

FASHION NOTE

The vogue for the horizontal line in decoration is not easy to make the best of, especially for the woman of over-large or over-wide proportions, which it will accentuate if not used with discretion. Even a yoke line tends to increase a woman's shoulder inches and should be avoided by all but the tall and slender or the definitely narrow.

Here is a use for the new wide braids that are so attractive. The central break produces the illusion of a slimming panel, flattering to any figure type.

—A.T.

OF BOOKS AND TOYS

I GET more and more convinced that it is true that we, as a people, as mothers, love our children in the right way—that is, the way that looks first to their good, and after—and rather cautiously—to their enjoyment. Odd letters find their way in to me, and here is one from a mother in Taranaki.

"Dear Kay,—I like to read what you say about children, I suppose because I am so interested in mine, Geoffrey, aged eight, and Kathleen, aged five. But I often wish I could buy them the lovely toys we see in town, and I want to ask you if you think they are important? We live in the country, which isn't so bad."

Yours faithfully,
B.M., Taranaki.

Dear B.M., may I answer your letter for all mothers as well as you—aloud, as it were? We all wonder occasionally, I think, whether perhaps we ought to make these "special efforts" about toys and extras for our children. There are toys worth trying to manage when your children are young. They are mostly referred to as "scientific toys" and help a baby's development in the business of learning colours and shapes, giving him interesting exercise (like hammering wooden pegs into holes and back again) and helping him to hold things rightly and to construct. You'll see a good many of these toys in any modern Kindergarten. They're made in Germany and America and England. I do think these are important for the city child. But there you have it. As you say, the "country . . . isn't so bad." It provides most of these activities more normally — and many more. Kathleen and Geoffrey have probably had a tremendously jolly childhood to date with streams and rushes and swinging boughs for playthings. And what is more, they had had to work out their own play—to use their wits, and without the help of the scientific toy-maker.

I know a small "Refugee" of seven whose mother was sad for him that all his splendid toys had to be left behind in Vienna. He lives in the country. She is surprised, now, that he has never once asked for them. He's a very busy little person and probably ten times as happy!

Books are different, though. Try to afford good books—well written, well pictured—even if only few. There are splendid ones now. Ask your bookseller to show you some next time you're in town. Besides being packed with interest they'll provide more than one-half of any child's education.

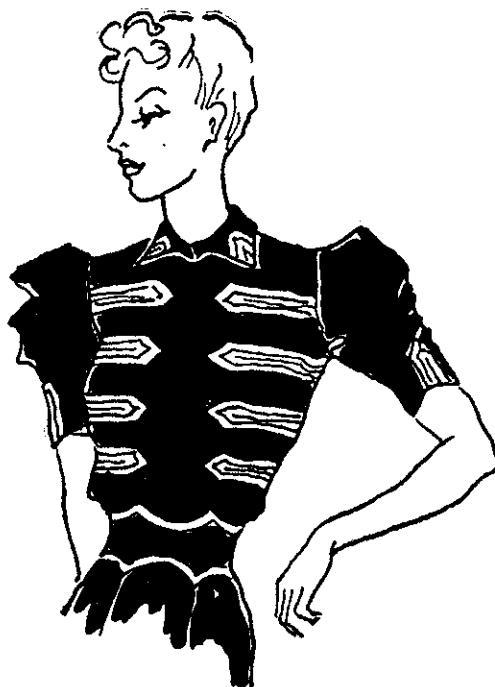
—KAY

Exempt?

The boss related one of his pet jokes to his staff of girls, all of whom laughed uproariously—except one.

"You don't find my little joke amusing, Miss Brand?" asked the boss, ominously.

"I don't have to," came the reply, "I'm leaving to-morrow."



SHOP PROWL

It's not easy to pick-up the inevitable present for the woman of taste and discernment. We can be pretty sure that the average husband dreads the approach of birthdays and what-not when it comes to us. It might even be kind to drop a hint or two. Here's a suggestion that might fit in with your ideas of what is jolly and at the same time useful.

