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# THE MYSTERY OF THE INN BY THE SHORE

By Florence Warden,
Author of "The House on the Marsh," etc.

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## CHAPTER I.

PROSPERITY and the sea had deserted Stroan together. As the waves receded, leaving a bare stretch of sand, where once whole fleets had ridded at anchor, the once flourishing town had dwindled and sunk, in spite of valiant struggles to revive and retain her ancient supremacy.

In the length and breadth of the land no place could be found so sleepy, so much behind the times, so tortuous of street and so moss-grown of stone, as Stroan had become, when, by a happy chance, the game of golf came down from the North and established itself as the fashion. Then somebody discovered that the bare and unproductive sands between Stroan and the sea made excellent "links;" visitors began to arrive and to put up at a brand-new hotel built expressly for their accommodation, and a little breath of active life began to stir once more in the narrow, winding streets.

Among the visitors one warm September came down from London three friends, who tempered their devotion to golf by various other pursuits, each according to his inclination.

Otto Conybeare, the eldest of the three, was a journalist, who had aspirations to literature of a less ephemeral sort. He used his holiday by trying his hand at both prose and poetry, of which his two companions offered trenchant if not discriminating criticism. He was a tall, thin, dark-skinned man, with clean-cut, aquiline features, and was looked upon by the two others as their champion and social leader.

Willie Jordan, the youngest of the party, was short and, alas! fat, with curly, light hair and a huge, tawny mustache, which he had cultivated as the trade-mark of his calling, which was that of an artist.

Clifford King, the remaining member of the trio, was a barrister, to whom no one had as yet intrusted a brief. He was a dark-haired, blue-eyed, good-humored young fellow, whom everybody liked and in whom all his friends believed with an enthusiasm which was not without excuse, for Clifford had brains, and was only waiting for the opportunity which comes to all who can wait in the right way.

They had been at Stroan five days, and the little god, Cupid, had already spoiled the harmony of the party.

Willie was the victim, of course.

It was always Willie who could not resist a pair of handsome eyes, black, blue or gray; so that when he became attached to the society of old Colonel Bostal, and would insist upon accompanying that mummer-sling old gentleman from the links to his home three miles away, Clifford and Otto exchanged winks, and having found out that the colonel had a daughter, at once believed that they had probed successfully into the mystery of Willie's civility.

So, justly incensed at Willie's duplicity, for that young man had spoken slightingly of Miss Bostal's attractions, Otto and Clifford determined upon tracking the traitor to his lair.

This they did on a sunny afternoon, when the straight road over the reclaimed marsh between Stroan and Shingle End was thick in white dust.

They knew the colonel's house from the outside, having passed it on many a walk from Stroan to Courtstairs, the next town. It was about half a mile beyond the Blue Lion, a picturesque roadside inn, which was the half-way house between Courtstairs and Stroan. Very poor the colonel was, as he took care to inform everybody, and very poverty-stricken his dwelling looked in the observant eyes of the two young men, as they rang the bell and waited a long time before any one answered it.

Shingle End was a pretty, tumble-down house, which stood at the angle formed by two roads. It had once been white, but neglect and hard weather had made it a mottled gray; while cracked and dusty windows, rickety shutters and untrimmed trees and bushes combined to give the place a dreary and unprosperous appearance.

Behind the house was a garden, with a poultry-run and a paddock; and Otto had seen, as they passed, the colonel reading his paper under an apple tree, while the flutter of a petticoat in the background among the trees seemed to confirm their suspicions.

"We've unearthed the rascal," smiled Otto, as they at last heard footsteps in the house in answer to their second ring.

But when the door was opened their hearts sank, for there stood before them a woman of forty, at least, small, lean, dowdy, precise of manner and slow of speech, wearing a pair of gardening gloves and a sun-bonnet, who looked at them in some surprise, and asked them stiffly what they wanted.

Otto, who was acute enough to perceive that this must be the colonel's daughter, apologized for disturbing her, and said they had brought a letter for their friend Jordan, who, they understood, was spending the afternoon with Colonel Bostal. They would not have intruded but that they believed the letter was very important, as it was marked on the envelope "Please deliver immediately."

And the plotter drew from his pocket, with ostentatious care, a missive which he and Clifford had prepared together, and which, with great ingenuity, had been made to look as if it had passed through the post.

