

AT A MAN-MILLINER'S.

Monsieur Trois-Etoiles' admirers and customers (the terms are by no means synonymous, for admiration is cheap, and Monsieur Trois-Etoiles' dresses are costly) base their reverent regard on loftier reasons than the mere fashion of the moment. They believe in Monsieur's mission—a regenerative one—in the matter of trains, and underskirts, and *polonaises*. They consider that a male reformer was necessary, averring that women's minds are too absorbed by the study of details to be able to regulate the general principles of costume: they consider that Monsieur deserves his celebrity, his irreproachable horses, that Swiss villa at Enghien, all the moral and material harvest he has reaped, by real services rendered to the art of self-decoration. We, who judge these novices by their outward effect, are biased in our conclusions by a mean prospective of other results—bills whose totals invariably contain four figures. This is unworthy of us, I have been assured. Monsieur is an artist, and should be judged from a purely artistic point of view. 'See his atelier, (who would dare call it a shop or work-room?) examine his studies in the rough, unrequited by any fear of paying for them; and Monsieur will have one traducer the less. Such are the theories and recommendation of the Comtesse O Tempora and Maréchale O Mores. Would I, if converted, make public renunciation of the normal masculine faith? Not march to Notre Dame in the simple attire (it was but a sheet) of ancient apostates, but, according to that more terrible modern practice, put my recantation into black and white? I would. Monsieur did not receive his customers' husbands, brothers, and fathers as a rule; but the Comtesse and Maréchale are all powerful in the atelier, and an exception was made in my favour.

We pass through a double door; we mount a padded staircase, hung with silk, heated like a conservatory capable of raising pines, and smelling of *poudre de riz*. Evergreens to right and left make a dwarf avenue of the staircase. There are flowers in hanging corbels—camellias and lilies; there is an eternal ascending and descending procession of pretty women: briefly we mount Jacob's ladder. And the ladder leads to pleasant places. On the first-floor there is a busy, noiseless coming and going, the flutter and *frou-frou* of femininity, and still that perfume of flowers that neither sew nor spin, but simply deal at Monsieur Trois-Etoiles, and find that function arduous enough. On either side folding doors were opened wide, and in and out passed young girls, whose figures presented fantastic out-lines, being clad in the costumes of six months hence—whose heads were strange and wonderful with unpublished chignons. These horribly progressive damsels speeded the parting customers with polite assurances of quick delivery, welcomed the coming with nice little ready-made phrases of delight and surprise. The excessive, the hyperbolic was cultivated in speech, as well as in manner and dress. The blondes were too blonde, and made one wink with their splendour, the brunes were too sombre, and depressed the observer. There was no medium between the milk-maid's kirtle and the duchess's train. The skirts had a superabundance of plaits, or none at all. It was a panorama of fashion plates of 1883. In the first saloon sat the secretary, perched on a small platform, and ticking down every visitor that entered, the orders given, and the dates when mesdames must positively have that *falbala* or this *cotillon*. Here the Maestro is occasionally to be found bowing in his clients like a prince of the blood royal. To-day he is absent *en consultation*, it is whispered. We traversed three or four large saloons, furnished with a quiet taste that, to some minds, did the great man milliner rather more credit than most of the garments he has named and patented. Broad oak tables were in the centre of the rooms, and spread out upon them cuttings of pink, green, yellow, and black fabrics, interspersed with delicate laces and exquisite specimens of the artificial floriculturist's art, in garlands, bouquets, and trimmings. Everywhere the same subdued, decidedly genteel agitation reigned. Ladies—foreigners for the most part, and the noisiest persons present—were choosing stuffs and patterns, served by serene, abstracted, and dignified young gentlemen, who made discreet inquiries concerning 'the next article,' like so many dukes in reduced circumstances. No bustle, no verbosity or insistence. At times myrmidons came and questioned the young noblemen in rigid frock-coats as to a shade, a measurement, a combination of colours or stuffs, a novelty in trimming, a heresy in shapes; and the youths dropped a brief, dignified, disinterested answer, with the air of sullen bards divorced from the ideal. And silently to and fro passed the gracious young girls with novel chignons, dressed in black, and trailing through the saloon skirts that were veritable models, practical examples of Monsieur's art. I surmised that a wise trade policy dictated their presence. They were living temptations for the *clientes*, plastic realisations of what a pair of scissors would make of these cuttings on the tables. By studying those animated and perambulating canons of taste, the dullest Teuton, the most primitive Transatlantic possessor of newly-struck 'ile,' could choose her *pouff*, her bodice, her sash, without thereby exposing herself to the derision of the boulevard. The choice might be rendered quite perfect and Parisian by a consultation with a formidably dignified lady between two ages, as the French phrase politely describes the predicament into which we must all fall unless the gods love us, to whom I was told to bow as the *genus loci*. But she was frigid. Monsieur's establishment is uniformly iced to several degrees below zero—and she would have been a more than ordinarily bold Columbian who had dared solicit that ducal dame's advice in the matter of stuffs and *façons*. She is the *Première*, the chief forewoman; a terrible authority, and a lady whose lessons in deportment would make the fortune of any young ladies' seminary. The hundred richest wardrobes in Paris have no secrets that she does not share. She knows when Lady A's green silk was turned; she knows every item on the glove budget of the Princess B. A lady to propitiate. Monsieur was still invisible. We advanced in search of him into the farthestmost saloon, where on wonderfully lifelike manikins are hung the complete toilettes, perfected a day or two ago, and ready for delivery. Monsieur gives his private view no less than the contributors to the *Salon*, and in a studio that will quite bear comparison with the comfortable barns of the Rue des Martyrs. The walls are one vast sheet of looking-glass, and I reflect head, shoulders, and unto the last inches of the trains. From morning to night groups of well-bred enthusiasts collect around the studies, and the fumes of most delicate incense rise into the illustrious Trois Etoiles' nostrils. The more extravagant costumes are generally labelled for Germany, when not, it must be said, for England. The simple

