

The Fine Art of Dressing Like a Lady

By
Lady Duff-Gordon

LADY DUFF-GORDON, the famous "Lucile" of London, and foremost creator of fashions in the world, writes each week the fashion article for this newspaper, presenting all that is newest and best in styles for well-dressed women. Lady Duff-Gordon's Paris establishment brings her into close touch with that centre of fashion.

A "Trousered" Model of a "Robe Intime" Which is Only for a Lady of a Pronounced Type



An "Harmonious Development" of Simplicity—Notice the "Barbaric Note"—Dangerous Unless Skillfully Handled

Lady Duff Gordon
("Lucile")

HOW often have I heard persons say of some woman, "Oh, yes; she dresses well, but not quite like a lady." And, unfortunately, it is often quite true. Then, sometimes, just to see what they will say I ask, "Well, just what is it that isn't quite like a lady?"

Usually the answers are vague. There is a "something wrong." And this is too bad, also, because while taste is oftentimes not articulate, it would be better for the world if it were. I mean that while there are many who know taste when they see it, and who can express it in their own dresses, there are not many who can express it in words. And the more people there are who can express themselves clearly, the faster the world moves along the paths of clear thinking and clear seeing.

The art of dressing like a lady is, indeed, an art. Like all art its foundation is simplicity. It is the art of linking one's self with the great harmonies. All law is harmony. The world and the suns and the nebulae which are to become worlds and suns move only by harmonious law. So does the lowest creature in the scale of life. When it becomes at odds with the harmonies of law it dies—whether it be lowest creature or greatest solar system. The Great Source of all is harmony, and harmony rules all the way along the tremendous stretch from that Great Source to its smallest manifestation.

Worlds and suns, angels and human beings, pyramids, paintings and dresses are all alike in this one thing—that they must obey the harmonious law. In this all things are really equal. And in the consequences of their disobedience they are equal. In this we have all of existence.

When we say "She dresses like a lady" we really say, "She dresses in harmony with eternal law." When we say "She doesn't dress quite like a lady" we really say "She has not yet mastered the harmonies."

But if she has not mastered the harmonies of dress she has not, in all probability, mastered the harmonies of life. "Fine feathers do not make fine birds" runs the old saw. But fine feathers DO make fine birds—or, to put it in better form—a woman who has mastered the art of fine feathers has actually made herself a fine bird. She could not encompass the harmonies of the one—taking it in the sense of artistic dressing—without moulding her inner self harmoniously at the same time.

It is an art to "dress like a lady" but it is not really a hard art to master. It may seem odd to you to speak of dress the frivolous as a symbol of the soul—but that is really what dress, woman's dress is. If a woman thinks right, thinks truly, without fear or malice or hatred of anything or anyone, she cannot be unhappy. And if she thinks always in this way she cannot be unhappy in her dress. The sense of order, of beautiful simplicity, of harmony that is in her heart will be reflected in her dress. Therefore the first step in acquiring the art of dressing like a lady is to have the heart of a lady—and I use the term not in any sense of social order or social class, but in



A Perfect Example of "Dressing Like a Lady"—An Exquisite Costume of Pervenche Blue Chiffon with the Hoops Covered with Mauve Satin. A Lace Fichu and Yellow Satin Hat

its best sense of the highest manifestation of womanhood.

There are the harmonies of age, the harmonies of figure, the harmonies that we call personal charm, the harmonies of face—all these are part of the harmonies of dress. The first lesson is simplicity. A woman who dresses with entire simplicity—and by this I do not mean crudeness or without a touch of imagination—cannot help dressing like a lady. After she masters this art of simplicity, the control of the first harmonies, she can progress to what I call the acceleration of simplicity. This is the dress that seems simple,

that in its effect is simple—but which is extremely complex in the thought that has gone into it to give it the effect of super-simplicity.

There is the complexity that heaps ornament upon ornament—and this is the complexity that refines and reduces to the subtlest point—and this is the good complexity.

There is one broad rule—if you are in doubt that your dress or hat is inharmonious because of too much ornamentation—too great elaboration—strip it of the doubtful factor. You are seldom in doubt as to whether to add something.

Here I show a few dresses that I believe conform to the formula of dressing like a lady. I have not space to analyze them—that you must do for yourself. They are object lessons.

The large photograph in the centre of the page is from my monthly article in Harper's Bazaar.

This is a perfect example of dressing like a lady. Here every harmony is observed. The dress itself is called "Love's Garden of Roses." It is all of pervenche blue chiffon with the hoops covered with mauve satin. A lace fichu and yellow satin hat complete the picture. Here you do

PHOTO BY BURKE ATWELL, CHI.



A Lady Dress—Apricot Chiffon Tea Gown Over Underdress of Apricot Satin

("Lucile" Models)

not see a jarring note. All is simplicity and harmony. And so it is also in the other photograph. This is an apricot chiffon tea gown, opening over an underdress of apricot satin. Bands of satin, hemstitched in silver, adorn it, and a little spray of flowers is at

the corsage. Here again you see studied and beautiful simplicity. In the little sketch in the left-hand corner is a sample of what has been called "accelerated simplicity." Here a touch of the barbaric has been worked into the creation. Still its simplicity has not been destroyed.