But Miss Bostal glanced at the letter and shook her head.

"There is no one with my father," she said, "and I don't know any one of that name. But if you will come into the drawing-room I will ask him."

"Oh, no, not for the world. We could not think of intruding. We must have made a mistake," stammered Otto, while Clifford hurriedly passed out by the little wooden gate into the road.

In the meantime, however, Colonel Bostal, having heard the voices, had come through the narrow passage from the garden to learn the meaning of this unusual sound. The matter was explained to him by his daughter, amidst further apologies from Otto.

The colonel, a withered-looking, gray-faced man of about sixty-five, in a threadbare and patched coat and a battered Panama hat, remembered the name at once.

"Jordan? Jordan? Yes, of course, I know him," said he at once. "A little fellow, with a long mustache. Yes, he often walks home with me as far as the bridge, but there he always turns back and excuses himself from coming any farther."

Otto looked perplexed by this information, but over Miss Bostal's thin, pinched face there came a little, pale smile.

"Try the Blue Lion," she said, rather primly.

Otto grew stiff.

"My friend is no frequenter of taverns," said he.

"Try the Blue Lion," said Miss Bostal again.

Her father burst into a little, dry laugh.

"The Blue Lion has a good many frequenters who are not frequenters of other taverns," said he. "Nell Claris, the niece of the man who keeps it, is a protege of my daughter's, and the prettiest girl in the place."

A light broke over Otto's face. But Miss Bostal looked grave.

"I shall have to speak to her very seriously," said she, with a little frown. "She encourages half the young men of Stroan to waste their time out here."

But the colonel smiled and shook his head doubtfully.

"It's no use speaking to a pretty girl," said he, with decision. "You will only be told to mind your own business. And there's no harm in Nell."

"I know that," retorted his daughter, not spitefully, but with a spinster's stern solicitude. "I shouldn't be so much interested in her if I didn't know that she's a good little thing. But she's giddy and thoughtless. I shall really have to advise her uncle to send her back to school again."

"She won't go," said the colonel. "And if she would, old Claris wouldn't part with her. We must rely on the effect of your sermons, Theodora."

Father and daughter had carried on this dialogue without including the visitor in the conversation, so that Otto, who prided himself upon being an acute observer, had an opportunity of peeping into the rooms on each side of the passage, as the doors were open, without moving from where he stood.

He was much struck by what he saw; by the carpets worn so threadbare that there was no trace of the pattern to be seen on them; by the carefully-darned table-covers, the worn-out furniture. All was neatly kept and spotlessly clean; all showed a pinched poverty which there was no attempt to hide.

He withdrew with more apologies as soon as the short discussion between father and daughter was ended, and rejoined his friend outside.

"Well," said Clifford, as Otto turned toward Stroan in silence, "and what kept you so long talking to the severe-looking lady?"

"I wasn't talking. I was listening," answered Otto, "and working out in my mind a romance, a pitiful romance, of the kind that is not showy enough for people to care to hear about."

"What! Do you mean to say that Jordan's fallen in love with that venture and lean spinster?" asked Clifford in astonishment.

"Oh, dear, no. He's fallen in love; I've found that out, but it is with the usual maid of the inn—nobody half so interesting as Miss Bostal."

"Interesting?"

"Yes. I have an idea that the lean spinster is a heroine. Not the sort of heroine one troubles on self about, of course. But while they were talking about a certain 'Nell,' who is evidently the object of Jordan's priceless but transient affections just now, I looked into their rooms, their poor little dining-room, their bare, long drawing-room, and I saw such a history of [illegible] lives and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] for pen and paper."

Clifford groaned.

"It doesn't take much to make you do that!" he grumbled. "And I don't think your subject a very interesting one."

"Of course you would not. It is not obvious or commonplace or highly-colored enough for you," retorted Otto. "But to my mind there is something infinitely pathetic in the tattered old coat of this dignified and distinguished-looking old man, and in the darns which the daughter must have lost the brightness of her eyes over."

"Decidedly, my dear boy, you must do it in poetry, not prose," said Clifford, mockingly.

Otto would have retorted, but that they had now reached the little bridge over the River Fleet, and were within a few yards of the half-way house.

"This is the place where Jordan spends his afternoons," said Otto, leading the way to the little inn.

"Let's have him out."

