

The True and False Chic

By SEM.



This is the "False Chic," according to Sem.



"The couturiers organize exhibitions of their models in the form of music hall performances, and thereby lead misguided women to wear things unsuitable to them." The other pictures show an exaggerated Parisian type and Sem's idea of the insect that one fashion suggests to him.



"The True Chic," by Sem.



SEM, the most amusing and the most malicious caricaturist of the day in Paris, put forth a new album of clever drawings, published and copyrighted by the "Success" Company, of Paris.

Sem has devoted his pencil in this new work entirely to caricaturing the prevalent fashions in women's dress. He entitles his book, "The True and False Chic," but the examples of the false chic overshadow the true.

In the letterpress accompanying the pictures, Sem says that the prevailing fashions are the ugliest and the most ridiculous the world has ever seen. Women, imagining themselves to be fashionable, make themselves look like strange insects, like clowns, and even like lunatics.

"Paris," he exclaims, "is going through a terrible crisis of bad taste. Fashion is abandoning herself without restraint to the wildest phantasies of a disordered imagination. Some of the great couturiers, it is true, have held themselves aloof from the contagion, but, except for these few select ones, most of the houses pour forth all sorts of eccentricities which are too quickly adopted and circulated. They organize exhibitions of their models in the form of regular music-hall performances, and thereby lead misguided women to wear things that are entirely unsuitable for them."

"Imagine that a wise Parisian resolved to exile himself ten years ago, and went to live among the savages of Central Africa. He comes back to Paris eager to see once more the fair Parisiennes, whose discreet charm and grace he remembers.

"What is his disillusion! In the theatres, the fashionable restaurants, he finds himself among a multitude of bizarre creatures whose inexplicable appearance transfixes him with stupor.

"They appear to him like strange insects immeasurably swollen, beetles, grasshoppers with heavy abdomens and skinny legs and long antennae upon their heads. These queer creatures dance and hop like a swarm of insects in a ray of sunlight.

"While many women have an entomological appearance, others suggest that they have been dressed for a masquerade. The fashion of excessive panniers and volants has given them ridiculous silhouettes that can only be regarded by an artist as a caricature of what woman should look like."



The "Waterfall" Costume of Shell Pink Pussy Willow Taffets, Showing the Bouffant Outline in its Most Extreme Development.

Extremes

By Lady Duff Gordon



The "Clinging Ivy" Costume of Rose Colfax, Showing the Ideal Slender Outline.

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.

By Lady Duff-Gordon

HATS are very high, or very low, silhouettes are very bouffant, or of a flagpole slimmness; gowns are very low cut in front, very high in the back—and so it goes. Extremes meet on every corner and at every tea table. The mademoiselle with the slimmest of the slim outline will be walking on the Bois or sipping tea at the Ritz-Carlton with a matron whose outline is as bouffant as that of a frigate under full sail!

There was never a time when so much latitude was allowed the woman of fashion. In other days all women had to look alike. They all had to wear panniers or else be voted hopelessly dowdy, or they had to wear straight up and down effects—in fact, each goose had to wear what all the other geese wore.

But this awful state of affairs is, happily, over for the nonce. As I have told you ever so many times, never could one be more individual, never could one so satisfactorily choose that style which pleases herself alone, as at present.

I am proving my contentions by sending you two photographs, which are not only proofs, but very forceful proofs, of the "New Freedom." In the charming waterfall costume the draperies are very pronounced, and the effect in the back is very much that of the bustle gowns which some Parisians have tentatively adopted. In this costume the breadth given the upper part of the figure is thoroughly in harmony with the draperies.

But let me tell you that there are some couturiers here in Paris who are combining the bouffant skirt with the tiniest of bodies.

The pretty girl who wears this very charming but extreme-of-its-kind gown will be just as much "in style" as the girl who wears the clinging ivy costume which is developed in rose gossamer, that most delectable of the new fabrics.

To my mind there is a hint of Dorian in this photograph; the clinging swiftness of the drapery and the bouffant pose of the slender figure produce this impression!