Austen Letters: Fashion Quotes, Hope Greenberg, hope.greenberg@uvm.edu

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Before beginning: what Jane wrote to James Stanier Clarke about his suggestions for a character:

“I am quite honoured by your thinking me capable of drawing such a clergyman as you gave the sketch of… But I assure you I am *not*. The comic part of the character I might be equal to, but not the good, the enthusiastic, the literary. Such a man’s conversation must be on subjects of science and philosophy, of which I know nothing; or must occasionally be abundant in allusions and quotations which a woman who, like me, knows only her mother tongue, and has read very little in that, would be totally without the power of giving. A classical education, or at any rate a very extensive acquaintance with English literature, ancient and modern, appears to me quite indispensable for the person who would do justice to your clergyman; and I think I may boast myself to be, with all possible vanity, the most unlearned and ill-informed female who ever dared to be an authoress.”  
Jane Austen to J. S. Clarke  
December 11th 1815

A) http://www.archive.org/stream/lettersofjaneaus01austuoft/lettersofjaneaus01austuoft\_djvu.txt  
**Edward, Lord Brabourne, ed. *Letters of Jane Austen*. 1884**

Vol. 1, p. 46  
"I have been told that I might very well have left out all those parts of her letters which refer to the details of dress and the descriptions of her gowns and other raiment which she gives to her sister. I am, however, of a contrary opinion ; that which does not interest one person may be precisely that which pleases another, and to alter or omit the apparently insignificant parts of a large picture may have a prejudicial effect upon the whole. Besides, it is something in the nature of a comfort to ordinary persons to find that so superior a being as Jane Austen concerned herself about such trifles as the fit of a gown or the colour of a stocking, and I am glad to be in a position to afford the slightest comfort to anybody."  
  
  
B) http://www.archive.org/details/janeaustenslette009739mbp  
**Chapman, R. W. *Jane Austen's Letters To Her Sister Cassandra And Others.* Oxford University Press, 1932.**

1) To Cassandra Austen. Saturday 9 Jan. <1796>  
To Miss Austen: Rev. Mr. Fowle's, Kintbury, Newbury

"You say nothing of the silk stockings ; I flatter myself, therefore, that Charles has not purchased any, as I cannot very well afford to pay for them; all my money is spent in buying white gloves and pink persian." (p. 3)  
  
"We have trimmed up and given away all the old paper hats of Mamma's manufacture ; I hope you will not regret the loss of yours." (p. 3)  
  
"The latter is really very well-behaved now; and as for the other, he has but one fault, which time will, I trust, entirely remove it is that his morning coat is a great deal too light. He is a very great admirer of Tom Jones, and therefore wears the same coloured clothes, I imagine, which he did when he was wounded." (p. 3)

3) From Rowling to Steventon

To Cassandra Austen. Thursday 1 Sept. <1796>

I have had my new gown made up, and it really makes a very superb surplice. I am sorry to say that

my new coloured gown is very much washed out, though I charged everybody to take great care of it.

I hope yours is so too. (p. 9)

Mr. and Mrs. Cage and Mr. and Mrs. Bridges dined with us yesterday. Fanny seemed as glad to see me

as anybody, and enquired very much after you, whom she supposed to be making your wedding-clothes. (p. 10)

We are very busy making Edward's shirts, and I am proud to say that I am the neatest worker of the

party. (p. 10)

**Letters: Selected from the Compilation of Her Great Nephew, Edward, Lord Brabourne**

**Published by Little, Brown and co., 1898**

**ed. by Sarah Chauncey Woolsey**

[Note: These letters are selected and expurgated (see Woolsey, p. viii-ix, "The letters included in this series comprise about three quarters of the collection in two volumes published in 1884 by her great-nephew Lord Brabourne. The lightness, almost friskiness, of their tone cannot fail to strike the reader....Furthermore the letters, in all probability, are carefully chosen to reveal only the more superficial side of their writer. There are wide gaps of omission...What is vouchsafed us is a glimpse of the girlish and untroubled moments of Miss Austen's life; and the glimpse is a sweet and friendly one...A good daughter, a delightful sister, the most perfect of aunts, what better record could there be of a single woman? Her literary work never stood in the way of her home duties, any more than her "quiet, limpid, unimpassioned style" stood between her thought and her readers.") Thus not to be entirely trusted. However, Brabourne made a point of including clothing references, and Woolsey has probably considered such references worthy of inclusion to highlight the "girlish and untroubled" Austen.]  
  