The Blue Lion was a very unpretending establishment, old, but without any pretensions to historical or archaeological interest, small, inconvenient and weather-beaten. Standing as it did midway between sleepy Stroan and democratic Courtstairs, it was the house of call for all the carriers, farmers and cattle-drovers all the year round, while in the months of July and August its little bar was thronged with the denizens of the Mile-end Road, who take their pleasure in brakes, with concertinas and bowls and discordant songs.

A few late visitors of this sort were in the little bar when Clifford and Otto entered. But there was no sign of Jordan. Both the young men looked with curiosity at the woman who was serving behind the bar, a portly young woman with a ready tongue, who in her sturdy build and large coarse hands, as well as in the weather-beaten look of her complexion betrayed that she was accustomed to fill up her time, when work was slack inside the house, with out-door labor of the roughest kind.

When the two friends came out they looked at each other in disgust.

"She isn't even young!" cried Otto. "Nearer thirty-five than twenty-five, I'll swear!"

"And her voice! And her detestable Kentish accent!" added Clifford. "And those high cheekbones, and that short nose! It's a type I loathe—the type of the common shrew."

"I shouldn't have thought it of Jordan!" murmured Otto, in pity tempered with indignation.

"But where is the ruffian himself?" asked Clifford, stopping short. "Do you think we are on a wrong scent, after all?"

"If it were anybody but Jordan, I should say yes," said Otto, deliberately. "But his susceptibility is so colossal that I see no reason to doubt even this."

Nevertheless he following Clifford, and the latter turned back toward the little bridge.

"There's a cottage," said the more [illegible] King, "a little cottage by the roadside. Let us see if we can discover a petticoat in the neighborhood of that. We may be doing the poor fellow an injustice, after all."

But before they reached the cottage the attention of the two young men was attracted by the sound of a girl's voice on the left, just before they crossed the bridge. It was a voice so bright, so sweet, with such a suggestion of bubbling laughter in its tones, that they both stopped short and looked at each other with faces full of surprise.

"That's Nell," said Otto.

"We have done him a cruel wrong," murmured Clifford.

And with one accord they bent their steps in the direction of the voice, and after getting over a wooden paling by the roadside, scattering a colony of fowls on the other side, and making their way over the rough grass beside the river where the boats were drawn up which carried excursionists to [illegible] Castle, they came upon a wooden shed, and a strong smell of pitch, and two human figures. The one was Jordan, coatless, with his straw hat tilted to the back of his head, a tar-brush in one hand and a tin can in the other, engaged in the humble but useful task of covering the cow-shed with a new coat of pitch.

But his two friends scarcely glanced at him. It was the other figure that absorbed all their powers of vision—a slender girl in a print frock, with a white cotton blouse and an enormous straw hat. This was the Nell who wasted the time of half the young men of Stroan, and who would have wasted the time of half the young men of London if they had only once seen her. A beauty of pure Saxon type she was, with the opaque white skin which the sun does not scorch or redden, with rose-pink cheeks, a child's pouting mouth, and big blue eyes that made a young man hold his breath. Her hair had turned since childhood from flaxen to a deeper tint, and was now a light bronze color. There was about her an air of refinement as well as modesty which could not fail to astonish a stranger who found her in these strange circumstances. She saw the newcomers long before poor Jordan did, and she watched them approach while the unfortunate artist toiled on at his inglorious task.

Perhaps the girl had seen the three young men together; perhaps it was that feminine quickness of wit which made her jump to the right conclusion.

"I think there are some friends of yours coming this way, Mr. Jordan," she said, in a voice as refined as her appearance and manner.

To be Continued.

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Indian "relics" are being turned out in regular factories, one of which is found in Wisconsin. The relic makers have a secret process by which an ancient appearance is imparted to bones, pots, arrowheads, etc.

# AGRICULTURAL

### Green Cut Bone For Eggs.

We may obtain some eggs for winter use without feeding cut bone, but by its use we can materially increase the number. The owner of a hundred hens is losing the price of a good cutter every winter by depriving them of the material which he would be able to furnish at a very small cost. We have discovered that for early hatched chicks it is indispensable. To raise strong, healthy, vigorous chicks a substitute must be found to take the place of the bugs, worms, etc., on which they thrive so well later in the season. A mineral substance is also necessary for building the frame of the growing chick, and experiments have proved that chicks fed on green cut bone are never subject to leg weakness. But it is as a winter food for laying hens that we derive the greatest profit from it.—Mrs. Ada B. F. Parsons, in Iowa Homestead.

