

LA BELLE ASSEMBLEE.

FASHIONS

For AUGUST, 1807.

EXPLANATION OF THE PRINTS OF FASHION

ENGLISH COSTUME.

KENSINGTON-GARDEN DRESSES.

No. 1.—A plain cambric round dress, a walking length. Roman spencer of celestial blue sarsnet, with Vandyke lappels and falling collar; finished with the same round the bottom of the waist, and flowing open in front of the bosom. A village hat of Imperial chip, with bee-hive crown, confined under the chin with ribbon the colour of the spencer. Cropped hair, divided in the centre of the forehead with full curls. Gloves and shoes of lemon-coloured kid. Parasol of salmon-coloured sarsnet.

No. 2.—Round train dress of India muslin, with short sleeves, ornamented round the bottom and sleeves with a rich border of needle-work. Promenade tippet of Brussels lace, lined with white satin. Hat of white chip, or fancy cap of lilac satin, with a Brussels lace veil. Hair confined in braids over the right temple, and formed in loose curls on the opposite side. Gold hoop earrings. Gloves and slippers of lilac kid.

LONDON WALKING DRESSES.

No. 3.—A French jacket and petticoat of India muslin, finished at the extreme edge in Vandyke and beadings of embroidery. Plain short sleeve; frock bosom, confined at each corner of the bust, where the jacket falls in easy lappels. Full frill of French net round the back and shoulders. Brunswick bonnet of pale

jonquil sarsnet, ornamented with a wreath of similar flowers. Hair a wavy crop; oval hoop earrings; York tan gloves; shoes of jonquille kid; parasol of bright lavender blossom.

No. 4.—A plain round gown of the finest cambric, with gored bosom, and slashed sleeves. Lace tucker, with shell-scolloped edge. Robe pelice of jaconot muslin, bordered all round with needle-work and Vandyke. A Gipsy hat of satin straw, with edge *à-la-cheveau de-frise* tied across the crown, and under the chin, with a handkerchief of Paris net, or coloured sarsnet. Bosom of the gown confined with a bow of ribbon to correspond. Straw-coloured kid gloves and shoes. Parasol of shaded green sarsnet.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

PRESENT STYLE OF FASHIONABLE DECORATION.

HAVING given, in regular progression, our delineations and remarks on the various fashions of the passing season, we at length offer to our several readers a close of equal animation, attraction, and splendor. We scarcely ever witnessed a period when taste and fashion were more perfectly in unison; nor any season when elegance and grace shone with such unrivalled fascination. Not only amidst the assemblies of rank and opulence, but in those simple unobtrusive adornments appropriated to the intermediate station—in those chaste habits becoming

such as move in a more domesticated sphere, have our fair country-women exhibited testimonies of their advancement in taste, and the graces of life.

The era is long since past, when the daughters of our Isle condescended to turn copyists; and the females of a neighbouring kingdom are now happy to aid their exhausted inventions, by adopting the correct graces of English style.—When, therefore, we offer a sample of Parisian decorations, it is more with a view of rendering our information extensive, various, and amusing, than from the necessity of offering to British females prototypes for imitation.

Although the metropolis is gradually losing on the score of fashionable attraction, yet do the Opera, Vauxhall, and our summer Theatres, still continue to exhibit a crowded display of beauty and fashion. Pleasure still holds her court within its walls; and her votaries, beguiled by her various allurements, seem reluctant to quit the field.