[Page 11-12](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA11&vq=stockings&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)   
Thursday, 16 January 1796: What a good-for-nothing fellow Charles is to bespeak the stockings! I hope he will be too hot all the rest of his life for it!  
  
Our party to Ashe to-morrow night will consist of Edward Cooper, James (for a ball is nothing without him), Buller, who is now staying with us, and I. I look forward with great impatience to it, as I rather expect to receive an offer from my friend in the course of the evening. I shall refuse him, however, unless he promises to give away his white coat.  
  
[Page 15](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA15&vq=shooting&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)   
Monday, 5 September 1796: I shall be extremely anxious to hear the event of your ball, and shall hope to receive so long and minute an account of every particular that I shall be tired of reading it. Let me know how many, besides their fourteen selves and Mr. and Mrs. Wright, Michael will contrive to place about their coach, and how many of the gentlemen, musicians, and waiters he will have persuaded to come in their shooting-jackets.

[Page 19-21](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA19&vq=muslin&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)   
Thursday, 15 September 1796: At Nackington we met Lady Sondes' picture over the mantelpiece in the dining-room, and the pictures of her three children in an ante-room, besides Mr. Scott, Miss Fletcher, Mr. Toke, Mr. J. Toke, and the archdeacon Lynch. Miss Fletcher and I were very thick, but I am the thinnest of the two. She wore her purple muslin, which is pretty enough, though it does not become her complexion. There are two traits in her character which are pleasing, —namely, she admires Camilla, and drinks no cream in her tea...  
  
We went in our two carriages to Nackington; but how we divided I shall leave you to surmise, merely observing that as Elizabeth and I were without either hat or bonnet, it would not have been very convenient for us to go in the chaise...  
  
Edward and Fly went out yesterday very early in a couple of shooting jackets, and came home like a couple of bad shots, for they killed nothing at all. They are out again to-day, and are not yet returned. Delightful sport! They are just come home, Edward with his two brace, Frank with his two and a half. What amiable young men!...  
  
Buy Mary Harrison's gown by all means. You shall have mine for ever so much money, though, if I am tolerably rich when I get home, I shall like it very much myself

[Page 29](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA29&vq=silk&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)   
Saturday, 27 October 1798: Whilst my mother and Mr. Lyford were together I went to Mrs. Ryder's and bought what I intended to buy, but not in much perfection. There were no narrow braces for children, and scarcely any netting silk; but Miss Wood, as usual, is going to town very soon, and will lay in a fresh stock. I gave *2s. 3d.* a yard for my flannel, and I fancy it is not very good, but it is so disgraceful and contemptible an article in itself that its being comparatively good or bad is of little importance. I bought some Japan ink likewise, and next week shall begin my operations on my hat, on which you know my principal hopes of happiness depend....  
  
Almost everything was unpacked and put away last night. Nanny chose to do it, and I was not sorry to be busy. I have unpacked the gloves, and placed yours in your drawer. Their color is light and pretty, and I believe exactly what we fixed on.

[Page 35](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA35&vq=dress&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)   
1 Dec 1798: Mary does not manage matters in such a way as to make me want to lay in myself. She is not tidy enough in her appearance; she has no dressing-gown to sit up in; her curtains are all too thin, and things are not in that comfort and style about her which are necessary to make such a situation an enviable one. Elizabeth was really a pretty object with her nice clean cap put on so tidily and her dress so uniformly white and orderly. We live entirely in the dressing-room now, which I like very much; I always feel so much more elegant in it than in the parlor.

[Page 38](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA38&vq=bonnet&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)   
Tues. 18 December 1798: I took the liberty a few days ago of asking your black velvet bonnet to lend me its cawl, which it very readily did, and by which I have been enabled to give a considerable improvement of dignity to cap, which was before too *nidgetty* to please me. I shall wear it on Thursday, but I hope you will not be offended with me for following your advice as to its ornaments only in part. I still venture to retain the narrow silver round it, put twice round without any bow, and instead of the black military feather shall put in the coquelicot one as being smarter, and besides coquelicot is to be all the fashion this winter. After the ball I shall probably make it entirely black.

[Page 39](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA39&vq=cap&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)   
Wed. 18 December 1798: I have changed my mind, and changed the trimmings of my cap this morning; they are now such as you suggested. I felt as if I should not prosper if I strayed from your directions, and I think it makes me look more like Lady Conyngham now than it did before, which is all that one lives for now. I believe I *shall* make my new gown like my robe, but the back of the latter is all in a piece with the tail, and will seven yards enable me to copy it in that respect? . . .