### Feeding Twice a Day.

At a recent dairymen's meeting attended by the writer, one of the speakers, a very practical and successful man, advised feeding cows only twice a day, since he had seen the plan employed with results just as good as when the cattle had three meals, and with a considerable saving in labor. Yet he further confessed that he still fed his cows three times a day, merely because he feared that a change would cause temporary shrinkage in the milk yield. But there is no need to fear such effects. The writer made the change from three to only two feedings without, so far as could be observed, losing a single ounce of milk. It was done gradually in about four days, making the noon meal lighter each day and increasing the other feeds until the change was made before the cows knew what was being done. A cow's stomach is very large as compared with that of a horse or of a human being, and she can easily hold enough to last twelve hours. Water should be given in the forenoon. The two-feed plan is quite a labor-saver.

### How to Order Fowls.

When placing an order for a trio or pen of pure bred fowls, it is well to consider the conditions that exist and not rush headlong into the poultry business before you have any clearly defined idea of what must be done. Study the matter carefully, the location of a market, the cost of grain, and more especially the prices usually paid for poultry products. Figure the cost, and then the returns, and place the matter on a business basis. If it will pay, then go ahead; but if the chances of success seem poor, abandon the idea. Failures are always matters of record, and there are already too many, so do not add yourself to the list of those who tried, but could not succeed.

Conditions in some localities are such that no amount of energy will make the poultry business a success, and the wise man will study the question well before he undertakes the raising of poultry. When once the problem is solved, put have your fowls in a business-like way, but do not expect anyone to sell you at half price simply because you are a beginner and he wants to help you along. Tell him plainly what you want and be willing to pay a fair price for what you get, and do not distrust him because you do not know him. Poultrymen as a rule are upright business men, and will deal honestly with you.—Home and Farm.

### Cucumbers Under Glass.

One of the most interesting crops that is raised under glass is the cucumber. The cucumber crop is started very early in the season and is grown during the coldest part of the year. It is commonly in place as soon as the second crop of winter lettuce is out of the way. The seed is easily started in a seed bed under ordinary conditions. The first pricking out is in baskets usually, or in beds about two or three inches apart. When the plants have grown so that the runners begin to develop trellises are provided, usually of iron wires and rods, and generally in the form of an arch over the beds and across the paths of the greenhouse. The vines run very rapidly, and shortly the trellises are all covered.

Blossoms appear when the plants are quite small, but there are many which never produce cucumbers, but fall off as false blossoms. The pollenization of the cucumber is like that of the squash and melon and similar plants. The pollen is carried by insects, principally bees, and for this reason no cucumber greenhouse is complete without a hive of bees. The high color of the flowers is evidently what attracts the insects, for they have very little odor. Cucumbers like intense heat and plenty of water. They grow very rapidly and find ready sale at profitable prices.—W. E. Stone, in New England Homestead.

### Kill Out Weeds Effectively.

A farm free from weeds is essential to success, but it is very difficult to keep it in this condition if the neighboring farmers fail to cut their Canada thistles, burdock and jimson weeds. In my opinion the Canada thistle is the worst of all weeds, with the possible exception of cocklebur. When it attains a foothold it is very difficult to eradicate. As it has an underground root stalk the pest cannot be killed out until every bit of root is removed from the ground. A New York farmer succeeded in destroying a large plot of Canada thistles by plowing the ground in June, dragging it twice in July, gang plowing three times in August and harrowing the ground after each plowing. An adjoining farmer destroyed a large field of thistles by first cutting the thistles, plowing the ground and then seeding to millet. The millet was harvested in September and the land plowed and seeded liberally with rye. In May the rye was plowed under and the land again seeded to millet. The next spring the field was planted to corn and the thistles were completely destroyed.

The wild mustard is another weed that is very difficult to get rid of. It will mature with any grass or grain and many farmers buy it in seed oats. I have seen fields completely covered with it and so thick that it nearly smothered the oats. The only way to get rid of this is to pull it by hand. I have seen fields seeded down twenty years for the purpose of killing it out and in spite of this the weeds came up and grew luxuriantly after all sorts of treatment. Chess or cheat is another weed that is very annoying, but it is an annual and can be killed out by frequent cultivation and burning as soon as the panicles form.—William Scully, in New York Tribune Farmer.