Little alteration is visible in the out-door costume since our last communication; but at Vauxhall we observe a novelty and grace of style appropriate to that place of captivating resort. The light flowing robes, and shadowy vestments, flowery ornaments, and azure veils, worn by our fashionable *elegantes*, conspire to render this brilliant scene truly Arcadian. Gowns and robes are now usually made round, and short; trains, even in full dress, being almost entirely exploded. We trust, however, that a speedy edict from the throne of taste, will again introduce this graceful appendage; for, however convenient and appropriate (which the short dress certainly is) to the morning, or walking costume, the distinguishing effect of a drawing-room is destroyed by this general reduction, and our females unquestionably deprived of much external dignity and elegance. Frocks of coloured muslin, or Italian crape, with a painted border of shells in Mosaic, worn over white sarsnet slips, are a new and elegant article; and French veils of coloured gauze, forming at once the head-dress and drapery, are considered as most graceful ornaments. They are usually worn with a plain white sarsnet or muslin gown, with flowers or wreaths in front of the hair, placed towards the left side, so as nearly to obscure the eye brow.

At the Duchess of M——'s last rout, we noticed two dresses of much novel attraction. The one entitled 'the Pomeranian mantle,' was formed of pea green gauze, cut in irregular pointed drapery, and trimmed with a silver tufted fringe; it was worn over a Gossamer satin under-dress, which had a narrow border of the hop-blossom delicately painted round the bottom.—

The hair in alternate ringlets, and bands, was ornamented with the same flowers, tastefully disposed. A sandal of white satin, laced with green chord, fastened with a tassel above the bend of the ankle.

The second dress, which struck us as singularly attractive, was styled 'the Cashmerian robe.' This dress was formed of azure blue crape, with alternate spots of blue and silver foil, and ornamented at the extreme edge with silver fringe. It was worn over a white satin round dress; was fastened with a pearl brooch on the left shoulder, and fell in a kind of Roman drapery round the form in front, gradually descending till it composed the train, completing the most elegant *tout ensemble* that imagination could paint. The head-dress, worn with this habit, consisted of a small half-square of blue patent net, spangled and bordered with silver. It was tied simply across the forehead, in the Chinese style, beyond which the hair appeared in dishevelled curls, and occasionally fell over the handkerchief. The shoes were blue satin, with silver roses.

Dress gowns are still worn high in the bosom, and very low on the back and shoulders. No handkerchief is seen in full dress; but the bottom, sleeves, and neck, are frequently ornamented with borders of natural flowers. Dancing dresses of Italian tiffany, crape, or leno, bordered with the convolvulus, wild roses, daisies, violets, &c. &c. have this season given a most animated *coup d'œil* to the ball-room. Indeed flowers as an ornament were never introduced with a more distinguishing effect. For the hair, they are formed in wreaths, tiaras, and small bunches; and each are placed very low on the forehead. The hair is now scarcely every seen without an ornament of this kind, or the small half handkerchief, which consists of patent net, embroidered or spangled. The latter was the distinguishing ornament of a fair bride of rank, on her first appearance at the opera, after her marriage. It was disposed in the Chinese style; but they are equally fashionable placed at the back of the head, and brought under the chin, with tiaras formed of carnations in front of the forehead. *Bandeaus* of broad gold are classed amidst a fashionable selection; but the turban has long resigned its place, in the sphere of taste and elegance. That dignified and graceful ornament, the winged ruff, *à la Mary Queen of Scots*, seems entirely confined to a few females of rank and taste, and is perhaps more immediately appropriated to such as may claim the privilege of singularity. The Vandyke though still very prevalent, is not considered so novel, or genteel, as the shell or crescent scollop; and the promenade tippets, and French bonnets, are now become absolutely *canailleish*. The Gipsy hat,