[Page 42](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA42&vq=cap&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)   
Monday night, December 24 1798: My black **cap** was openly admired by Mrs. Lefroy, and secretly I imagine by everybody else in the room. **...**

[Page 44](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA44&vq=muslin&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)   
Friday, December 28th 1798: This letter is to be dedicated entirely to good news. If you will send my father an account of your washing and letter expenses, etc., he will send you a draft for the amount of it, as well as for your next quarter, and for Edward's rent. If you don't buy a muslin gown now on the strength of this money and Frank's promotion, I shall never forgive you.

[Page 46](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA46&vq=cap&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)   
Tuesday, 8 January 1799: I am not to wear my white satin cap to-night, after all; I am to wear a mamalone [mameluke] cap instead, which Charles Fowle sent to Mary, and which she lends me. It is all the fashion now; worn at the opera, and by Lady Mildmays at Hackwood balls. I hate describing such things, and I dare say you will be able to guess what it is like. I have got over the dreadful epocha of mantua-making much better than I expected. My gown is made very much like my blue one, which you always told me sat very well, with only these variations: the sleeves are short, the wrap fuller, the apron comes over it, and a band of the same completes the whole.

[Page 48](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA48&vq=shoes&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)   
Wednesday, 9 January 1799: I wore my green shoes last night, and took my white fan with me; I am very glad he [nephew Charles] never threw it into the river.  
...I do not wonder at your wanting to read " First Impressions" again, so seldom as you have gone through it, and that so long ago. I am much obliged to you for meaning to leave my old petticoat behind you. I have long secretly wished it might be done, but had not courage to make the request.

[Page 56](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA56&vq=silk&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)   
Tuesday, 22 January 1799: I have no objection at all to your buying our gowns there, as your imagination has pictured to you exactly such a one as is necessary to make me happy. You quite abash me by your progress in netting, for I am still without silk. You must get me some in town or in Canterbury; it should be finer than yours.

[Page 61](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA61&vq=silk&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)   
Friday, 17 May 1799: In Paragon we met Mrs. Foley and Mrs. D.nvdeswell with her yellow shawl airing out, and at the bottom of Kingsdown Hill we met a gentleman in a buggy, who, on minute examination, turned out to be Dr. Hall — and Dr. Hall in such very deep mourning that either his mother, his wife, or himself must be dead. These are all of our acquaintance who have yet met our eyes...

I am rather impatient to know the fate of my best gown, but I suppose it will be some days before Frances can get through the trunk. In the mean time I am, with many thanks for your trouble in making it, as well as marking my silk stockings,

[Page 62-64](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA62&vq=shoes&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)   
Sunday, 2 June 1799: I will lay out all the little judgment I have in endeavoring to get such stockings for Anna as she will approve; but I do not know that I shall execute Martha's commission at all, for I am not fond of ordering shoes; and, at any rate, they shall all have flat heels.

My cloak is come home. I like it very much, and can now exclaim with delight, like J. Bond at hay-harvest, " This is what I have been looking for these three years." I saw some gauzes ill a shop in Bath Street yesterday at only 4d. a yard, but they were not so good or so pretty as mine. Flowers are very much worn, and fruit is still more the thing. Elizabeth has a bunch of strawberries, and I have seen grapes, cherries, plums, and apricots. There are likewise almonds and raisins, French plums, and tamarinds at the grocers', but I have never seen any of them in hats.

Elizabeth has given me a hat, and it is not only a pretty hat, but a pretty style of hat too. It is something like Eliza's, only, instead of being all straw, half of it is narrow purple ribbon. I flatter myself, however, that you can understand very little of it from this description. Heaven forbid that I should ever offer such encouragement to explanations as to give a clear one on any occasion myself! But I must write no more of this. . .

I am afraid I cannot undertake to carry Martha's shoes home, for, though we had plenty of room in our trunks when we came, we shall have many more things to take back, and I must allow besides for my packing. ...

I am quite pleased with Martha and Mrs. Lefroy for wanting the pattern of our caps, hut I am not so well pleased with your giving it to them. Some wish, some prevailing wish, is necessary to the animation of everybody's mind, and in gratifying this you leave them to form some other which will not probably be half so innocent.

