

SUBTLE DISTINCTION IN PARIS BETWEEN CHIC AND DOG

Both Pronounced Indefinable, but if a Woman Has Either She Does Not Need to Be Beautiful

Paris, March 29.—"If a girl cannot have dog, let her have chic," says Count Boni de Castellane.

It is easy to preach. Count Boni was born chic, men don't have dog, though fashions of it have been conceded to Henry Batolle and Theodore Roosevelt. But how is a girl to acquire either? A working girl may be born with chic innate in her, and a rich man's child may be chock-full of the best dog. And there you are. "I would define dog," says Mile. Mistinguette in her lectures on worldly misanthropes, "I would define dog as something indefinable."

Mile. Lender, in her Odeon conference, explains chic as: "A definite something which it is impossible to define."

Quite true. Each subtle analyst might be her own best illustration, though she cites Mile. Polaire for dog and Cecile Sorel for chic, not without reason. Gaby Deslys is supposed to have both qualities. Chic may go hand in hand with beauty, but requires no charm, and admits unlovely hauteur. Dog almost excludes beauty, almost includes charm, and is never without cozy good fellowship in looks and dress; mind you, not in manner. Dog cannot be put on.

Like chic, dog may carry beauty.



A millionaire's daughter may be born full of the best dog.

It is of little consequence. These are higher qualities than beauty. Why, chic and dog are at the bottom of style itself. They can adorn girls on a desert island; but, certainly, without one or the other of them the Rue de la Paix becomes as dry ashes in the mouth, and the styles a baffling, servile masquerade.

So do not underrate my janitor's daughter. She has a janitor of her own now.

There is always promotion for good taste in dress," she says, which sums the thing up and is essentially encouraging.

"When I went to work as sewing girl at Paquin's," says my janitor's daughter, "I was considered fortunate in the quarter. My position, though humble, gave me opportunity to dress correctly. On the street it pleased me to note the envious approval of other women that a successful costume always calls forth."

What Parisian Men Admire.

"And the admiration of the men was instructive. From it I came to learn that the Parisian man admires the smartly fitting, ahead of date, worn in a chic way more than the woman in it."

"This queen among women is not regularly beautiful, it should be explained.

"At Paquin's," she continued, "I worked on the newest fabrics, saw the newest shades. I came in contact with the most celebrated women of Paris—fashionable and aristocratic ladies and actresses and professional beauties.

"At home I was a personage. All the



A working girl may be born with chic.

girls and their mothers courted me for tips. They came with their crooked, lumpy jackets that would not go and their skirts that would not hang. . . . But wait. Do not forget I had my home. Should any American girl dream of coming to Paris to study dressmaking let her bring a good supply of money with her. She must not hope to support herself while gaining the first knowledge.

Genius is, now and then, unconscious. Notice how she assumes that any one can pick up the art of sublime dressmaking, given entrance to the right school and time to profit by it.

As a fact, she began as an apprentice in a little establishment of the Rue du Colisée, and recommends such debuts to newcomers. There are always between forty and fifty apprentices at Paquin's, Worth's, Doucet's and Redfern's, many of them foreigners, English and Austrian girls in particular.

"They calculate that they will be gaining reputation while they learn," she explained. "It is to be hoped they do, because if they come knowing nothing they learn only what they can pick up. Working together in pairs, the little hands do only what the hands tell them. At Paquin's, when I was in the workrooms, I could not but pity those poor little hands who had worked themselves up from apprentices. No one taught them.

Earned 15 Cents a Day.

"If they were started on corsets they stayed on corsets. The premieres and secondes—great ladies to us—stood all day in front of the mirrors admiring themselves. They never dreamed of troubling with the education of apprentices."

The foundation of her technical education was laid in that little place of the Rue du Colisée where she worked six months for nothing. Its "patronne" was a good and charming woman, making clothes for a few rich families of the Champs Elysees. Both she and her two "premieres" did their best to push on their four apprentices, and at the end of six months this young Parisian, with all her natural chic, was earning 15 cents a day.

Six months later she got 25 cents a day. At the end of two years she was a full worker at 50 cents a day, where she stuck—as all must stick. I was a complete couturiere (journeywoman dressmaker)," she says, "and those were my wages—50 cents a day, without food or lodging; nowadays the pay has gone up, along with food and rent, say 20 per cent. all along the line."

She entered Paquin's workrooms at

95 cents a day without food. She was one among 300 hands, and little hands, earning between \$1 a day and 60 cents a day of ten hours, with 15 cents an hour for overtime. In all such great establishments they work overtime half the year

and reduce the force the other half. There were in addition some sixty apprentices, most of them expert dressmakers. They had slipped in to pick up information, or, rather, to say that they had worked for a famous house.

"In truth we saw details rather than general effects, which are realized only in the parlors," she says. "We saw the new trimmings, new tissues, shades, combinations, buttons, linings and new devices for giving new appearances. I shall never forget when the straight front corset came in. I was only a young girl still, but I said, with most of my companions, 'That corset will never succeed.' Perhaps it was two weeks later before we saw the mannequins wearing them. Then we understood."

One day they discovered that the janitor's child had a figure, "and my real life began," she says.

Willow Girls Sans Energy.

Not that she was a born mannequin—one of those dreamy, willow girls without energy who are content just to wear clothes till something happens; but it got her into the parlors.