It is a new thing in umbrellas, about as light and attractive and unobtrusive as one could wish. The length is cut down by the steels coming right up to a flat silver disc of handle, in the centre of which is a tiny ring and a cord loop for carrying.

The whole is contained in a circular over-case of checked taffetas which zips neatly up the side. It is a gift worth receiving or giving.

HAIR BEAUTY

"Styling for the individual" is the latest policy in Paris hairdressing. After all, it is a little stupid of us to attempt the "Edwardian" or the "Victorian" coiffures without regard to our type.

One thing seems certain for the Spring — exact balance and symmetry are not to be. In one style the hair is piled up all to one side in puff curls. If the face is long it is dressed a little more fully at the sides.

For a young girl a picturesque dressing is the "Marie Antoinette" with the hair taken up in front and decorated above the forehead with a bow or, for evening wear, perhaps a lovely cameo.

Practical and very kind to most features is what will be known as "Curly-up." This is a little Edwardian, but much softer. Instead of the straight-up piece at the back you get curls arranged flat to the head.

New decorative ideas are in the form of tiny fans which tuck into the hair in the manner of a Spanish comb, though some of us might prefer the brooch or flower worn on the cluster of curls that fills the nape of the neck.

—M.L.

EPITAPH

*She might have lived exquisitely,
But she preferred
Malicious gossip and a cup of tea.
Now she's interred.*

—A.J.M.G.

WHILE THE KETTLE BOILS

Dear Friends,

Perhaps it is reaction from the last few weeks of tension, but to-day I am feeling frivolous and completely feminine, so I am tempted to talk about clothes.

Despite the existence of war conditions, fashion moves on. Styles may be modified by the military trend, but even a world war cannot blot out woman's age-old instinct. If we found ourselves condemned to wear flour bags, there would still be the competitive spirit. We would experiment with fringes and tappings and emerge triumphant in the latest thing in sacks!

However, with the shops so full of lovely things we need not dwell on thoughts so mundane.

Have you noticed how short some of the daytime dresses are being worn? Well, don't be deceived. It is a swing to the extreme, and these flashes are short-lived. Only the young and the near young can wear these successfully, and the most suitable length is a couple of inches below the knee.

The shorter frocks give us the opportunity to wear to effect becoming stockings and shoes. Catherine the Great of Russia is reputed to have been the first woman to wear silk stockings, and she certainly started a good work. One is likely to get bewildered amongst all the shades in vogue to-day, but a pretty safe rule to steer by is to choose a skin-tan stocking for day wear—essential with black shoes and a black costume—and for evening wear a shade the colour of the skin.

Evening shoes are briefer and gayer than ever. You can twinkle the most audacious toes beneath your dance frock—and get away with it. The well dressed woman, however, bars anything showy for day wear. Suede, kid, and patent leather are always popular, and the two-tone shoes are extremely smart with a matching ensemble. Gabardine shoes are also an excellent investment, as they not only look smart but wear well. By the way, a word about sandals. If you have wide feet don't be tempted by this style. They may be attractive, but they are definitely not for you.

So much has been written about style that there seems little remaining to be said. My own idea is that a style is successful only when it combines grace with utility. If you look "always right" for every occasion, then you possess that enviable gift—style.

All of us at some time are faced with "that formal occasion" when we will run the gauntlet of critical eyes—and usually we are over-anxious to appear at our best. An outfit that would be correct and smart for any such function is a well cut black redingote worn over a patterned silk frock. A coloured belt can be worn of the same shade as the colour motif of your frock with a matching handbag. A smart black hat and shoes complete the picture.

A final word about hankies. Add a couple of large chiffon handkerchiefs to your collection. They not only look feminine and graceful, but they give you something to do with your hands.

Till next week,

Yours cordially,

Cynthia