[Page 66 - 70](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA66&vq=sprig&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)  
Tuesday, 11 June 1799: Though you have given me unlimited powers concerning your sprig, I cannot determine what to do about it, and shall therefore in this and in every other future letter continue to ask your further directions. We have been to the cheap shop, and very cheap we found it, but there are only flowers made there, no fruit; and as I could get four or live very pretty sprigs of the former for the same money which would procure only one Orleans plum — in short, could get more for three or four shillings than I could have means of bringing home — I cannot decide on the fruit till I hear from you again. Besides, I cannot help thinking that it is more natural to have flowers grow out of the head than fruit. What do you think on that subject?...  
  
I am very glad you liked my lace, and so are you, and so is Martha, and we are all glad together. *I* have got your cloak home, which is quite delightful, —as delightful at least as half the circumstances which are called so.

Now I will give you the history of Mary's veil, in the purchase of which I have so considerably involved you that it is my duty to economize for you in the flowers. I had no difficulty in getting a muslin veil for half a guinea, and not much more in discovering afterwards that the muslin was thick, dirty, and ragged, and therefore would by no means do for a united gift. I changed it consequently as soon as I could, and, considering what a state my imprudence had reduced me to, I thought myself lucky in getting a black lace one for sixteen shillings. I hope the half of that sum will not greatly exceed what you had intended to offer upon the altar of sister-in-law affection.

[Page 72](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA72&vq=shoes&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)   
Thursday, 20 November 1800: There were very few beauties, and such as there were were not very handsome. Miss Iremonger did not look well, and Mrs. Blount was the only one much admired. She appeared exactly as she did in September, with the same broad face, diamond bandeau, white shoes, pink husband, and fat neck. The two Miss Coxes were there; I traced in one the remains of the vulgar, broad-featured girl who danced at Enham eight years ago; the other is refined into a nice, composed-looking girl, like Catherine Bigg. ... Miss Debary, Susan, and Sally, but without any statues, made their appearance, and I was as civil to them as circumstances would allow me. . . .

Mary said that I looked very well last night. I wore my aunt's gown and handkerchief, and my hair was at least tidy, which was all my ambition. I will now have done with the ball, and I will moreover go and dress for dinner. . . .  
  
[Page 74](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA74&vq=gown&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)   
Saturday, 3 January 1801: As you have by this time received my last letter, it is fit that I should begin another; and I begin with the hope, which is at present uppermost in my mind, that you often wore a white gown in the morning at the time of all the gay parties being with you.

[Page 80](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA80&vq=muslin&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)   
Thursday, 8 January 1801: I believe you are right in proposing to delay the cambric muslin, and I submit with a kind of voluntary reluctance.

[Page 89](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA89&vq=dress&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)   
Wednesday, 7 January 1807: Mrs. F. A. has had a very agreeable letter from Mrs. Dickson, who was delighted with the purse, and desires her not to provide herself with a christening dress, which is exactly what her young correspondent wanted; and she means to defer making any of the caps as long as she can, in hope of having Mrs. D.'s present in time to be serviceable as a pattern. She desires me to tell you that the gowns were cut out before your letter arrived, but that they are long enough for Caroline. The *Beds,* as I believe they are called, have fallen to Frank's share to continue, and of course are cut out to admiration.

[Page 89](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA89&vq=dress&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)   
Thursday, 8 January 1807: We expected James yesterday, but he did not come; if he comes at all now, his visit will be a very short one, as he must return to-morrow, that Ajax and the chair may be sent to Winchester on Saturday. Caroline's new pelisse depended upon her mother's being able or not to come so far in the chair; how the guinea that will be saved by the same means of return is to be spent I know not.

[Page 97](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA97&vq=bonnets&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)   
8 February 1807: The Browns are added to our list of acquaintance. He commands the Sea Fencibles here, under Sir Thomas, and was introduced at his own desire by the latter when we saw him last week. As yet the gentlemen only have visited, as Mrs. B. is ill; but she is a nice-looking woman, and wears one of the prettiest straw bonnets in the place.  
  
[Page 99](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA99&vq=gloves&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)  
Wednesday, 15 June 1808: At half-past ten we were again off, and, travelling on without any adventure reached Sitting- bourne by three. Daniel was watching for us at the door of the George, and I was acknowledged very kindly by Mr. and Mrs. Marshall, to the latter of whom I devoted my conversation, while Mary went out to buy some gloves.