and robe pelice, form an elegant morning costume: the former are generally of chip with silk crowns; and the latter of white, or coloured muslin, trimmed with thread lace. The French cloak of white sarsnet, is very generally esteemed; this article is also trimmed round with broad lace; and is formed somewhat like the *capuchins* worn by our females of old. Caps are considered an indispensable in the morning costume. These are variously formed; but the Anne Bullen cap, and the Brunswick mob, are those in general estimation, both for their novelty, simplicity, and elegance. A large bonnet, styled the woodland poke, has lately been introduced. It forms a complete shade for the face; and is particularly adapted for those ladies, who, on the public promenades, or by the sea side, would be otherwise exposed to the scorching rays of a summer's sun. These bonnets, so conspicuous for unobtrusive neatness, are best formed of clear leno, with the raised pea spot. They are lined with coloured sarsnet, agreeably to the taste of the several wearers; trimmed round the edge and crown, with a Vandyke lace, and simply confined with a ribbon under the chin. The French jacket and petticoats, of cambric, edged with a heading of embroidery, are the last new article for morning attire: the jacket is made with a square collar, and long sleeves; shaped to the form of the arm. Sometimes it is cut with a round frock bosom; and worn with an embroidered shirt. Trinkets have undergone little change since our last information. The sapphire necklace, earrings, and brooches, are most distinguishable on females of taste; but pearls, diamonds, emeralds, and the union of gold and hair, must ever be ranked amidst the most chaste and elegant ornaments in this line. Gloves and shoes admit of little variety. The kid slipper for walking; and the sandal of satin, for full dress, are generally adopted.

The prevailing colours for the season are pink, lavender blossom, green, and jonquille.

LETTER ON DRESS.

FROM ELIZA TO JULIA, PREVIOUS TO HER DEPARTURE FROM LONDON.

• ALAS! my dear Julia, this will probably be the last letter you will receive from me bearing the date of dear enchanting London. My spirits are, I confess, a little below par at the prospect of quitting its gay and jocund scenes. The polished societies, the fashionable assemblies, the theatres, gardens, and public drives, the works of genius and the productions of art; have all afforded me amusement and delight; and, I fear, given me a relish for higher enjoyments. Perhaps, my friend, it had been better had I never

quitted Truro. There I was at least contented. The confined circle in which my faculties were permitted to roam, gave little opportunity for the expansion of thought, or the intercourse of polished life. A still quiet routine of domestic pursuits and feelings, rendered my spirits calm and serene. My pleasures were not dazzling, were not vivid; but then they satisfied me. And if (as is asserted) all happiness is comparative, I cannot say absolutely that I am benefited by the change. For with all the numerous pleasures by which I have of late been surrounded—while friends have flattered and *beans* pursued; yet do I not feel that perfect tranquillity I was sensible of when in Cornwall. A restless anxiety, a sort of hurrying apprehensive emotion, flutters in my breast; and I am not philosopher enough to trace the cause which actuates, or the medicine which heals. We were to have quitted town three days since; but have this morning received cards for the Marchioness of S——'s last grand assembly, which will collect together all the rank and beauty in London and its environs. Mary is one of those happy mortals who catch pleasure as it flies, and will not deprive herself of any amusement morally within her reach. A letter is travelling by to-day's post, soliciting an indulgence, which, after so long an absence, I scarcely dare hope to obtain—nothing less, Julia, than that I be permitted to accompany these delightful relatives, first to their country seat in Kent, and from thence to Brighton races. Forgive me, Julia, if I say that I wait in fearful suspense the result of this petition. Brighton, I am told, is the very centre of fashionable attraction at that season; and the scene will to me possess all the charm of novelty in addition. I shall, from this place, be able to continue my communications to you from the most select and elegant sources; and how much subject for personal conversation will it afford for our evening *tete-a-tetes* on my return to you. Do not, therefore, condemn me on the score of friendship, dear Julia! Gladly would I bring you to me; but as this is impracticable, I will endeavour to atone for my protracted absence by renewing my treaty with you. There are people, Julia, who prefer epistolary to personal converse. You remember the story related by Madam de Luxembourg in the *Confessions of Rousseau*, of the man who quitted the company of his mistress purely that he might have the pleasure of writing to her. Now though this conduct may by numbers be thought the very essence of romance, proceeding from visionaries, who, dissatisfied with things as they are, form to themselves a world of their own, and people it with the offspring of their own refined imaginations: yet will I maintain that there are situations in which an epistolary

correspondence is more interesting and effective than a personal commune; and, I trust, that my determined exertions to afford you instruction and amusement, will eventually what I advance.

