

The Bonnet Of 1830 Versus The Saucer Hat

By CONSTANCE CHISHOLM.

WHILE the trig and dapper woman rejoices in the fact that the changes of this season have evolved the long-predicted smaller hat, her sisters who affect the picturesque as exemplified in headgear of umbrella dimensions deplore the tendency toward what they derisively decry as the "saucer" hat. But decry it or not, the saucer hat is evidently on its way and will, unless all signs fall, be upon our devoted heads with the next revolution of fashion's wheel.

And yet one wonders whether the advocates of the umbrella and the saucer hat realize that either style is anachronistic in conjunction with the high-waisted frock which so persistently refuses to down an inch. To be quite in keeping with the high waistline and the revived style of coiffure now worn, the 1830 bonnet is required to complete the real period effect. No saucer hat for the 1830 maiden whose girdle spanned her figure at the top of her stays, and most unseemly would she—or rather her elders—have considered the flamboyant abominations which are now going out of fashion after so tyrannical a reign.

Modesty then, as now, never seemed to concern itself with the cut of the skirt, but it was essential that the feminine visage be discreetly screened within the sheltering embrasure of a "bonnet as is a bonnet." To this quaint poke must the 1913 girl hark back or consistently wear her belt where it belongs.

But she should not too confidently rely upon a greatly reduced milliner's bill in

consequence, for, though guiltless of expensive feathers or flowers, the 1830 survival shown in the accompanying photograph cost the goodly sum of \$26 "in the mat"; the "mat" consisting of the great flat circle of leghorn straw as it came by importation into the hands of the bonnet artist and out of which she fashioned the tantalizing structure behind which side glances were rendered perfectly ineffectual.



Grandmother Paid A Big Sum For Her Hat

The papa who pays the bills of the 1913 girl and bemoans the good old sensible days of the early nineteenth century—the papa who thinks \$10 an infamous charge for a hat—will not credit the statement that his old grandmother had twice that amount expended upon her head-covering. But if, when convinced of the price, he were to learn what was expected of those old-time creations he could soon turn the argument against his adversaries; for when once bought there was no such thing as another milliner's bill until the bonnet could no longer hold together by dexterous mending and pressing. It lasted a lifetime, almost, and did not distract one's thoughts any more at Easter than at the Yuletide service.

It is true that patrician profiles were no less obscured than the most plebeian ones by this leveling chapeau and that dazzling eyes were eclipsed except when brought to bear in a direct, straightforward look at the creature they would fascinate—or annihilate; but great charm is lent by mystery, and daring adventures were hazarded for a glimpse within the ramparts of the bonnet's side walls. Truly the 1830 maiden

must have smiled many a little smile of self-complacency when thus ensconced; even while sitting in the high-backed pew next her vigilant guardians who relied upon the bonnet to keep her fancy from anticipating the time of exit, when the march down the main aisle would bring her right-about-face and in line with the cavaliers awaiting her greeting at the portal.

Though unaware of our modern word, these circumspect parents fully counted upon the psychological effect of this Leg horn construction. To their minds, it was bound to insure a corresponding demureness, not to say primness. To them, this love of a bonnet justified its first cost not only in its durability but in its moral influence. It was nothing if not proper.

The one shown belonged to a fair, auburn-haired Elizabeth of the Eastern Shore: for whom it was made when the style came in and who wore it till her early death in 1836. It is lined with soft white satin, broad satin ribbon folded around the crown and the strings tying in a well-spread bow under the chin. Though this 1830 bonnet took up space it was not lateral space and did not require half a pew to itself, like the hats now happily on the wane. It only poked out in front of the wearer's face in a way that lent coyness rather than the demureness that was expected of it.

Sometimes these bonnets, like those of a somewhat later period, were made bewitchingly becoming by a bandeau of pink rosebuds set in illusion, framing the face; and a piquant visage peeping out from this embellishment was far and away a more winsome sight than the one overtopped by great masses of "additional" hair and a hat of cartwheel proportions.

This Maryland Betsy no doubt rejoiced

that the rules of her church required that her head be covered when in the sanctuary and that she was not prevented from wearing her fashionable bonnet by such cruel laws as those passed in Massachusetts about 50 years earlier, when, in 1769, the church at Andover voted whether "the Parishe Disapprove of the female sex setting with their hats on in the meeting-house in time of divine service as being indecent." In Abington, too, in 1775, they decided that it was "An indecent way that the female sex do sit with their hats and bonnets on to worship God;" and still another set of censors of that exacting Commonwealth recorded that it was the "Town's Mind that the women should take their bonnets off in meeting and hang them on the pegs."

In spite, however, of this effort to suppress the Sunday bonnet in New England, it was a Yankee girl, Betsy Metcalf, of Providence, R. I., who started the straw hat business in America in an imitation of the too expensive Leghorn and Genoese braids first brought over about 1800, and it was for using palmetto leaves and straw for hats that the first patent ever awarded in England to an American was taken out by a woman, Mrs. Sybilla Masters, of Philadelphia; while, curiously enough, it was for an invention in straw plaiting that the United States issued the first patent to a woman. In 1821 Sophia Woodhouse, of Connecticut, secured a patent for a new hat material made from grass growing in Weathersfield, gaining her a national reputation and winning her a prize of 20 guineas from the London Society of Arts.

One of these bonnets was worn by the wife of President Adams, she and her

husband being proud of this early American industry.

Of course, the 1830 woman cherished her bonnet and took the best care of it, else we should have no survivals now. She kept it in a bandbox befitting its worth, measuring 60 inches around and 15 inches high. This one is covered with the quaintest old wallpaper, on which is depicted in colors, with other alternating patterns, a scene peculiar to the handicraft products of the time, showing a lady sitting on the terrace of a stately home and listening raptly to the gay troubadour in tights, trunks and a plumed hat, who is tuning his guitar on the steps below, while nearby a fountain plays its streams and lordly peacocks strut, spreading their fan feathers.

It was such a precious bandbox as this, containing the best bonnet and many bits of finery like lace fichus, mitts and sheer handkerchiefs scented with sprigs of lavender, that was stowed within the stage-coach along with the Mary Ann, Sally Ann or Matilda Ann who was going off to boarding-school in those days.

Perhaps the troubadour is not singing a sonnet indited to the eyebrow of the fair lady on the terrace, but is straining his lungs in a prophetic warning to the high-waisted girl of 1913.

methinks he may be proclaiming:
"O maid of the future, dear Art wears a crown
As a pert saucer hat with a real '30 gown."

His Precaution.

"Rosa, my mother-in-law comes tomorrow. Here is a list of her favorite dishes."

"Ah, that is very good of you, sir."

"Ahem! Remember, if you cook any of them you will lose your position."—
Flying Dutchman.