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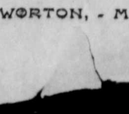
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CURRENT FASHIONS.

THE CUT OF THE SKIRT REMAINS THE MOMENTOUS POINT.

Cloth and Velvet Exceedingly Popular—Stylish Costumes With One or Two Unique Features—A Pretty Example of the Velvet Waist.

The skirts of cloth walking gowns seem to be contracting "visibly before our very eyes," to parody the worthy Sairey Gamp, and if they continue to decrease in size at the present rate they will become so small by degrees and so beautifully less that there will be little left to say about them. Many of these new skirts fasten at the side toward the front instead of at the back, where, however, they have the appearance of being held together by loops of cord and tiny buttons.

Cloth and velvet are fashionable materials. Parisian modistes go so far as to build exquisite evening gowns out of



ORIGINAL CLOTH GOWNS.

the former in white and pale tones. A few years ago street costumes in the very light shades of cloth would have been voted unsuitable for winter wear, but now pale leather shades, trimmed with dark fur or velvet, are extremely fashionable, and are worn to afternoon functions. The more severely plain tailor type of costume is usually in tweed, homespun or frieze, while fine plain cloths are elaborately trimmed or braided and adorned with fur.

Two quite distinguished but useful cloth gowns are shown in the first illustration. One is of heliotrope cloth, finished with fancy stitching and little strips of violet velvet fastened with tiny crystal buttons, and the triple capes form a unique feature. The second is a dressy toilet of cloth, velvet and guipure. The back of the skirt is arranged as a double skirt, while velvet simulates an underskirt in front and forms the sleeves. The bodice, with its eton coat and bolero overpart, furnishes a novel and stylish departure. The front is of velvet put in full to the bust line. The upper part, of velvet plain, is covered with guipure.

The second cut is given as an example of a simple yet charmingly effective waist in velvet or velveteen most useful for wear with any skirt. The light yoke and collar can easily be replaced when soiled if the plaited silk, satin or crape is folded and laid on after the blouse is made and the edge slipped under the trimmed top of velveteen.

Modistes must be weary of the interminable tucks, cordings and gaug-



A USEFUL VELVET WAIST.

ings, but among the newer goods are tucked and corded silks, chiffons, etc., which can be bought to harmonize with the plain fabric and will lighten the work considerably. Moreover, as these tuckings are done by machinery, they are beautifully regular, and insertions of fine lace or passementerie are introduced in various styles. A very small quantity of this necessarily costly material gives a telling finishing touch to an otherwise plain gown.

Pressed Chicken.

An easy way of preparing boneless chicken is, according to The American Kitchen, as follows: Boil a fowl in as little water as possible till the bones slip out and the gristly portions are soft. Remove the skin, pick the meat apart and mix the dark and white meats. Remove the fat and season the liquor highly with salt and pepper; also with celery salt and lemon juice if you like. Boil down to one cupful and mix with the meat. Butter a mold and decorate the bottom and sides with slices of hard boiled eggs, also with thin slices of tongue or ham cut into round or fancy shapes. Pack the meat in and set away to cool with a weight on the meat. When ready to serve, dip the mold in warm water and turn out carefully. Garnish with parsley, strips of lettuce or celery leaves and radishes or beets.

A Notion About Pressing.

Do not press a sleeve or dress waist seam on a flat surface. Keep a board for the purpose made from a rolling pin sawed in half lengthwise, so that it will rest firmly on a table beneath the weight of the iron, and then cover it as you would an ironing board. It supplies just what is needed, a curved, smooth surface.

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THE GAME OF QUOITS.

CAN BE PLAYED ANY PLACE AND IS SPLENDID EXERCISE.

It Is a Very Ancient English Pastime, and Its Beginnings Are Lost in the Mist of Ages—Fine Training For the Eye and Arm.

There are some games which have never had their boom, and quoits is one of them. Still, as nothing happens but the unexpected, it may be that the time is nearly ripe for quoits to be taken out of its undeserved obscurity, to be exalted to the status of a national game, to have weekly papers named after it and to have columns in the sporting press devoted to the doings of its champions. Stranger things have happened. Who, for instance, would have said when at the end of the sixties a few energetic sportsmen went wobbling about on bone shaking bicycles which it would have been far easier to push than to ride that at the end of the century considerably more than 100,000 bicycles would be manufactured annually in Great Britain alone and that a great part of the population would adopt this means of locomotion? One cannot imagine that quoits will ever attain such popularity as the bicycle, but the unprejudiced person can see no reason why it should not become as favorite a pastime as golf, which a very few years ago was almost unheard of south of the Tweed.

