

WHEN A WIDOW LIGHTENS HER MOURNING—by Mrs. Cholly Knickerbocker.

No Longer the Tyranny of Mourning Dress. Crepe in Terrifying Quantities Out of Style. Either All White or All Black Takes the Place of Black-and-White for Secondary Mourning.

CHEER up, and forever banish the pre-mortem purchase of mourning clothes, and even in post-mortem buying you may do very much as you choose. Not much longer will the terror of heavy crepe be added to the burden of our sorrow. Witness the proof thereof! A straw, for example, may show which way the wind blows, and so may a wee bit of a handkerchief.

How those black-bordered handkerchiefs made one shiver! Our mothers and grandmothers were able to tell just how long a widow's husband had been dead by the width of the border on her handkerchief. It was reduced, I believe, one-eighth of an inch at a time. Now, instead of a black-bordered handkerchief, just a sweet bit of pure white linen (and usually dry) with a small monogram is carried. Dry, I insist, because we, of the world of fashion, are supposed never to cry, if we belong to good families, such as the Knickerbockers, though Collie, of course, is still alive, and I can't say what



A—A Gown of White Mull with White Braiding and Bands of White Pique for Trimming. White Straw Hat Trimmed with Black Oats. Brighton Coaching Parasol of Black Silk with Long Leather Loop on Handle.
B—A Blouse of Washable Tulle with Four-in-Hand Tie of Dull Black Jet.
C—A Suit of Black Silk with Waist-coat of White Crepe.
D—Veil of Silk and Wool. Light in Weight, and with Scalloped Edge Embroidered with Silk.
E—Veil of Crepe and Net Attached to a Charlotte Corday Hat.
F—Evening Gown of Chiffon Over Dull Silk with Egyptian Girdle of Dull Jet.

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been in style for at least ten years, always carries with it the thought of the heavy, respectable widow of the one time conservative Gramercy Park.

But the sweet midsummer widow imitates the pure white lily style. She has a love for dead white silk. She chooses armure, poplin, China and India silk. Even in light mourning, however, her gowns are never trimmed with lace. She may have mull and chiffon on which a floral design is embroidered in silk—white flowers on a white ground, however, and black on black. Sometimes in the evening, instead of being the lily, she wears soft, dull black. In clinging chiffon over dull silk, and with a Cleopatra-like girdle of dull jet beads, she is slender, mysterious and fascinating. Her collar ornament may be of ivy leaves of maiden-hair ferns, but, whether of flowers or of foliage, always in dull jet. Her midsummer evening cloak is of silk and cashmere interwoven and trimmed with bands of black silk embroidery. It is a material woven only in Rome. No lining adds to its weight or warmth.

Then, of course, there is always the naughty widow, who will go to midsummer dances with rhinestones set in the high heels of her mouse-gray velvet slippers. She is sure to be the widow whose handkerchiefs were three-quarters black in the beginning, though she wore petticoats of purple silk from the very first. Mrs. Hermann Oelrichs, with her raven black hair, and black eyes that sparkled all the more because her jet jewelry was dull, always wore violet petticoats, though never the jeweled slippers or the daring picture boots.

Picture boots in midsummer are more fetching, however, than picture hats. I know one midsummer widow who wears pure white picture boots with black heels. They are embroidered with jet beads in a design at each side. They always lace—never button—these high picture boots, so that there may be space for elaboration at the sides above the ankles. The black boots are embroidered with steel or gun-metal and, perhaps, a few rhinestones, the midsummer widow who is "looking forward" should wear them if she wants them, for some of the girls and even the "married maidens" have their coats-of-arms embroidered in gorgeous colors on the tips of their slippers.

But the midsummer widow with her high picture boots and such long laces! All the fat bachelors, the widowers (and other lady-folk's husbands) are always at her feet. Long laces have the picture boots, and men are prostrate at her feet.

She is the same midsummer widow—who she who has the picture boots—who has all her trunks reined with violet silk. All the fittings of her travelling bags are of the turtle ebony, a brownish black wood that looks dead black from a short distance. All the appointments of her desk are also of turtle ebony. The pad is deep purple, and the ebony covers of the ink-stands have her monogram in dull silver letters. This turtle-ebony is tremendously important when she travels. The naughty widow! She knows why. It pronounces her an American widow—which, on the Continent means far more than even being the "Merry Widow" from Roumania. Turtle ebony can seldom be purchased in other countries. Only in America is this brownish-black wood—dedicated to the needs of the widow—easily obtainable.

Then, besides her rose-colored glasses, worn during the time her clothes are black, so that she herself may not be too blue, she must have a lognette of gun-metal, set with pearls, each no larger than a pin-head. No matter how much she can see with her naughty, naked eye, she needs her lognette, for a dignified and death-dealing presentation of the acid fruit that is the old-maid coin of the orange. In Japan the baby-girl begins early to learn the language of the fan. In New York the baby-girl is given lessons in the nursery in regard to the language of the lognette.