[Page 105-106](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA105&vq=shoes&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)   
Saturday, 15 October 1808: [upon death of Mrs. Edward Austen]

Your parcel shall set off on Monday, and I hope the shoes will fit; Martha and I both tried them on. I shall send you such of your mourning as I think most likely to be useful, reserving for myself your stockings and half the velvet, in which selfish arrangement I know I am doing what you wish.

I am to be in bombazeen and crape, according to what we are told is universal here, and which agrees with Martha's previous observation. My mourning, however, will not impoverish me, for by having my velvet pelisse fresh lined and made up, I am sure I shall have no occasion this winter for anything new of that sort. I take my cloak for the lining, and shall send yours on the chance of its doing something of the same for you, though I believe your pelisse is in better repair than mine. One Miss Baker makes my gown and the other my bonnet, which is to be silk covered with crape.

[Page 110](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA110&vq=coat&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)   
Monday, 24 October 1808: Mrs. J. A. had not time to get them more than one suit of clothes; their others are making here, and though I do not believe Southampton is famous for tailoring, I hope it will prove itself better than Basingstoke. Edward has an old black coat, which will save his having a second new one; but I find that black pantaloons are considered by them as necessary, and of course one would not have them made uncomfortable by the want of what is usual on such occasions.

[Page 121](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA121&vq=bracelets&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)  
Friday, 9 December 1808: The bracelets are in my possession, and everything I could wish them to be. They came with Martha's pelisse, which likewise gives great satisfaction.

[Page 129](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA129&vq=shoes&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)   
Tuesday, 27 December 1808: I was happy to hear, chiefly for Anna's sake, that a ball at Manydown was once more in agitation; it is called a child's ball, and given by Mrs. Heathcote to Win. Such was its beginning at least, but it will probably swell into something more. Edward was invited during his stay at Manydown, and it is to take place between this and Twelfth-day. Mrs. Hulbert has taken Anna a pair of white shoes on the occasion.  
  
[Page 138-140](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA138&vq=cravats&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)  
Tuesday, 17 January 1809: I am happy to say that we had no second letter from Bookham last week. Yours lias brought its usual measure of satisfaction and amusement, and I beg your acceptance of all the thanks due on the occasion. Your offer of cravats is very kind, and happens to be particularly adapted to my wants, but it was an odd thing to occur to you.  
  
I hope you have had no more illness among you, and that William will be soon as well as ever. His working a footstool for Chawton is a most agreeable surprise to me, and I am sure his grandmamma will value it very much as a proof of his affection and industry, but we shall never have the heart to put our feet upon it. I believe I must work a muslin cover in satin stitch to keep it from the dirt. I long to know what his colors are. I guess greens and purples.

We were agreeably surprised the other day by a visit from your beauty and mine, each in a new cloth mantle and bonnet; and I dare say you will value yourself much on the modest propriety of Miss W.'s taste, hers being purple and Miss Grace's scarlet.

I can easily suppose that your six weeks here will be fully occupied, were it only in lengthening the waists of your gowns. J have pretty well arranged my spring and summer plans of that kind, and mean to wear out my spotted muslin before I go. You will exclaim at this, but mine really has signs of feebleness, which with a little care may come to something.

[Page 148](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA148&vq=shoes&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)   
Tuesday, 24 January 1809: Your silence on the subject of our ball makes me suppose your curiosity too great for words. We were very well entertained, and could have stayed longer but for the arrival of my list shoes to convey me home, and I did not like to keep them waiting in the cold. The room was tolerably full, and the ball opened by Miss Glyn. The Miss Lances had partners, Captain Dauvergne's friend appeared in regimentals, Caroline Maitland had an officer to flirt with, and Mr. John Harrison was deputed by Captain Smith, being himself absent, to ask me to dance. Everything went well, you see, especially after we had tucked Mrs. Lance's neckerchief in behind and fastened it with a pin.

[Page 157-158](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA157&vq=muslin&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)   
Thursday, 18 April 1811: I am sorry to tell you that I am getting very extravagant, and spending all my money, and, what is worse for you, I have been spending yours too; for in a linendraper's shop to which I went for checked muslin, and for which I was obliged to give seven shillings a yard, I was tempted by a pretty-colored muslin, and bought ten yards of it on the chance of your liking it; but at the same time, if it should not suit you, you must not think yourself at all obliged to take it; it is only 3s. *6d.* per yard, and I should not in the least mind keeping the whole. In texture it is just what we prefer, but its resemblance to green crewels, I must own, is not great, for the pattern is a small red spot. And now I believe I have done all my commissions except Wedgwood.