Quoits is a very fine game, especially in the winter time. It is splendid exercise and trains the eye and the hand to act together in a way that few other sports can do, for the very essence of it is accuracy of aim at a mark placed below the level of the hand. It has been objected that throwing quoits makes the player lopsided, but, after all, that is easily remedied, for there is nothing to prevent the player throwing the quoit with his left hand if he so pleases, and such a change would make a variation in the game and also afford an excellent method of handicapping the men of unequal skill. Quoits strengthens the arms and shoulders, but it is not a pastime which primarily demands strength.

A great advantage of the game is that it can be played in any small space and that the ground need not be particularly level. Any rough field or waste bit of ground is good enough for a quoits pitch, and no rolling or cutting is required to satisfy the demands of the most exigent. For cricket you need a carefully prepared wicket, for lawn tennis and croquet a piece of turf like a billiard table and for golf the best part of a country all to yourself, but for quoits you only need a few yards of rough ground, and you have as good a place for throwing as any one can possibly require.

People certainly might play quoits more than they do, but the taking up of a game is usually a matter of fancy, and perhaps two things stand in the way of quoits. First, there is an idea that it is a "rustic" sport and can only be played by the rough country lads, and, second, there is the legend that the game is derived from the classical discus throwing, a suspicion which it must be confessed is enough to throw a slur on any well regulated game.

No treatise on quoits can begin without the time honored pedigree of the quoit from the discus. Strutt, who lived at the end of the last century, of course dealt with it, and equally of course he dragged in the discus even if he did not invent the descent of quoits from the sports of ancient Greece. The thing, of course, is absurd. To make a discus, the artisan did not, in the words of the immortal Irishman, take a hole and put some iron around it. The discus was more like a flattened Dutch cheese and was a solid missile. Moreover, it was not held in the same manner as a quoit, but was bowled underhand, in which indeed it alone differs from putting the weight. That quoits is now played chiefly in the country is the fault of those who do not play it and bring it into fashion.

It is no doubt a very ancient English game, and its beginnings are lost in the mist of ages. Hakluyt mentions it in his book of "Voyages," so it was well known in Queen Elizabeth's time, when it probably was one of the favorite sports of Merrie England. In some parts of the country the rustics used to employ horseshoes for want of properly made quoits, and there are districts in which the quoit is called a "shoe" even to this day. This gives us the clew to the most probable origin of the sport and hints that the first game of quoits was started by throwing old horseshoes at the hob or mark, and from this gradually grew up the practice of having quoits specially made for throwing. So much for the discus legend. As for the word "quoit" itself, its etymology is more than doubtful, and it gives us no clew whatever to the origin of the game.

Shakespeare, who mentions everything except tobacco, of course has a reference to the sport, and as Hakluyt was a contemporary of his it may be held to show that the spacious times of Great Elizabeth were the palmy period of quoits. It is true that he does not speak of the sport in very reputable connection, for the only mention of it occurs in the scene in which Prince Henry, Falstaff, Poins and the rest were in the Boar's Head tavern, in Eastcheap. Falstaff, in giving a character sketch of the young prince, observes that he plays quoits well, but the context very clearly shows that in Queen Elizabeth's time at any rate quoit playing was looked down upon as the idle man's recreation, much as skittles is with us. That fat Jack Falstaff, disreputable old fellow as he was, meant to imply no good of the prince by his reference to quoits is very evident. This is the only reference to quoits in Shakespeare, and it is a libel, though the sting is taken out of it by the fact that it is put into the mouth of Falstaff.—Physical Culture.

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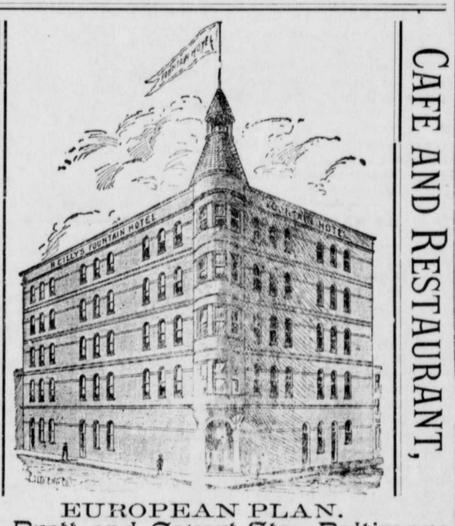
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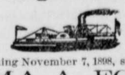
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