

ist." This program instructed us as to the proper views that we were expected to take of the costumes paraded before us, as follows:

FOR THE DINNER PARTY.

Topaz.  
Elusive Joy.  
Pleasure's Thrill.  
Red Mouth of a Venomous Flower.

The "Red Mouth of a Venomous Flower" was a harmless, somewhat sheepish-looking girl in a bright scarlet toilet—neither the toilet nor the sensational title suited her. But perhaps the "Cult of Chiffon" presented the most varied and startling phases to a properly receptive mind. Thus it ran:

THE CULT OF CHIFFON.

The Dirge O'er the Death of Pleasure.  
The Fire Motif.  
The Meaning of Life Is Clear.  
Moss and Starlight.  
Incessant Soft Desire.  
A Frenzied Song of Amorous Things.  
A Summer Night Has a Thousand Powers.

Faint gigglings shook the bosoms of the profane as the "Incessant Soft Desire" glided into view, followed by "A Frenzied Song of Amorous Things"—indeed it would have been positively unnatural and inhuman had no one laughed.

Curious to relate, there were quite a large number of "gentlemen" at this remarkable exhibition of feminine clothes, many of them well-known and easily recognizable. Certain *flancours* of Bond-st., various loafers familiar to the Carlton "lounge," and celebrated Piccadilly trotters formed nearly one-half of the audience, and stared with easy insolence at the "Red Mouth of a Venomous Flower," or smiled suggestively at "Incessant Soft Desire." They were invited to stare and smile, and they did it. But there was something remarkably offensive in their way of doing it, and perhaps if a few thick boots worn on the feet of rough but honest workmen had come into contact with their smooth personalities on their way out of Madame Modiste's establishment it might have done them good and taught them a useful lesson. Needless to say that the prices of Madame

Modiste who could set forth such an exhibition of melodramatically designated feminine apparel as "The Night Has a Thousand Eyes" or "Spring's Delirium," were in suitable proportion to "A Frenzied Song of Amorous Things." Such amorous things as are "created" in her establishment are likely to make husbands and fathers know exactly what "a frenzied song" means. When the payment of the bills is concerned, they probably will sing that "frenzied song" themselves.

It is easy to dress well and tastefully without spending a great deal of money. It certainly requires brain, thought, foresight, taste and comprehension of the harmony of colors. But the blind following of a fashion because Madame This or That says it is "*chic*" or "*le dernier cri*" or some parrot-like recommendation of the sort, is mere stupidity on the part of the followers. To run up long credit for dresses, without the least idea how the account ever is going to be paid, is nothing less than a criminal act. It is simply fraud. And such fraud reacts on the whole community. Extravagant taste in dress is infectious. Most of us are impressed by the King's-sensible and earnest desire that the press should use its influence for good in fostering amity and good-will between ourselves and foreign countries.

If the press would use its efforts equally to discourage florid descriptions of dress in their columns, much of the wild and wilful extravagance which frequently is the ruin of otherwise happy homes might be avoided. When Lady A sees her loathed rival Lady B's dress described in half a column of newspaper "gush," she straightway yearns

and schemes for a whole column of the same kind.

When simple country girls read the amazing items of the "toilets" worn by some notorious *demi-mondaine*, they begin to wonder how it is that she has such things, and to speculate as to whether they ever will be able to obtain similar glorified apparel for themselves. And so the evil grows, till by and by it becomes a pernicious disease, and women look superciliously at one another, not for what they are, but merely to estimate the quality and style of what they put on their backs.

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Virtue goes to the wall if it does not wear a fashionable frock. Vice is welcomed everywhere if it is clothed in a Paris "creation." Nevertheless, Ben Jonson's lines still hold good:

Still to be neat, still to be drest,  
As you were going to a feast;  
Still to be powder'd, still perfum'd:  
Lady, it is to be presumed,  
Though art's hid causes are not found,  
All is not sweet, all is not sound.

"All is not sweet, all is not sound" when women think little or nothing of ordering extravagant costumes which they well know they never will be able to pay for, unless through some dishonorable means, such as gambling at "Bridge" for example. Madame Modiste is prepared for such an exigency, for she does not forget to show "creations" in clothes which, she softly purrs, are "suitable for Bridge parties." They possibly may be called: "The Tricky Trump," or "The Dazzling of a Glance Too Long," or "The Deft Impress of a Finger Nail." One never knows!

Any amount of fashion papers find their way into the average British household, containing rabid nonsense, such as the following:

"There were wonderful stories afloat about Miss B's dresses. Rumor has it that a dressmaker came over specially from New-York to requisition the services of the most important artistes in Paris, and gold lace and hand embroidery were used with no frugal hand; yet, despite this and the warm welcome

accorded to her by an English audience, Miss B does not seem to have made up her mind to stay with us long, for it is said the end of June will see the end of her season. We have sketched her in her pink chiffon wrap, which is made in the Empire shape, covered with chiffon and decorated with bunches of pink flowers and green leaves held with bows of pink satin—a most dainty affair full of delicate detail, and preeminently becoming."