I liked my walk very much; it was shorter than I had expected, and the weather was delightful. We set off immediately after breakfast, and must have reached Grafton House by half-past eleven; but when we entered the shop the whole counter was thronged, and we waited full half an hour before we could be attended to. When we were served, however, I was very well satisfied with my purchases, —my bugle trimming at *2s. 4d.* and three pair silk stockings for a little less than 12s. a pair...

Miss Burton has made me a very pretty little bonnet, and now nothing can satisfy me but I must have a straw hat, of the riding-hat shape, like Mrs. Tilson's; and a young woman in this neighborhood is actually making me one. I am really very shocking, but it will not be dear at a guinea. Our pelisses are 17s. each; she charges only 8s. for the making, but the buttons seem expensive, — are expensive, I might have said, for the fact is plain enough.

[Page 167](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA167&vq=muslin&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)  
Thursday, 25 April 1811: Do not have your colored muslin unless you really want it, because I am afraid I could not send it to the coach without giving trouble here.  
  
[Page 169 - 171](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA169&vq=pelisse&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)

Tuesday, ? 1811: I do not mean to provide another trimming for my pelisse, for I am determined to spend no more money; so I shall wear it as it is, longer than I ought, and then — I do not know...

My head-dress was a bugle-band like the border to my gown, and a flower of Mrs. Tilson's. I depended upon hearing something of the evening from Mr. W. K., and am very well satisfied with his notice of me — "A pleasing-looking young woman"—that must do; one cannot pretend to anything better now; thankful to have it continued a few years longer!

I mean, if I can, to wait for your return before I have my new gown made up, from a notion of their making up to more advantage together; and as I find the muslin is not so wide as it used to be, some contrivance may be necessary. I expect the skirt to require one-half breadth cut in gores, besides two whole breadths.

[Page 179-80](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA179&vq=bonnets&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)   
Thursday, 6 June 1811: I like your new bonnets exceedingly; yours is the shape which always looks well, and I think Fanny's particularly becoming to her.  
  
I had just left off writing and put on my things for walking to Alton, when Anna and her friend Harriot called in their way thither; so we went together. Their business was to provide mourning against the King's death, and my mother has had a bombazine bought for her. I am not sorry to be back again, for the young ladies had a great deal to do, and without much method in doing it.  
  
[Page 187](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA187&vq=gloves&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)   
Thursday, 20 May 1813: I was very lucky in my gloves, — got them at the first shop I went to, though I went into it rather because it was near than because it looked at all like a glove- shop, and gave only four shillings for them; after which everybody at Chawton will be hoping and predicting that they cannot be good for anything, and their worth certainly remains to be proved; but I think they look very well.  
  
[Page 189](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA189&vq=collection&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)   
Monday, 24 May 1813: I then walked into No. 10, which is all dirt and confusion, but in a very promising way; and after being present at the opening of a new account, to my great amusement, Henry and I went to the exhibition in Spring Gardens. It is not thought a good collection, but I was very well pleased, particularly (pray tell Fanny) with a small portrait of Mrs. Bingley,1 excessively like her.

I went in hopes of seeing one of her sister, but there was no Mrs. Darcy. Perhaps, however, I may find her in the great exhibition, which we shall go to if we have time. I have no chance of her in the collection of Sir Joshua Reynolds's paintings, which is now showing in Pall Mall, and which we are also to visit...

I gave 2s. *6d.* for the dimity. I do not boast of any bargains, but think both the sarsenet and dimity good of their sort.

I have bought your locket, but was obliged to give 18s. for it, which must be rather more than you intended. It is neat and plain, set in gold.

[Page 198-200](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA199&vq=lace&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)

Wednesday, 13 September 1813: Oh, dear me! when I shall ever have done. We did go to Layton and Shear's before breakfast. Very pretty English poplins at 4s. *3d.*; Irish, ditto at *6s.;* more pretty, certainly, — beautiful.

Miss Hare had some pretty caps, and is to make me one like one of them, only white satin instead of blue. It will be white satin and lace, and a little white flower perking out of the left ear, like Harriot Byron's feather. I have allowed her to go as far as *11.* 16s. My gown is to be trimmed everywhere with white ribbon plaited on somehow or other. She says it will look well. I am not sanguine. They trim with white very much.

I learnt from Mrs. Tickars's young lady, to my high amusement, that the stays now are not made to force the bosom up at all; that was a very unbecoming, unnatural fashion. I was really glad to hear that they are not to be so much off the shoulders as they were.