creations—not quite Arcadian even these!—remain in Paris. They are studied, arranged, worked up like a five-act drama, and cost rather more—two hundred francs the stuff, six or eight hundred francs the make, or, as Monsieur's artists say, the composition. The ecstasies excited by these regenerative conceptions are almost delirious: there are breathless fits of admiration, mute rhapsodies before the decorated manikins; everything else has disappeared for the worshippers—waltzes, balls, husbands, children, lovers; the Antinous himself—above all, the Antinous would shrink into insignificance beside these pendent rags. And we grope reverently in the plaits to discover how the vaporous scarf that floats behind is attached under the sash, the primitive *raison d'être* of the founce, the secret of the mystic marriage of Epaulette with Bodice. It is enthralling, and quite as intellectual as our daily drive round the Lac. The *Première* stands before her masterpieces, and modestly receives the felicitations of the spectators. The only drawback to the triumph is that the masterpieces in question cannot go into decent society in the character of their present possessors. La *Première* feels this sorely; 'but then we can see them at the Opera,' is the comforting reflection suggested to her. A moving tempest of tulle, Chinese crape, and lace passes before us, borne aloft at arm's length by damsels, who disappear in its clouds. That is Madame O Tempora's dress, and the Comtesse disappears to try it on behind folding doors, through the chinks of which a white vivid light is streaming. We are left during the trying-on process in a genteel chaos of discreet young ladies, clients, and clerks. The Maestro is still invisible, but he is replaced by a young man, small, spare, and active, who dances from point to point in the midst of clerks, customers, fleuristes, show-women, cutters-out, &c., ejaculating orders in dubious French, like a well-bred but epileptic clown.

At last I am informed that the first stages of the trying-on process are over. We can penetrate into the illuminated sanctuary. The sanctuary is rather like the *coulisses* of a minor theatre. The windows are bricked up, enormous glasses are affixed to the walls. The centre of the room is void; around it on a species of counter, on sofas, chairs, and ottomans, are odds and ends of stuff, flowers, ribbons, shreds of tulle, spangles, beads:—the costumier's room before a new ballet or burlesque. A row of footlights fitted with movable shades serves in lieu of chandelier, keeping the upper part of the room in shadow, and illuminating the person and the toilette under examination as they ought to be illuminated in every decent ball-room. Here is Madame O Tempora, receiving the shower of electric light, bare necked, though it is not later than 2 P. M. without, with a complacent equanimity that says a good deal for the strength of her nervous system. A young woman is kneeling before her, pinning up an invisible plait in the bodice, festooning a new 'effect' (amongst other ameliorations Monsieur has reformed the dress-maker's phraseology; it is now highly artistic and picturesque) at the side. Under the raised arms little girls pass to and fro, handing strips of muslin, flowers and pin-boxes. A shred or flower is taken now and then, and plastered, with the decision of sudden inspiration, on the skirt. It is a dress rehearsal. Three times already the illustrious Trois-Etoiles has been sent for. Three times, with the air of a veteran victor at the decisive moment of a hot engagement, La *Première* hath half opened an inner door to announce that the Maestro is about to appear. He is near at hand, in the next room, bestowing a consultation on a lady with an eyeglass, apropos of a newly-made magnificent costume, which he considers his *chef-d'œuvre*. He is right. I cast an indiscreet glance into the adjoining room when the door opens, and I must allow that the composition in question is a very poem, a piece of the wardrobe of Utopia. A dress of white *fage*, ornamented with *points de Venise*, so intertwined and involved as to make the masculine brain giddy; the corsage is cut square: the whole is rich, and withal simple. It would befit a sofa and novel at home, and not to be out of place at the Orleans' garden-parties at Chantilly. The doors open wide, the Maestro appears. His person is disappointing, though undeniably Britannic. He is a pink and white dapper man, with fat and shiny face; his hair parted in the middle; his moustache pendent, and highly oleaginous.