"Despite this" is rich indeed. Despite the fact that "gold lace and hand-embroidery" were used "with no frugal hand," Miss B is determined to leave "the gay and glittering scene," and deprive us of her "pink chiffon wrap in the Empire shape!" A positively disastrous conclusion! Nay, but harken to the maudlin murmurs of the crazed worshippers of Mumbo-jumbo "Fashion":

"Do you yearn for a gray muslin dress? Half my 'smart girl' acquaintances are buying gray muslins as though their lives depended on it. I feel in love with one of them that was in *bouilloné* gathers all around the skirt to within eight inches of the hem, while the yoke had similar but smaller *bouillonés* run through, well below the shoulder-line, with a wide *chine* ribbon knotted low in front. Beneath this encircling ribbon the bodice pouched in blouse fashion over a *chine* waist-ribbon to match, with long pendant ends one side; the sleeves were a distinct novelty, being set in a number of small puffs below one big one, a *chine* ribbon being knotted around the arm between each puff."

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"Do you 'yearn' for a gray muslin dress?" Oh, ye gods! One is reminded of a comic passage in the "Artemus Ward" papers, where it is related how a woman of the "Free Love" persuasion rushed at the American humorist, brandishing a cotton umbrella and crying out: "Dost thou not yearn for me?" to which adoration Artemus replied, while he dodged the umbrella: "Not a yearn!"

"I should like," says one of the poor, imbecile "dress" devotees, "the skirt finished off with a wadded hem, or perhaps a few folds of satin; but otherwise it should be left severely plain. These satin, brocade or velvet dresses should stand or fall by their own merits, and never at any time be over-elaborated."

True! And is it "a wadded hem" or a padded room that should "finish off" these people who spread the madness of clothes far and wide till it becomes a positively dangerous and immoral infection? One wonders! For there is no

more mischievous wickedness in society to-day than the flamboyant, exuberant, wilful extravagance of women's dress.

It has far exceeded the natural and pretty variety of permissible charm, good taste and elegance; it has become a riotous waste, an ugly disease of moral principle ending at last in the disgrace and death of many a good woman's name.

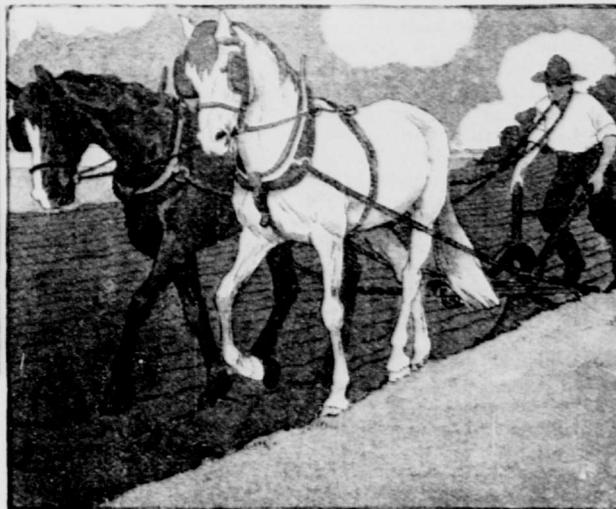
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["Coward Adam" next Sunday.]

## HER CONFESSION

By Kate M. Cleary

SHE had heard the Bible story of the world when all was young, of Adam and Eve and the apple, and the serpent's siren tongue, of the wrath that swift descended, of the joys we must forego, and of that fair, lost Eden, whose peace we might never know! She looked around the nursery, and her face that had been so glad lost all its bonny radiance, and wistful grew—and sad. She looked at her dolls and dishes, at the books she loved the best, at the doll that was blind and broken, and dearer than all the rest. "Poor woman!" The drooping lashes did wet and sweet uncurl. "I'm 'mostest sorry because her—was never a little dill!"

## IN THE FURROW



By Lewis Worthington Smith

Let me follow in the furrow while you turn the black soil over,  
Let me breathe the smell of Mother Earth I have not known so long.  
Here last summer through the sun and rain grew timothy and clover,  
Here again I feel my heart alive with all the joy of song.  
Though I come each spring-returning to the same instinctive rapture,  
It could never be more wonderful a transport than to-day.  
Let me follow in the furrow that my heart may so recapture  
The dreams that chased the swallow's flight and lost it far away.

Not the perfume of the violet or hyacinth or lily  
Can be sweeter, in the magic of the wonders that should be,  
When my boyish dreaming thought the world one golden daffodilly  
Blown for no one but myself to pluck, and no one else to see.  
Not the breath of any fragrance can be sweeter to my fancy  
Than the smell of earth the plowshare turns against the sun of May.  
Let me follow in the furrow while I feel the necromancy  
Of dreams that chased the swallow's flight and lost it far away.

Let me feel the early passions and the primal instincts thrilling  
Every deadened inspiration of the plowshare and the sod,  
Till the warm, moist earth with ecstasy my eager soul is filling,  
Such as led my steps in boyhood when the plowman's path I trod.  
Here the corn shall lift its greenness while the rain-washed winds blow over,  
Till it bears the wealth of summer where the dark stalks droop and sway.  
Let me follow in the furrow, every sense an idle rover,  
With dreams that chased the swallow's flight and lost it far away.