



WORLDLY WOMAN



WHY should we not have a censor of fashion instead of a censor of plays? It would be quite as important a part to play for a man, though it might be difficult enough to find a man for the part. Instead of haggling over *risqué* situations, or the *double entente* of an epigram, I would have him curtailing the heroine's feathers, or objecting to her all-too-clinging skirts. He would waste no energy in forbidding the repetition of mere words, but would employ it gloriously in condemning embroideries that cost a fortune without being beautiful. Being a man he would see no merit, nor sense, in "extinguisher" hats of fabulous price, and half the husbands in the world would call him their best friend. A benefactor, indeed, he would be instead of a personage railed at in magazines, petitioned against by playwrights. We do not dream of imitating the morals of a drama we go to see, but we religiously copy the gowns the players wear. Our censor, at least, would see to it that they were worth copying. Certainly, it would be a fine enough rôle, if only we could find the person to fill it; for he would have to be a brave man who could face calmly the wrath of insulted *couturiers*, to say nothing of daily petitions from legions of frenzied women.

And then there would be no more bitter, no more unnecessary criticism of grotesque hats, of incongruous clothes; these would have passed the censor and be beyond reproach. Besides, there would be no cause for complaint, for my censor should be a man of unimpeachable taste, and have an admirable sense of the fitness of things. Also, as all fashion begins on the Paris stage, he would, of necessity, be a Frenchman, and most probably an artist. Not, of course, that all art—not even that of dress—is limited to France; only she somehow usurps most of the reputation for it. Amongst the greatest of her great designers, it is a consolation to remember, though she has conveniently forgotten it, that Redfern is an Englishman, Drecol an Austrian, and that Worth—the once-upon-a-time incomparable Worth—was the son of a Nottingham farmer. So all is not French that adds to the glittering fame of Paris.



Cloche in mauve velvet, wreathed with many bunches of violets. Bow of purple satin ribbon. Model by Alphonsine.
THE EVER POPULAR CLOCHE HAT

To return to my idle imaginings, never likely to be realised, alas! for in Paris no one dreams of dictating to the stage, still less of protesting against fashion. I feel that in my Utopia no censor would have passed the skirts that have lately wriggled themselves into fame at the latest *premieres*. Their outlines remind one of the

audacities of Madame Tallien a hundred years ago. Perhaps their reappearance just now is a sign that we intend to celebrate the centenary of that notorious lady, and we may look forward to further reminiscences in the way of slashed-up draperies displaying a generous length of silk stocking and a magnificent garter. Why not, after all? *Pourquoi s'arrêter en si beau chemin?* Once again, I long for a censor to deliver us from the possibility of such terrors.

I do not like the creases below the hips that are a feature of the new skirts. On the boards of the Odéon, where their daring came almost as a shock, they seemed less unpleasant than they do in Bond Street. I see that we shall adopt them enthusiastically. In evening frocks, in which one may play at being artistic, they have some *raison d'être*, but I see no excuse for their appearance on mere coats and skirts. Nor do I believe for a moment that we think them beautiful; only we have talked of "line," preached on "line" for years, and now that we have got more of it than we bargained for, we must at all costs pretend it is a glorious thing. But, even in all loyalty to cherished ideals, I cannot help wishing that all this "line" did not quarrel so desperately with petticoats in the very depths of winter.

Furs, however, promise to make up for a great deal. Never have they been so warm, so enticingly beautiful, and never, alas! have they been dearer. I will not even mention sable; for most of us it is an unrealisable ambition, shrouded behind fashionable shop-windows. If we go on at this rate, not all the wealth of the Vanderbilts

will be sufficient to buy a sable cloak. Silver fox has also gone up fifty per cent; why, I have not discovered; and, strangely enough, no one insists on a reason, but cheerfully pays the price. Just now there is a craze for ermine, which, for a marvel, is slightly cheaper than last year. It is mostly used without its pretty little tails; but this is quite an exception, for on all other skins tails appear with such liberality that one cannot help doubting their sincerity. There are muffs entirely made of them (this is *le dernier cri*), coats with a fringe of them, hats that bristle with them; in fact where there is a small piece of fur there are at least twenty tails. The pillow muff is now so enormous that many women carry their little dogs inside it. I wonder whether they know how old is this fashion. In the seventeenth century people used gigantic muffs in which they hid a whole litter of puppies, and the larger the number of them, the greater was the *chic*!

Chinchilla is not quite as fashionable as it was, and beaver has come back after many years' absence; but the most charming fur for coats always was, and always will be, broadtail. This year it is thinner and softer than ever, almost like *moiré* with patches of velvet, and when laden with braid and *passenterie* it is irresistible.

These furs have all been made so soft and supple that they are twice as beautiful as and ten times more fragile than they were. It is all grist to the furriers' extremely profitable mill. I wonder no impoverished peer nowadays has thought of dealing in furs instead of motor-cars. There would be the chance of re-establishing his fallen fortunes. L. S. R.

Mr. Charles Dixon's excellent drawings of the Orient-Royal Mail steamers have been reproduced as postcards for the use of passengers by the line. In consequence of the numerous applications which have been made for them the Orient-Royal Mail Line have decided to issue them to the general public at a small charge. The set of nine will be sent post free on receipt of a postal order for sixpence.



A very graceful double skirt in grey-blue chiffon has wide hems of velvet of the same pretty shade. High belt in Liberty satin, and *empicement* and *mitains* of Alençon lace. Model by Doeuillet. Photograph by Felix.

"LE FIVE O'CLOCK"



A regal overdress in brown chiffon velvet is worn over a petticoat of gold tissue, embroidered in chenille. Tassels in brown silk, and vest of Malines lace. Model by Redfern. Photograph by Felix.

A DINNER DRESS