### Breaking Corn Stalks.

When the ground is frozen hard, if the land is not too hilly or rough, the breaking of the corn stubble is not difficult if the farmer has the proper implements. For those living handy to a railway, it is a good plan to buy an old rail or part of a rail discarded from the track. About four feet from each end of it a hole is drilled through the narrow part. A chain is attached at each hole by a bolt or hook and the chains being brought together at the other end, a ring is attached, to which three horses are hitched. The chains may be attached without drilling holes, if iron rods of suitable size be heated and bent round the rail at the proper places, so as to form eyes or hooks.

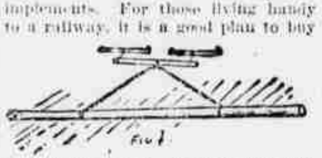

Fig 1

Another good stalk breaker may be made by selecting a wooden pole of as uniform diameter as possible and long enough to break five or seven rows of stalks. After ascertaining the centre of gravity by balancing over a log or some like object, cut notches at three and one-half or four feet on each side of this centre. Fasten chains around the pole at the notches and to a doubletree and singletrees, as shown in Fig. 1.

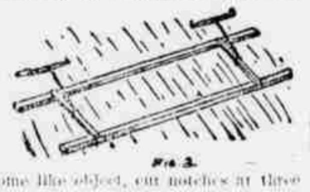

Fig 2.

The breaker shown in Fig. 2 is harder to construct but is a very effective one on level ground. A couple of pieces of 2x4 or 2x6-inch stuff about twenty feet long are connected by two cross-pieces, about 2x4 inches by three and one-half feet. A four and one-half inch bolt at each of the connecting points holds the frame together. A light chain is looped round each cross-piece and held at the desired point by a wooden or iron pin or bolt. Singletrees are attached to the chains. The chains are adjusted so that the horses will not raise the front of the stalk breaker. Two persons are necessary to drive this kind of stalk breaker, but a great deal of ground can be gone over in a short time.—J. G. Allshouse, in Ohio Farmer.

### Good Churn Management.

I like my cream to have a velvety appearance in the morning when I go to churn. Then the temperature is looked after, and if found too warm crushed ice is used. On the other hand, if found too cold lukewarm water is used. When the desired temperature is reached the cream is strained into the churn, color is added in the desired quantity; then the churn is started and, if everything is right, in about twenty-five minutes the butter has come in fine granules about the size of wheat grains. Then the buttermilk is drained off, water is added to the butter to wash the milk out.

When thoroughly washed I take the butter out of churn to be worked. Salting comes next, and I have my own way of doing this work, as every other butter-maker does. Salting is a matter of taste, and the amount used depends upon, first, the amount of water in the butter; second, the market in which you intend to sell. I use three-quarters to one ounce of salt to the pound of butter, according to the size of granules and moisture. I moisten it with water the same temperature as the butter. This is done in order to prevent mottles and to dissolve the salt quickly. Then I give the worker a few revolutions, after which I let drain a few minutes, then finish working.

The time it takes me to work my butter depends upon grain and body. I do not think there will ever be a time when we can have a fixed rule to work butter; it must be left to the judgment of the operator. After the butter is worked then it is packed in well-soaked tubs, lined with parchment paper. Then the butter is struck off level with the top of tub, paper folded over the edge of butter, and a cloth circle is laid on top of the tub, water sprinkled on the cloth and salt sieved off, after which the tub is nailed up and is ready for the market or convention as the case might be.

I believe every butter maker should have a butter tryer and learn to score his own butter, for how can we be good butter makers without we know when we have a fine piece of goods? By the use of a tryer butter-makers can score their own product every day, which has been a great help to me. Good judgment, cleanliness and a tryer go a great way in making good butter.—Perry L. Johnson.

# WOMAN'S SPHERE

## THE HATS FOR SPRING.

### Lace as a Prominent Trimming—A Change of Color [illegible].

Some [illegible] Millinery [illegible]

[illegible]

* * *

[illegible] little black [illegible]

* * *

[illegible]

* * *

[illegible] and [illegible]

* * *

[illegible] ornaments. Small [illegible]

* * *

[illegible] the advance [illegible]

* * *

[illegible]

* * *

[illegible] the most beautiful [illegible] ornaments of [illegible]

### When the Hair Turns Yellow.

[illegible] I mind," said a [illegible] "but it's [illegible] a gray. My sister [illegible] the most beautiful [illegible] and beautiful. But mine has gone yellow [illegible] and locks."