"And how about the poor kiddies," say you. "The children of the widow?" Well, after she buys some new collars for her Panamanian or her bulldog (these must be of black or of black flaze lined with purple silk) she then, perhaps, considers the children. It is most important to decide what will be most becoming to her—not to them. Usually she decides to have them in all white, not with black belts and ties. For many reasons they are not to be too conspicuous.

If, perchance, she has a love for vivid crimson, or scarlets, and really looks ugly without them, what may she do? Not like the olive-complexioned heroine in Ouida's novel (forced to wear mourning), who always carried a scarlet-bound book, may she have her maid hold a scarlet parasol over her head. Oh, no! But she does have scarlet cushions in her boudoir, in her drawing-room and back of her head, when she listlessly reclines in her steamer chair—going abroad to forget her trouble, if she can. Her summer fancy work always requires the manipulation of vivid scarlet materials. Cleverly she raises the scarlet fancy work to her face. Of course, there are the widows who always pine. Even in our set I know one. To such as these the world is all rue without the roses. But such as these are studies not in fashions but in psychology. "The widow with the artful eye, the gay little 'mid-summer widow,'" whose fads are original and cheerful! "Is better to have rhinestones in your heels than tears forever in your eyes. No longer liquid grief and terrifying mourning clothes are in style!"

form my sorrow might take. I might need a bath towel for my tears. Mrs. Eleanor Glynn said "that only plebeians cry." I think she meant when any one is looking. But true it is that even the widow's tears must drop discreetly, because when your blood is blue, your tears are never salty. Just a few fresh water tears denote a greater dignity in grief. Even a little handkerchief, four inches square, to tuck in her glove, is often carried by the midsummer widow. It is both adequate and good style. Have the borders, of course, if you like, but they are not absolutely necessary.

Neither could our eagle-eyed granmas now tell by the length of even the veil how long a widow's husband had been dead. Once upon a time it was a symbol much like the obi (the sash around the kimono) worn in Japan. Among the Japanese the obi tells whether a woman is married or single, or whether she is a leaz or a natural widow. But the veil worn by the widows in America is no longer a symbol in dress governed by fixed laws. It reveals more, however, than it did before. It illustrates a woman's own personality and character. Hitherto it denoted only the rules of fashion.

When we try to speak correctly (though we in the smart set need not be grammatical if only our A's have the true English accent) we find the rules upon which all authorities agree. These we accept, and personal judgment governs the others. But nowadays she who wishes to mourn correctly would fall to find even two authorities who agree in regard to so much as two or three rules. So here is proof that every thing tends to banish barbarous mourning clothes. For instance, the other day, in New York, driving up Fifth avenue, I saw a woman walking above whose beaming face were heavy folds of nun's veiling, making her head about the size of that of a Turk with his turban. She had thrown her veil back to free her face. Her husband died just the week before, but she had not lived with him for full fifteen years. Then another widow drove by. Her husband, with whom she had lived, and whom she had loved, since the wedding day, died not long ago, but her veil fell from a smart hat with a black ribbon, which is collarless and round. This

with net between the pleats, and her short face veil was of the same combination. Her parasol that day was of a gross grain silk with a bias fold of crepe bordering it, and a little ruche of the crepe encircling the handle, though often she carries a Brighton coaching parasol. A veil of all crepe is usually the style when in mourning for husbands, but often for a father or a mother a veil now falls only a short distance below the shoulders. There are soft velvets, narrow in effect, made of a silk and wool material, and often they have a close little bonnet. These may have a scalloped edge, finished in a button-hole stitch worked in silk.

The length, the texture and weight of the veil depend greatly upon the will and wish of the widow herself, but here for a long veil that hangs gracefully in back is one of the traits of the Eternal Feminine. Take the little May queen of New York's East Side. How she walks on air with her veil of mosquito netting floating around her shoulders, on her way to Central Park! Take, too, the Queen of Roumania, who always wears a parasol with well hanging in heavy folds from her head, whether at home in the palace or out driving. The widow, she, too, has much secret satisfaction in her veil, when her head droops mournfully showing a classic profile. The poor grass widow with her bit of red tape has no such sartorial consolation.

So if there be freedom of choice even in first mourning then the midsummer widow, who is lightening the habitment of sorrow, how "tripping" she may be! She wears all white or all black, rather than any of the old-time magpie, zebra or Dalmatian effects. Even the first year she is a decorative, not a depressing, member of society, and during the second Summer she is dangerous, perhaps.

