. Bobby was called down to dinner. The doctor had been sent for. Suddenly Mercy sat up with a jerk.

"It be growin' dark, Tom," she said, hoarsely; "hain't it time to call the cattle home from the ma'shes?"

"She's takin' rubbidge again," said Honor, chokingly. "Tell her she's in London, Bobby."

A wave of intelligence traversed the sallow face. Still sitting up, Mercy bent towards the side of the bed. "Ah! is Honor still there? Kiss me—Bobby." Her hands groped blindly. Honor bent down, and the old women's withered lips met.

And in that kiss Mercy passed away into the greater Silence.—Outlook.

A Classical Instance.

"I hear," said Diana the huntress, as she rested her toe for an instant on the pedestal, "that Pygmalion is in love with Galatea."

"Indeed!" ejaculated the Bust of Minerva; "well, it's a cinch that he gets the marble heart."—Puck.

GENIUS AND MARRIAGE.

Mrs. Burnett Is the Latest Unhappy "Literary Woman."

She Earned the Family Money for Many Years and Then Forgot to Look Up to Her Husband—Other Matrimonial Failures.

Frances Hodgson Burnett is the latest woman to add proof to the theory that genius on the feminine side of the family does not make a happy home. "Incompatibility of temper" is the sad excuse put forth when homes like hers are broken up.

It has never been known to fail when a woman's power of earning money is greater than that of her husband that breakers are ahead, and it is an irrefutable law of nature that it should be so. A woman of a large inheritance who marries a poor man has the advantage of him in a certain way, but the woman who earns the family money possesses an advantage gigantic in comparison and as impossible to overlook or deny as if it were tangible.

No womanly woman, says the Chicago News, relishes being married to a man to whom she cannot look up in all respects and whom she does not feel superior to her in many ways. Reformers may howl themselves black but they can't alter this stern fact one bit. And when a woman discovers that she has much more talent and a larger head for business than her husband there is going to creep into her heart first surprise, then pity and then careless contempt. A man does not shine in this kind of a light. In Mrs. Burnett's case her husband is as talented as she, though in a different direction. Dr. Swann M. Burnett is one of the leading oculists of the country. To be sure, his wife paid for his education in this profession with money earned by writing; still, that was no discredit, provided the couple had amicably understood one another. Mrs. Burnett has lived in Europe most of the time for the last few years, and when home she and her husband were only formally polite; congeniality of spirit seemed entirely wanting.

Other literary women have shared the same experience. John Oliver Hobbes, the English writer, otherwise known as Mrs. Craigie, has just secured a divorce because she was miserable in matrimonial life. Gossip now has it that she is going to marry George Moore, the novelist, with whom she has collaborated in several stories. One would think that she was leaping out of the brambles into the briers doing this, for novelists are as bad as an army in the amount of damage they can wreak. The artistic and literary instincts produce in a person a sort of irrationalism, a restless morbidness, tender nerves and a large demand for sympathetic tolerance, and if an uncomprehending husband is unable to give this a husband of like temperament is more than apt to refuse to give it. Women of genius usually have checkered lives. George Eliot, with her strong intellect and knowledge of cause and effect, was not proof against the matrimonial fate of literary women, as her various wedded and unwedded experiences show.

MRS. FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT.

Ouida seems to have had a prescience of what would follow if she married, and so wisely stayed single. Can anyone imagine Ouida married? Much as she stoutly admires men, she could never make one happy. He would shoot himself or get mangled somehow when she turned on him a stream of her biting, withering, devilishly sarcastic eloquence, poured forth all for his benefit. Eloquence of that sort is admirable on paper and directed in an opposite line, but when there is a hint of the personal in it it becomes uncomfortable. Ouida trying to fry potatoes following on a cataclysm in the kitchen; Ouida mooning over an unreachable cobweb or musing on the turning possibilities in a worn gown; Ouida mixing a salad dressing or sewing on a suspender button—oh, no! it is impossible to conceive.

It is not charitable to lay gifted women to stay single, for they need the fullest of life to expand in and in which to spread their minds; yet the history of their matrimonial tangles is but a history of the divorce courts. The men who are talented are as unfortunate as they are. A little American actress, who was married to a prominent writer of plays, threw up her hands when her divorce was mentioned. "Yes," she cried, "I am divorced from him at last! My dear, whatever you do, never marry a genius!" Her dramatic emphasis was sufficient to express poor Jane Carlyle's unspoken thought and Harriet Shelley's and that of Shakespeare's neglected wife and their thousand of unknown sisters. When the genius is on the feminine side of the house the result is worse.

Doesn't Live Half His Life.

A Spanish mathematician, figuring out the average allowance of sleep, illness and the like, says a man thirty years of age has only really lived about fourteen or fifteen years.

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