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# Clothes & the Woman



**T**he purposes of wearing apparel are three in number. It would seem that they may be placed in the following order of importance: (1) for women—to bring admiration to the hearts of men and envy to the hearts of other women; (2) for the great dressmaking industry to provide meat, mansions, and motor-cars; (3) for men—to provide a shield against the weather.

The case may thus be summarized: Clothes and the Woman, Trade fit for Heroes to live on, and Arms and the Mau.

Some people appear to think that man is the slave of woman, and woman is the slave of her dressmaker. It would, perhaps, be more accurate to say that man and the dressmaker are more or less fixed stars, while woman is an eternally moving one, alternately swaying and being swayed by the other two.

The dressmaker started the vogue of the neck, breast, back, and legs being thrown open to public view. There success was for him. But does anyone suppose for a moment that he would succeed if he tried now to close this exhibition? No. And that is where woman is in turn successful.

You may disagree with the above. You may insist that it was woman who decided, and always decides, the nature of her garments, and that the dressmaker is but a pawn in her game. You may say that when Eve ate the apple she was naked, and that all she thought fit to wear thereafter was a fig-leaf, and that now she is slowly, but surely, making her way back (not to say forward) to that fig-leaf. Well, so be it. I shall not argue about it. I only hope I shall live long enough.

Apropos of Eve, there is one great truth that her daughters never forget, and her sons too often lose sight of: the nude is Eden undefiled, while the demi-nude is the Tempter with all his guile. Some men prefer it that way; others are too old to bother anyway.

Moreover, what does she buy? If she is a siren of generous proportions, she probably buys a feathered hat and a white crêpe-de-Chine dinner-gown. She does not buy that hat to look like a bird, or that gown to look like an angel. She buys them because she is told that they are "so ridiculously cheap." If she is a tiny sylph, she will probably buy a fur coat that stretches to her feet and would hold two of her, not because she wants to look like a teddy bear, but because it is "almost given away."

**Y**ou may think I am wrong. You may point out that the woman's clothes do proclaim the man, for the reason that a rich man can spend proportionately more money on clothes than a poor man. It may seem so—to the uninitiated. But, believe me, a beautifully dressed woman only indicates a prosperous dressmaker, and not a prosperous husband.

The present-day virgin (woman) is much more concerned about trimming herself than her lamp. She has discovered the simple fact that the more charmingly she trims herself, the more easy will it be for her to find the man who will not only pay for the trimming, but also open the door to such Earthly Paradise as her heart craves for.

One of those statistician fellows asserts that if all women were compelled to dress alike, all the hospitals and 99 per cent. of the private houses in the world would have to be turned into lumatic asylums.

He may be right. It would probably be as demoralising for one sex as for the other. We may take it that the odd one per cent. are those houses occupied by the blind, the deaf, and the dumb.

It is a well-known adage that "Knowledge is Power." Men agree with it. Women do so also when the knowledge is about some other woman. It is, however, the adage "Dress is Power" that appeals above all others to women. Yet

*We should not be proud of the clothes we wear;*

*They're all second-hand, as we know;*

*For a plant or an animal, insect or bird,*

*Has worn them before, long ago.*

*By "Celt," in "Woman."*

Your cough sounds bad and needs prompt cure.

Neglected lungs you'll surely rue. Of all unwise delays beware.

What millions take is good for you.

Why suffer still and perhaps grow worse?

A night of ease you may assure: Don't sneer and doubt and be perverse—

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