A thick white throat enclosed by a fawn-coloured ribbon, a tight-fitting frock-coat, a chronic smile, a bow that does not incline his body—these are the descriptive items remarked by a cursory observer of the great Trois-Etoiles. His voice is strong and high; his accent is boldly insular. He looks round with an absent air, then suddenly speaks. He has seen at a glance what is missing in Madame O Tempora's toilette. The train has been drawn out carefully to its full length before his arrival. 'What are you thinking of, Esther? Madame's figure must have nothing but draperies. Too low in the neck. An *épaulette en biais*. A *suçon* to the right at the hip. Take half that bouquet at the breast away. And do you go to Trouville this year, madame?' His manner is easy, assured, and well-bred. He has genius of a certain kind, undeniable tact, and imperturbable *sang froid*. And I think he believes in his mission. He will not dress every one. He would not bestow a glance on those clumsy Germans in the first room. I hear he refuses to make for a certain popular actress, because she does not share his ideas of the capabilities of her figure, and wants her dresses too low. He converses in English with old docile trusted customers like Madame O Mores, and for her he consents to give a little professional exhibition. A messenger is despatched to remote regions, and presently the folding-doors are thrown open, and two young ladies enter, preceding an extraordinary apparition. A slight damsel, whom the master calls Mary, a dark-eyed English girl, with that indescribable air known as *vispa* in Italian, *lisa* in Spanish, *espégle* or *déliuré* in French, and perhaps 'wideawake' in English, advances erect and haughty, dressed as a rainbow. Like a queen of comedy she places herself in the strong white light of the foot-lamps. The electric rays smite on multitudinous scales and spangles. She glitters from head to foot like a pillar of golden ore, or like a stalactite. The exhibition has been noised through the rooms, and visitors and employés gather at the doorway, and mount on chairs to obtain a better view. Happily, Mary is not timid. She turns, bends, takes a few steps, dragging that rainbow train after her, never smiling, never heeding the spectators, simply fulfilling a mission. A noble duchess is to wear the costume at an Italian fancy ball. The corsage is made with basques, cut according to the fashion of the middle ages; it is covered with golden scales, and seems to explode under the converging lights. On the chest there is a rainbow garland; the skirt is in tulle, very long, with iris colours on the flounces. The head-dress is high, with a firmament of stars set on a field of the same prismatic hues. The fan and shoes are to match, even the gloves, even the

comb. The allegory is conscientiously studied in all its details. Monsieur remains cool in the midst of wild enthusiasm. His is the composed demeanour of a successful author. He has retired behind the counter, and salutes, without bending, the noble company at the door. Miss Mary stoops slightly. Four little girls advance bearing a pile of lilac satin. The rainbow disappears, falls suddenly; and on the simple black costume left apparent, in a moment, as though by enchantment or Porte St. Martin machinery, the dress of an Incroyable is elaborated. An Incroyable à la Watteau, with a species of coat in lilac satin, with long tails, enormous breast-flaps in pink satin. The skirt is in lilac tulle, studded with small bouquets. A tall hat in grey felt, garnished with a big posy of roses and feathers, towers on the head. A long iron-grey veil, delicate pistache, green gloves, and lilac satin slippers with pink bows, complete the costume. And Miss Mary takes a tall gold-headed cane from the hand of an attendant, and poses before us a perfect Thermidorienne. We are enthusiastic; the ladies emit little shrill shrieks; but the Maestro remains iced, and receives compliments with an indifference replete with a deep eternal melancholy.