[illegible] have beautiful white [illegible]

[illegible] "bluing" [illegible] this several [illegible] how delighted you [illegible]

[illegible] The laundry bluing [illegible] small hair, but [illegible] it might be worth a "try" by the woman who has a similar grievance.—Detroit [illegible]

### Mrs. Herbert's Foresight.

Before her marriage Mrs. Michael Herbert, wife of the British Ambassador at Washington (then Miss Wilson) was greatly interested by the ease and cleverness with which English women in high society discussed politics in the drawing room. It was something quite out of the educational curriculum through which the Wilson girls had passed in Paris, whither their mother took them when they were girls. About this time "current question" clubs were finding favor in this country. Many clever women earned a livelihood coaching society women on the questions of the day in politics and international affairs. To one of these "coachers," descendant of a race of [illegible] Miss Wilson went for instruction in English home and colonial politics. "I was [illegible]" said the coach, "when Miss Wilson [illegible] to join my class. Interest soon became [illegible] on a [illegible] and we finished the course in English politics [illegible] was thoroughly bright—when her engagement to Michael Herbert was announced. It was foresight characteristic of the Wilson family. No [illegible] the secret of their phenomenal success in matrimony and society."

### Two Fads of the Smart Girl.

[illegible] bit of a [illegible] that proves the most [illegible] but very little [illegible] this time to [illegible] high in the [illegible] of tulle, [illegible] in a [illegible] small [illegible] Clusters in all [illegible] are also new. [illegible] a wreath, and [illegible] than the front. Another [illegible] to have your [illegible] waist in a fur. [illegible] is coming [illegible] black hosiery with colored [illegible]. Instead of the [illegible] as they used [illegible] made of tiny flowers, with a little bow knot or a cluster of flowers at the top.—Woman's Home Companion.

### Lounging Gowns.

We may not [illegible] we are more cultivated, but we are certainly more extravagant than of yore and more given to [illegible]. Our [illegible] rooms are as [illegible] as any part of the house and [illegible] more time is spent there than of old. On this account we have to consider the subject of [illegible]. They generally [illegible] soft silk jackets or sacques and elaborately trimmed negligees. Many of the [illegible] Chinese and Japanese origin. We still cut clothes to our [illegible]. In Oriental style we dress [illegible] modes; if [illegible] Watteau and Louis XV [illegible]. We carry our [illegible] very [illegible] the days of the Restoration and Louis XIII, wide apart, but with some points in common.

### Day of the Slender Woman.

[illegible] their own way. The perfect form has been discussed [illegible] by the Americans, [illegible] slenderness, [illegible] is essential, but [illegible] The taller the more slender, the better, the shoulders [illegible], the arms long, the waist line at [illegible] the hips well shaped, [illegible] The line must [illegible] from under the arms to the [illegible] there must be a single outward curve at the back of the waist. It is [illegible] greatest mistake to pad over the hips. One of the [illegible] of a fashionable [illegible] the hips [illegible] Stays grow longer and [illegible] comfortable, but [illegible] below the waist [illegible] New Orleans Times-Democrat.

The [illegible] new cuff [illegible]

[illegible] of the advancing season.

Very [illegible] being worn, and [illegible] nouveau art style [illegible]

Some of the plaid silk petticoats are finished with [illegible] of plain colored silk in the prevailing shade of plaid.

The [illegible] yoke is the [illegible] that are worn for walking and shopping.

Some new and handsome tortoise shell combs and coiffure ornaments are adorned with [illegible] fashioned from gold and enamel.

For light weight materials for house wear the favorites this season for [illegible] of nun's veiling and albatross cloth.

Velvet styles in black and white or brown and white check effects are used with artistic results as trimming for plain colored wool gowns.

The mothers of brides are beginning to adopt more or less of a livery, namely, a thick Irish or [illegible] overdress, with just a suspicion of gray or some color beneath.

There are very pretty necklaces made of three chains of gun metal strung with large pearls. Gun metal and gold are also blended in many of the fashionable chains and coral or crystal and coral.