

## Modesty Dresses

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.

By Lady Duff-Gordon  
("LUCILE")

I HAVE heard so many people say of this fashion and that fashion, of this dress and that dress, "it is immodest."

I always feel like asking, and, indeed, often do ask these people, "What is your definition of modesty in dress?"

The answers I get are as saddening, as a rule, as they are unintelligent, and I am moved to-day to write a little upon the subject of true modesty in fashion.

Modesty is not a mere matter of covering up the human form. This is what most people seem to think it. There is nothing immodest about the human body if that body is beautiful. There is nothing immodest about anything which will accentuate or draw attention to or interpret the beauty of the human body. "In His own image He made him," says the Bible. And surely there is no one with hardihood enough to say that the Creator could be in any way immodest.

To my mind there is nothing so lacking in modesty as the bathing suits, which some of the Puritan beaches in this country lay upon—I mean the long, loose, hideous, baggy trousers and skirts and blouses that women are forced to wear. These are nothing but sign boards on which a certain type of man has written, "When you look upon these clothes their hideousness will make you think of every immodesty."

On the other hand, there is Pavlova. In some of her dances she wears next to nothing, and yet there is no impression of nudity, or any lack

A Side View of the "Modesty Dress"

of clothing, or of any immodesty. So it is with some women whom you will see at evening gatherings. One woman will be very fully clad, and yet will give you a "strike of the eye," as the French say. I mean that she may appear shockingly vulgar. And another woman with only a third as many clothes will seem absolutely proper, beautifully, harmoniously and charmingly dressed.

What, then, is a modest dress, and what an immodest dress?

An immodest dress is any dress which is ugly. It is any dress which does not interpret beauty.

It is any dress which accentuates or fails to hide any departure in the human body away from the Godlike image in which it was created. It is any dress that shows bad



A "Modesty Dress" of Embroidered Net and Silk. The Fashionable Wide Skirts Are Much in Evidence. ("Lucile" Model)

taste either in color or in line. A modest dress will still be modest even if it is only a few yards of chiffon, so long as it does interpret beauty, and so long as it is harmonious to the wearer.

And a dress will be immodest though it be made of a hundred yards of cloth and show only the top of a woman's toe and her eyes, if it has some of these things I have mentioned.

There enters into immodesty in dress another factor—that of place. A bathing dress which is perfectly proper on the beach will, of course, be "immodest" on Broadway or at a ball. And nothing could be more immodest than a woman walking along a bathing beach

in the same dress which would be perfectly modest at a dance. There is harmony of circumstances and environment which must be obeyed.

There can be no set rules of how low décolleté should be, how much of the arm should be exposed and how much covered; how short or how long dresses should be, nor how tight, nor how wide. For all these things depend upon the dress itself, the wearer and the place she wears it.

The large picture on this page shows you a dress which certainly is a "modesty dress." And yet the ultra-Puritan might object that too much of the shoulder and too much of the arm

is shown. Shoulders and arms are, indeed, covered by nothing but a diaphanous net, through which the whole upper part of the torso shows down to the top of the little bodice covering the breast. Observe how the beautifully plain coiffure harmonises with this display of shoulders and arms and how chaste the whole effect is. Observe the gracious fulness of the skirt and how the whole effect is essentially one of simplicity and modesty. Beside it I show you for further guidance another view of the same dress.

The point that I want to make is that mere covering of the body is not modesty. Be simple in your dress, be harmonious and you will be modest.



A Walking Dress of Blue Duvetyn, with One of the Hats and Parasols to Match ("Lucile" Model)