Mr. Hall was very punctual yesterday, and curled me out at a great rate. I thought it looked hideous, and longed for a snug cap instead, but my companions silenced me by their admiration. I had only a bit of velvet round my head. I did not catch cold, however. The weather is all in my favor.

[Page 203-206](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA203&vq=silk&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)   
Thursday, 16 September 1813:

I hope you will receive the gown to-morrow, and may be able with tolerable honesty to say that you like the color. It was bought at Grafton House, where, by going very early, we got immediate attendance and went on very comfortably. I only forgot the one particular thing which I had always resolved to buy there, — a white silk handkerchief, — and was therefore obliged to give six shillings for one at Crook and Besford's; which reminds me to say that the worsteds ought also to be at Chawton to-morrow, and that I shall be very happy to hear they are approved. I had not much time for deliberation....

My cap is come home, and I like it very much. Fanny has one also; hers is white sarsenet and lace, of a different shape from mine, more fit for morning carriage wear, which is what it is intended for, and is in shape exceedingly like our own satin and lace of last winter; shaped round the face exactly like it, with pipes and more fulness, and a round crown inserted behind. My cap has a peak in front. Large full bows of very narrow ribbon (old twopenny) are the thing. One over the right temple, perhaps, and another at the left ear....

Fanny bought her Irish at Newton's in Leicester Square, and I took the opportunity of thinking about your Irish, and seeing one piece of the yard wide at 4s., and it seemed to me very good; good enough for your purpose. It might at least be worth your while to go there, if you have no other engagements. Fanny is very much pleased with the stockings she has bought of Eemmingtou, silk at 12s., cotton at 4s. *3d.* She thinks them great bargains, but I have not seen them yet, as my hair was dressing when the man and the stockings came....  
  
We must have been three-quarters of an hour at Grafton House, Edward sitting by all the time with wonderful patience. There Fanny bought the net for Anna's gown, and a beautiful square veil for herself. The edging there is very cheap. I was tempted by some, and I bought some very nice plaiting lace at 3s. *4d.*  
  
[Page 207-208](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA207&vq=poplin&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)  
Thursday, 23 September 1813: I am extremely glad that you like the poplin. I thought it would have my mother's approbation, but was not so confident of yours. Remember that it is a present. Do not refuse me. I am very rich...

[Page 217-223](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA217&vq=cap&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)   
Thursday, 14 October 1813: I left off in a great hurry to prepare for our morning visits. Of course was ready a good deal the first, and need not have hurried so much. Fanny wore her new gown and cap. I was surprised to find my stole so pretty....  
  
However, Miss Chapman's name is Laura, and she had a double flounce to her gown. You really must get some flounces. Are not some of your large stock of white morning gowns just in a happy state for a flounce — too short?...  
  
We did not go to the ball. It was left to her to decide, and at last she determined against it. She knew that it would be a sacrifice on the part of her father and brothers if they went, and I hope it will prove that she has not sacrificed much. It is not likely that there should have been anybody there whom she would care for. I was very glad to be spared the trouble of dressing and going, and being weary before it was half over; so my gown and my cap are still unworn. It will appear at last, perhaps, that I might have done without either. I produced my brown bombazine yesterday, and it was very much admired indeed, and I like it better than ever....  
  
Let me know as many of your parting arrangements as you can, as to wine, etc. I wonder whether the ink-bottle has been filled. Does butcher's meat keep up at the same price, and is not bread lower than 2s. *6d. ?* Mary's blue gown! My mother must be in agonies. I have a great mind to have my blue gown dyed some time or other. I proposed it once to you, and you made some objection, I forget what. It is the fashion of flounces that gives it particular expediency.

[Page 230](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA230&vq=stays&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)   
Sunday, 18 October 1813: The two Fannies went to Canty, in the morning, and took Lou. and Cass. to try on new stays.

[Page 234](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA234&vq=bedford&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)   
Wednesday, 3 November 1813: Harriot, in a letter to Fanny to-day, inquires whether they sell cloths for pelisses at Bedford House, and, if they do, will be very much obliged to you to desire them to send her down patterns, with the width and prices; they may go from Charing Cross almost any day in the week, but if it is a ready-money house it will not do, for the *bru* of *feu* the Archbishop says she cannot pay for it immediately. Fanny and I suspect they do not deal in the article.  
  
