

and Vienna for the real master pieces in a season's wardrobe. The great dressmakers and milliners go to the same cities for their ~~male~~ models. Those who can not go abroad ^{To} seek inspiration and ideas ^{copy} those who have gone or ~~from~~ the fashion plates they import. The French or Viennese mode started on upper Fifth Avenue spreads to 23rd St., from 23rd St. to 14th from 14th Street to Houston and Canal. ^{now} Each ~~shop~~ sees it reproduced in material a little less elegant and durable, its colors a trifle vulgarized, its ornaments cheapened, its laces poorer. By the time it reaches Houston St. the \$400 gown in brocaded velvet from the best ^{houses} ~~house~~ in Europe has become ^a cotton velvet from Lawrence or Fall River decorated with mercerized lace and glass ornaments from Rhodel Island! A travesty and yet a recognizable travesty. The East sides ^{houses} ~~houses~~ over it as Fifth Avenue has done ^{over} the original. The very shop window where it is displayed is dressed and painted and lighted in imitation of the uptown shop. The same process goes on inland. This same gown will travel its downward path from New York ^{Midway} ~~Midway~~ to Buffalo, ^{Midway} ~~Midway~~ until it arrives in some cheap and gay mining or factory town. From start to finish it is imitation, and on this imitation vast industries are built! — Imitation of silk, of velvet, of lace, of jewels, in ~~varying grades of quality until the end in the shawls~~

If these imitations are a far greater extravagance cheap as they are for their ~~class~~ buyers than the original world.

was for the buyer for the latter came from that class where money does not count - while the former is of a class where every penny counts. Where for

soundness must be forever duplicated, instead of freeing industry to go ahead producing other goods and permanent things.

What it all amounts to is that the instinct for ornament has gotten the upper hand of a great body of American women. We have failed so far to develop standards of taste, fitness, and quality strong, sure and good enough effectually to impose themselves. There is no national taste in dress; there is only admirable skill in adapting fashion made in other countries; There is no national sense of restraint and proportion. It is pretty generally *agreed* that getting all you can is entirely justifiable. There is no national sense of quality, even the rich to-day in the country, wear imitation laces. The effect of all this is a bewildering ~~multitude~~ *multitude* in costume - a sheep-like willingness to follow to the extreme the grotesque and the fantastic. The very general adaption of the ugly and meaningless fashion of the last few years - peach-basket hats - hobble-skirt - slippers for the street - is a case in point. From every ~~side~~ *its own* side this is bad - defeating, ~~and~~ *its own* purpose, ~~in the line of the~~ corrupting national taste and wasting national substance.

Moreover the false standard it sets up socially is intolerable. It sounds fantastic to say that whole bodies of women place their chief reliance for social advancement on dress, but it is true;

They are, or are not, as they are gowned! The ~~most~~ *most* of the fantasy, perhaps is not that it forces too much attention from useful women but that it gives such poise and assurance to the ignorant and useless!

If you look like the women of a set, you are as "good" as they, is the democratic standard ^{of} many a young woman holds. If, for any reason she is not able to produce this effect, she shrinks from contact, whatever her talent or charm! And she is ^{often} not altogether wrong in thinking she will not be welcome if her dress is not that of the circle to which she aspires. Many a woman indifferently gowned has been made to feel her difference from the elegant she found herself among. If she is sure of herself and has a sense of humor, this may be an amusing experience. To many, however, it is an embittering one.

Now these observations are not presented as discoveries! Recently in New York ~~city~~, a critic of these little essays ~~thought~~ sought to discredit them, because there was "nothing new" in them! They are not offered as new. The writer has never so far in her life made any discovery or had any ideas which she had not been able to trace

They were but

In fact there is nothing

at least, as far back as the Greeks! ~~She is unable to see anything~~ in the so called woman's movement, which in its essence did not exist then. The stream of human aspirations, with its stretches of wisdom and of folly, has flowed steadily through the ages and on its troubled surface, man and women have always struggled together as they are struggling today. These little comments ~~are not offered as new but as old truths.~~ They simply seem to the writer worth making because for the moment ~~they~~ *truths* are not getting as much attention as they ~~perhaps~~ *deserve*. Certainly the tyranny dress exercises over the woman in this American Democracy is an old enough theme.