"The salesladies also stand around in attitudes," she laughs now. "I found it another world. Having a figure and a knowledge of English I was promoted to the position of talking mannequin, replying to customers, assisting, very discreetly, in making sales, and particularly in keeping customers patient, at \$3 per month 'and the table.' I had my lunch and dinner with the saleswomen, the mannequins and my old task mistress, the premieres and secondes of the workrooms. I think my greatest immediate satisfaction was to be no longer screamed at by those latter."

"Screamed at?"

"From morning to midnight! The workroom of a great Paris dressmaking establishment is full of hysteria, but temper, hatred and haste, to the point of madness. Every fashionable customer expects to be served first. Every moment there are impassioned demands for this skirt and that corset. But in the salesrooms all is calm, beautiful and dignified.

"Elegant messieurs wait in them patiently, entertaining the mannequins, while the ladies they escort are trying on. A girl must be vivified by dress as a flower by the sun, or she won't last

great retail modistes. What will he get? Nothing. The great modistes have shown him all they have. They can't give him something different. Their whole trade each season is to combine, realize and illustrate the forms and trimmings prepared for the season by the great wholesale manufacturers for the 'exclusive' trade.

So with the dressmakers. They do not make the styles. Behind great Jove were shadowy gods who let him do the fancy governing on Olympus, but kept the fundamental direction of things to themselves. So when Lyons speaks the famous dressmakers tremble. When Etouffé and the Rue du Sentier are discontented something has got to happen. It is not so marked as with the hats, but the great silk and cloth manufacturers, when they agree, can always put pressure on the so-called arbiters of styles.

Wanted the Trouser Skirt.

And there is another shadowy element—the hour and the epoch. The Paris public really wanted trouser skirts and the dressmakers wanted to make them. Yet neither trouser skirts nor pashoon skirts nor harem skirts could possibly become the style.

The technical style designer's work is well known.

"Mme. Paquin herself works according to the 'bouquet school,'" says the girl who was once with her. "With piles of the latest tissues, tints and trimmings scattered before her she chooses, combines, compares, tries effects, not knowing what is going to come, as one builds up a bouquet. The other is the architectural school, where the designer starts out knowing what he wants—generally some modification of an old style—and draws it on paper. Then they see if the new stuffs will stand it."

Any one who can find an idea is rewarded for it.

"The front cut in the hem was worth \$100 to a little sewing girl," says my janitor's daughter.

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makers are always hiding their new models from each other, spying and counterspying. A trusted employee sells a secret, but it is a false secret got up to fool the bribing rival. Another sells a real secret—but how is he sure it is real?

They never come to an understanding. The Utopian 'Academy of Style' recently described (in advance) by a United States consular agent, never got any further. And, according to my fair informant, such frank style making by committees of dressmakers, manufacturers and famous painters and sculptors, would be deplorable. It would work against originality, inspiration and chic.

"Yes," I said, "but who makes the big changes?"

She did not know.

"They are vaguely in the air," she said. "They come like a flash to a single designer and leak out and are adopted with frasca. Or they may dawn on a dozen style designers at the same time and at-

tain the vogue tranquilly. The fashionable women of Paris must ratify. What they choose becomes the style."

"But they can only choose among the models presented to them?"

"Obviously."

"And the great dressmakers who employ the style designers can only follow the tendencies which the great manufacturers impose on them by making the best of their novelties?"

"Yes," she smiled.

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"Yes," I said, "but who makes the big changes?"

She did not know.

"They are vaguely in the air," she said. "They come like a flash to a single designer and leak out and are adopted with frasca. Or they may dawn on a dozen style designers at the same time and at-

tain the vogue tranquilly. The fashionable women of Paris must ratify. What they choose becomes the style."

"But they can only choose among the models presented to them?"

"Obviously."

"And the great dressmakers who employ the style designers can only follow the tendencies which the great manufacturers impose on them by making the best of their novelties?"

"Yes," she smiled.

"Then all depends on the chic of the manufacturers?"

"Given form by the chic of the style designers who are —"

"Restrained by the chic of the great

dreammakers —"

"Constrained by the chic of the surrounding atmosphere —"

"And sustained by the fashionable public."

"Exactly."

great retail modistes. What will he get? Nothing. The great modistes have shown him all they have. They can't give him something different. Their whole trade each season is to combine, realize and illustrate the forms and trimmings prepared for the season by the great wholesale manufacturers for the 'exclusive' trade.

So with the dressmakers. They do not make the styles. Behind great Jove were shadowy gods who let him do the fancy governing on Olympus, but kept the fundamental direction of things to themselves. So when Lyons speaks the famous dressmakers tremble. When Etouffé and the Rue du Sentier are discontented something has got to happen. It is not so marked as with the hats, but the great silk and cloth manufacturers, when they agree, can always put pressure on the so-called arbiters of styles.

Wanted the Trouser Skirt.

And there is another shadowy element—the hour and the epoch. The Paris public really wanted trouser skirts and the dressmakers wanted to make them. Yet neither trouser skirts nor pashoon skirts nor harem skirts could possibly become the style.

The technical style designer's work is well known.

"Mme. Paquin herself works according to the 'bouquet school,'" says the girl who was once with her. "With piles of the latest tissues, tints and trimmings scattered before her she chooses, combines, compares, tries effects, not knowing what is going to come, as one builds up a bouquet. The other is the architectural school, where the designer starts out knowing what he wants—generally some modification of an old style—and draws it on paper. Then they see if the new stuffs will stand it."

Any one who can find an idea is rewarded for it.

"The front cut in the hem was worth \$100 to a little sewing girl," says my janitor's daughter.

They are seeking, experimenting, whispering in fifty jealous secretive groups, and it is a wonder how any radically new style is arrived at. The great dress-

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