Just see the midsummer widow in the morning! Mere man would hardly know it was mourning in the morning. Her white or black gown may be trimmed with bands of white or black, or a little frock of untrimmed dimity, or any simple white material, finished with footings, heading, scalloping or hemstitching. There must, however, be no lace. If she chooses to wear white with touches of black, she may have a frock with narrow black ribbon in two rows circling the waist, run through wide heading and falling in long ends in the back. The black ribbon also circles the neck, which is collarless and round. This

is the ingenue style that belongs by right to the midsummer widow.

Then, with the shirt waist made of wash tulle, and with narrow pleats, she may wear a four-in-hand tie made of dull jet beads, and as pitiable as silk, I hardly recommend it. She can also buy in dull jet a heavy cross on which a wreath is coiled in tombstone style and hanging from a heavy jet chain. I positively condemn it. In dull jet, she may have a tiara, a card case, bracelets in fact, anything she sees in bright jet, for the shopkeeper has a process whereby the glitter is removed. The bracelets are like those worn by women before the war. They slip over the hands (separating without clasp) and show the wrist they expand into a big oval that contains a black onyx. From dull jet, as life grows brighter, the widow gives up that glitter, and in the centre of buckles and other ornaments large amethysts are often set. No diamonds should be worn even in the last stages of mourning. In delicate refinement should indeed prohibit their use. Pearls are sometimes worn even

in the first weeks of deep mourning, but diamonds are like a blatant torchlight of vulgarity.

In the morning, or in the afternoon, the midsummer widow may have hats of many varieties. Black grain and black fruit are often seen. Wheat, however, is too suggestive of a coffin sheath. Black oats, without any other trimming, I saw on a hat that came from Paris, and also dull black cherries, hung singly in a circle from the top of the crown so that their dangliest ends just touched the forehead. The French designers intended to suggest for the widow. The American widow's black hats are, however, in no way symbolical. She wears them because they are graceful. No reference to the wild oats of the departed is intended. The majority of the black hats for the widow are of the Charlotte Corday variety (all ingenue in effect), made of frills, chiffon, crepe, net and maline, and often with many cordons. Like widow with an ample countenance, like that of the Hon. William H. Taft, always

chooses the hebe hat. She is the widow of the "hipful," hopeful sort, who always tries to get into the hipless skirt. From all hats, if made of black material, no matter how girlish they are in shape, a widow's veil may hang, and many smart hats made of black crepe are faced with pure white crepe.

For a morning in town, when she comes to the city to do her shopping, the midsummer widow will wear, perhaps, a saucy little jacket of silk over a gown that has puffed sleeves of crepe that are only pulled length. Her gloves, of course, are black suede. At the elbow there will be a wide cuff of white linen with a black line, and she wears a turnover collar that opens often shows a V-shaped glimpse of white crepe. The material for gowns intended for general wear are Chichonette, Malrose, which is a combination of silk and wool, marquisette and batiste, which is practically an old-fashioned nun's veiling. Of all the silks, pean de sole is the most becoming, while heavy gros grain silk, which has

If Your Birth Stone Is a Ruby.

ACCORDING to a curious old legend, the ruby first became known to mortals as the result of an act of kindness shown by a poor woman to an injured stork. Ptolemy, one of the old Greek writers, tells us that this gem was originally placed by the stork in the fabric of her nest as a charm against serpents, and Aesop, in his eighth Book of Animals, enlarging upon this fancy, thus relates the episode: "A certain widow, Hercules by name, had tamed a young stork that, having fallen out of the nest before it was fully fledged, she sat at her door a previous stone, which, on her awakening at night, she found to her astonishment had lighted up her chamber like a glowing torch." Upon examination this stone proved to be a matchless ruby.

There are in reality two kinds of rubies, the true or Oriental ruby, and the spinel ruby. The former is a red variety of the precious opalium, of great variety and value; while the latter is an aluminate of magnesium. By ancient writers a still wider range—under the common name of the "carbuncle"—preserves from evil-dreams. "It is an excellent saying that the ruby brings gladness to the wearer and preserves the heart pure, and, if laid beneath the pillow, drives away evil dreams."

One of the most interesting "historic" rubies is that which crosses the centre of the diamond Maltese cross in the Imperial State Crown of England. Originally the property of Don Pedro, King of Castile, it was presented by him to Edward the Black Prince, after the battle of Najara, near Vittoria, A. D. 1367. Afterward it was worn by Henry V. in his helmet on the occasion of the battle of Agincourt, 1415, and no doubt the brilliant victory was in no small degree attributed to the glowing gem. Perfect rubies are enormously valuable, so we can estimate the worth of a good woman and of widow when we find they excel in value these rarest stones. Holy Writ contains several references to them, the best known being in Job xviii, 18, "The price of wisdom is above rubies," and "Wisdom is more precious than rubies" (Proverbs III, 15), and the virtuous woman whose "price is far above rubies" (ch. xxii, 10). "The glowing ruby should show them who in warm July are born, from whom the sun's rays are warm and bright, and from whom the sun's rays are warm and bright."