Now then, dear Julia, to begin with the time present and to come; for each, I assure you, is fully occupied with a succession of engagements. To-night we attend the Duchess of B——'s concert; and scarcely a disengaged two hours presents itself during our stay in town: for though many fashionables of acknowledged celebrity have quitted the metropolis, it only seems to have excited a more determined animation in those which still sojourn within its walls; and every place of fashionable resort still exhibits an assemblage which bespeaks neither a dearth of beauty, rank, or elegance.

Last evening we hustered a strong party for the opera, to witness the unparalleled powers of Catalani at her second benefit. Now, Julia, I charge you not to laugh at, or cavil with me when I say, that though I do not understand more than a few words of Italian, yet did I feel every note poured from the enchanting pipe of this sweet minstrel. Never did I witness such versatility of powers. The emphatic, the dignified, the expressive, the sublime, the insinuating; all reach the hearts of her enraptured auditors, and proclaim this surprising woman to possess the very soul of harmony. Thus much for my favourite enchantress, who appears to have only one thing to learn, that of economizing her talents; or rather, the art of making herself scarce. So tottering and incomplete is the fabric on which public applause is founded; that they, I am convinced, are most likely to continue favourites, who wisely leave much to hope and expectation.

But away! this moralizing strain! and let me step at once (a prodigious effort of mental agility), from the pulpit to the orchestra—from volumes of ethics to the crowd at Vauxhall. Gladly, I am sure, will Julia go with me in the exchange. Well then,—to this gay spot come along my friend; and gather from the costume selected by fashionables such as Mary and me, a few well-directed arrows for your bow. Our gowns were composed of the same materials, and consisted of India mull muslin, worked in the most delicate and minute sprigs. They were made a walking length; and round the bottom,

were trimmed with a broad French lace; above which was laid a white satin ribbon. The bosoms and sleeves were gored; and the seams finished with satin heading. Mary wore her hair braided, and fastened in knots in the French style, at the back of her head, with a comb of brilliants à la *cheveux de frise*, a bandeau in the Chinese style crossed her forehead; and over her head was thrown in graceful negligence, a long veil of Paris net, embroidered in an elegant border of the phœasant's eye, copied to nature. This veil fell in tasteful folds about her figure, shading consistently the bosom, and forming a drapery strangely beautiful. Mary's figure is perfectly adapted to this style of ornament, being the very model of Grecian symmetry. My *petite* person would have been perfectly shrouded in such an article; so, Julia, I contented myself with my hair à la *rustique*, decorated with a bunch of the variegated pea-blossom; which divided the curls in front of the forehead; and appeared in a cluster so as nearly to obscure the left eyebrow. My bosom was shaded with a half handkerchief of patent net, embroidered in a border of the same flowers in colours; and was simply fastened at the throat with an Egyptian amulet set in pearls and gold. Mary has just ordered several new articles of attire for the country. A new set of morning dresses, consisting of the French jacket and petticoat; the robe pelice of blossom, and white muslin. Riding coats of Circassian silk. A gipsy hat of satin straw, and woodland poke bonnet. All her evening dresses are without trains, ornamented at the feet with lace, work, or crescent scollops; and worn with the imperial ruff of lace. Little satin caps, and the cap Anne Bullen, with wreaths and bunches of natural flowers, are to form a part of her extensive and tasteful wardrobe. I send you, dear Julia, one of the prettiest gipsy hats I have ever seen, with a wreath of the blue convolvulus; which you must simply twine round the crown: for you must lay aside your little French bonnet, they being now considered *antifashionable*.—Adieu! dear Julia. Friday's post will determine whether I am destined to follow in the train of fashion's votaries, or soon to embrace those dear fire-side friends, who will ever be sacred to the affections of

ELIZA.