This is what I beheld under the guidance of Mesdames O Tempora and O Mores. I dare not express my personal opinion after that experience. I respect Monsieur. His tender melancholy impresses me. But is he an eminently moral and useful institution? EVELYN JERROLD.

GEORGE SAND.

George Sand has been spending some days in Paris. She keeps a *pied à terre*, a small apartment, and has for years, at the French capital, so that she is quite as much at home here as at Nahant, which is twelve hours distant. She is now seventy years old. She attends the theatres, writes plays, and seems to be as enraptured with the mimic scenes as forty years ago, when she disguised herself in male attire to be self-protecting; when she roamed about the streets at night; or, for economy's sake, when she promenaded the Quai St. Michel with her first lover, Jules Landeau. Such an age since then! Alfred de Musset is dead, and so is Frederick Chopin, with the latter of whom she passed eight years of her life, and whose music inspired 'Consuelo.' Nobody would think now, to see Jules Landeau, fat and grey-haired and small-eyed, married and happy, and a member of the French Institute—one of the Immortal Forty—that he was once a broken-hearted youngster, believing the world false because a woman abandoned him for a 'handsomer man,' and trudging along toward the Mediterranean coast friendless and homeless, dreaming to drown his sorrows in the blue waters of that inhospitable sea. And one would hardly think to see George Sand now, with the heaviness of age in her face, that she has been the grand hope and despair of so many men. As much as she formerly seemed to enjoy the admiration of the world, she now avoids it, so that she has the reputation of being a complete savage toward strangers who have a curiosity to see her. Her son Maurice made a very happy marriage with a daughter of the eminent Milan engraver, Calamatti. Like his mother he is artist, poet, musician, writer. Her daughter Solange married, about sixteen or eighteen years ago, a clever sculptor named Clesinger, unfortunately his violence of temper, aggravated by drunkenness, forced her to return to her mother, with a child, a lovely little girl whom the grandmother adores. The great romancer lives with her children and grandchildren, and if any living woman has an eventful past to look back upon and entertain her old days, it is she. She made a law unto herself and followed it, regardless of all established canons. But she never lost her self-respect, and seems always to have ennobled with the honest and loyal base of her character and the richness of her genius whatever she did, was it fault or an indiscretion. Her history of her life, in twenty volumes, is her most remarkable work, but while it is full of most interesting and charming details of her inner and outer life, it is by no means confessional, and throws no light whatever upon several phases and experiences the world would like to know the exact truth about, as it fancies that people of genius are influenced by ways and means common mortals are ignorant of. Her house at Nahant is said to be anything but imposing. One sees considerable needlework, drawings, sketches, &c., all of home talent. At eleven o'clock she breakfasts with her family, embraces her son, and presses the hand of each one present. Her table is abundant and delicate. She eats with appetite, and indulges in coffee morning and night. Silent and grave, she loves better to listen than to talk, and she is a most sympathetic listener. When she gives herself up to the general fun no one exceeds her in laughter and repartee. Her house is old, being hardly worthy the name of château, and is the very same in which her accomplished grandmother, the illegitimate daughter of the Marshal de Saxe and the Countess Aurore de Koenigsmark, reared her.

ROMANCE IN THE TREASURY.

A correspondent says: 'I am acquainted with a lady who writes Spenserian pages in the Patent Office at Washington for \$900 a year. Her father was a naval officer of long and meritorious service, and died a rear admiral. Her husband put \$70,000 on the wrong side of the stock sale in New York, lost, sneaked to the hereafter through the back-door of the suicide. Patient and lovable, she works as steadily as if some mighty reward were near at hand. I suppose it is hope on, hope ever, with her, though nobody can see anything she has to expect more than a life of routine and an humble grave. In Paris she would have flown first to the streets and then to the charcoal brazier. In London it would have been the Argyll Rooms, gin, and the waters of Blackfriars Bridge. As you pass the tables of the ladies in the Treasury building you are moving among better materials for romances than exist in the teeming brains of Hugo or Turgeneff. 'You see that second woman to your left,' whispered Spinner. 'Her father was once at the head of two railroads. The '57 panic laid him out. She married a Baden baron, and he left her in a year or two for some Dutch flame. She has a noble little boy, five years old now. Says she is going to fit him for Harvard by and by, and then make a Senator of him. Watch her count that money. You cannot move your fingers up and down in the air as fast as she brushes off the single notes. Never did a day's work of any kind in her life till she came here.'