[Page 241](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA241&vq=crape&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)  
Saturday, 6 November 1813: It was twelve before we reached home. We were all dog-tired, but pretty well to-day: Miss Clewes says she has not caught cold, and Fanny's does not seem worse. I was so tired that I began to wonder how I should get through the ball next Thursday; but there will be so much more variety then in walking about, and probably so much less heat, that perhaps I may not feel it more. My china crape is still kept for the ball. Enough of the concert...  
  
[Page 248](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA248&vq=perigord&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)   
Wednesday, 2 March, 1814  
Mrs. Perigord has just been here. She tells me that we owe her master for the silk-dyeing. My poor old muslin has never been dyed yet. It has been promised to be done several times. What wicked people dyers are! They begin with dipping their own souls in scarlet sin.

[Page 250](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA250&vq=ribbon&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)   
Wednesday, 9 March 1814: I wear my gauze gown to-day, long sleeves and all. I shall see how they succeed, but as yet I have no reason to suppose long sleeves are allowable. I have lowered the bosom, especially at the corners, and plaited black satin ribbon round the top. Such will be my costume of vine-leaves and paste....

Mrs. Tilson had long sleeves, too, and she assured me that they are worn in the evening by many. I was glad to hear this. She dines here, I believe, next Tuesday.

[Page 261](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA261&vq=silk&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)

Tuesday, ? August 1814: Henry talks of being at Chawton about the 1st of Sept. He has once mentioned a scheme which I should rather like, — calling on the Birches and the Crutchleys in our way. It may never come to anything, but I must provide for the possibility by troubling you to send up my silk pelisse by Collier on Saturday. I feel it would be necessary on such an occasion; and be so good as to put up a clean dressing-gown which will come from the wash on Friday. You need not direct it to be left anywhere. It may take its chance.  
  
[Page 281](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA281&vq=pelisse&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)

21 November 1814: Mrs. Clement walks about in a new black velvet **pelisse** lined with yellow, and a white bobbin net veil, and looks remarkably well in them. **...**

and I have been just sending a very good report of you to Miss Benn, with a full account of your **dress** for Susan and Maria. **...**

[Page 285](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA285&vq=pelisse&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)   
Wednesday, 30 November 1814: Her purple pelisse rather surprised me. I thought we had known all paraphernalia of that sort. I do not mean to blame her; it looked very well, and I dare say she wanted it. I suspect nothing worse than its being got in secret, and not owned to anybody.

[Page 292](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA292&vq=gloves&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)   
These **gloves** having appeared on the pianoforte ever since you were here on Friday, we imagine they must be yours. Mrs. Digweed returned yesterday through **...**

[Page 296-303](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA296&vq=silk&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)

Sunday, 26 November 1815: The parcel arrived safely, and I am much obliged to you for your trouble. It cost *2s. 10d.,* but as there is a certain saving of *2s.* 4^rf. on the other side, I am sure it is well worth doing. I send four pair of silk stockings, but I do not want them washed at present. In the three neckhandkerchiefs I include the one sent down before.   
Well, we were very busy all yesterday; from half-past eleven till four in the streets, working almost entirely for other people, driving from place to place after a parcel for Sandling, which we could never find, and encountering the miseries of Grafton House to get a purple frock for Eleanor Bridges....

I am glad you have put the flounce on your chintz; I am sure it must look particularly well, and it is what I had thought of

[Page 315](http://books.google.com/books?id=-jwVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA315&vq=coat&dq=letters+jane+austen&source=gbs_search_s&cad=0)

23 March 1816: Old Philmore was buried yesterday, and I, by way of saying something to Triggs, observed that it had been a very handsome funeral; but his manner of reply made me suppose that it was not generally esteemed so. I can only be sure of one part being very handsome, — Triggs himself, walking behind in his green coat. Mrs. Philmore attended as chief mourner, in bombazine, made very short, and flounced with crape.

**Le Faye, Deirdre. *Jane Austen's Letters*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.  
references to Clothing, etc. in Austen's letters can be found at the Subject index on Molland's:**

<http://www.mollands.net/etexts/ltrindex/ltrindexc.html>

Lett. 12, p. 22

The Overton Scotchman ["a pedlar carrying fabrics and drapery goods round the countryside for doorstop sales"] has been kind enough to rid me of some of my money, in exchange for six shifts and four pair of stockings.The Irish is not so fine as I would like it; but as I gave as much money for it as I intended, I have no reason to complain. It cost me 3s. 6d. per yard. It is rather finer, however, than our last, and not so harsh a cloth.

# Magazine of the Actually Prevailing Female Fashions of London and Paris