Indeed it has always formed a part of her program of emancipation. Out of her revolt against its absurdities, has come the most definite developments in American costume which we have had, and that is the sensible street costume, which in spite of efforts to distort and displace it, a woman still may wear without differentiating herself from her fellows. *The short skirt and jacket, the shirt-waist and stout boots*

The short skirt and jacket, the shirt-waist and stout boots a woman is allowed today, are among the many good things which the Women's Rights movement of the 40's and 50's *helped* secured for us. When those able leaders made their attack on man, demanding that the world in which he moved alone, be opened to them, they were quick enough to see that if they succeeded in their undertaking they would be hampered by their clothes. *They revolted*

True they did not ~~include~~ *voice this protest* in their historic list of "injuries and usurpations on the part of man towards women" ~~the charge~~ *They did not say!*

"He has compelled her to hamper herself with skirts and stays, to decorate her head with rats and puffs, to paint her face with poisonous compounds and walk on the streets in foot gear which is neither suitable or comfortable."

This statement, however, would have had ~~exactly~~ the same degree of truth ~~in it~~ ^{as} several which were included in the ~~historic~~ "list of grievances" ^{as much as the declaration;} *It would have the same quality of truth*

"He has compelled her to submit to laws in the formation of which she has had no voice."

"He has denied her the facilities for obtaining a thorough education, all colleges being closed against her."

Dress reformers ^{were admitted to} quickly ~~sprang up in~~ their ranks of the agitators. The initial revolt was thorough-going. They discarded the corset, discarded it when it was still improper to speak the word! They cut off their hair in a day when every woman owned a chignon and ~~hair~~ ^{feathered & powdered head dress} was still in fashion. They discarded the corsets, cut off their hair, and adopted bloomers!

The story of the bloomer is piquant. It was launched and worn. It became the subject of platform oratory and had its organ. Why is it not worn today? No woman who has ever masqueraded in man's dress or donned it for climbing, will ever forget the freedom of it. Yet to-day the only woman in the Christian world who ~~wears it~~ ^{has worn it} at once naturally and with that touch of coquetry which is necessary to carry it off, as far as this writer's ^{personal} observations go, ^{was} Madame Dieulafoy, and Madame Dieulafoy ^{was} protected by the French government and an exclusive circle!

The pity of it is that the young girls who put all that they can earn into elaborate lingerie (at 79 cents a set (the original model probably sold for \$1.75 or \$1.00!) into high-necked hose at 25 cents a pair (original \$1.00 a pair) into willow plumes at \$1.19 (the original sold at \$1.00!) never have a durable or suitable garment. They are barely ornamented but never properly clothed. Moreover they are brave but for a day. Their purchases have no influence on them. They tear, grow rusty, fall to pieces with the first few wearings and the poor little victims are shabby and bedraggled long before they have paid for their belongings just many of these things are bought on the installment plan, particularly hats and fancy gowns.

and circumstances it is little wonder that one becomes often & often among this class the plaintive cry "free, but it's hell to be poor" - that one finds so often assigned by a girl as the cause of her down fall the natural &

reason - "wanted to dress like other girls"
"wanted pretty ~~at~~ clothes".

This habit of buying poor imitations does not end in the girl's life with her clothes. When she marries she carries it into her home. Decorations - not furnishings - is the key note of all she touches - ~~the the & the~~ & it is she who is the best patron of the elaborate ~~plaid~~ & monstrous furniture, rugs, draperies, "crochery", "vic-a-vac".

which I fill the slope of the ^{cheaper} ~~cheaper~~
quarter of the great cities & of all
quarters of the ^{new} ~~newer~~ island towns ~~towns~~

Why should we expect ~~anything else~~
of her? She is imitating her employer's wife.

Who is imitating ~~then~~ the Canker's wife
who is imitating the just citizen
wife who is imitating the ~~poor~~ of the
the only one of the ~~poor~~ she can
law upon is imitating something
in Paris & Vienna.

It has all this no relation to national propriety
to the best of our knowledge &
it is not the

~~What has all this to do with propriety~~
The effect on the national budget is clear -
the effect on the family budget is
which it dominates - is plain. In both
cases nothing of permanent value
acquired & the good linen, the undergarments
the "all wool" gown - the broad cloth cap
or coat - those standard garments -
which the thrifty acquire & cherish are
only an illusion of the value of our the
pretty little spendings of \$8 a week.
Solid furniture such as ^{the} dignify ~~the~~ even
the ~~house~~ of European ^{the} ~~house~~ & are
passed from mother to daughter for
generations - are objects of contempt in
this land. By the younger generation
here - even the daughters of good
old New England farmers are found busy
glad to exchange ^{to improve} ~~to improve~~ for
guaranteed ash & pewter for pressed
glass & stamped crockery. Thus another
generation may come on & buy it all much
at fabulous prices but the waste of it!
This production of cheap slummy
cloths - cheap ^{cheap} ~~cheap~~ ^{cheap} ~~cheap~~ furniture -
what is it - but waste - waste of labor
& materials - time & money & simplicity
which might have been turned to
the permanent value.

with white
cloth.

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