

How American Tenderiness Has Won Over Dame Fashion

Now the Centers of Fashion Have Put Aside
Real Wings and Feathers.



Toque
Entirely of Tobacco
Colored Plume
(Imitation Birdskin)
Ornamented with Two
Branches of Burnt
Fancy.

BY STERLING HEILIG.
PARIS, Jan. 28.—(Special Correspondence.)—This is not a fashion story.

Huh! A fashion story! It is something grander and nobler. It is a narration of America's triumph over a principality and pomp and throne against which all the governments of Europe confessed themselves impotent—the invisible, intangible and brooding power of styles.

We were told it, we knew it, we saw it—all the empty and vapid rich women of the world, all dreaming, longing and struggling for the same thing; bah! but that is nothing, the good women also, charitable and compassionate, tender of others, women of brain and soul, great organizers, great capacities, the noblest of their sex, and also just nice women, who are makers of the home, and all hard-working girls—all mad alike to be alike and marching, marching, breathless to keep up with the procession; marching, all together, to the unheard commands of a mysterious, invisible commander, supposed to be in Paris.

Suddenly a wireless message strikes their souls in August—and they all sit on their felt hats, in the heat. Or in February they hear an unuttered order—and they come out in straw hats and Spring clothes!

"I'm an autocrat," explained the Czar of Russia, apropos of the tango, "but I dare not buck against the veiled prophet of fashion!"

All right. The veiled prophet has received a jolt.

Rude, uncouth United States customs examiners, boarding the transatlantic liners, tore out from simply beautiful hats the stunning aigrettes and suave parades that had cost their wearers up to \$200 a throw. Or they said: "Madame, we will not molest your hat if you desire to send it back to Europe, where you got it. But America has passed a law protecting wild birds martyred for their plumage."

You know all about it. What you do not know, perhaps, is England's admirable following of our example. A bill is before Parliament "to prevent the importation of feathers used in millinery obtained from wild birds, often in circumstances of great cruelty"; but it does not interfere with the objectionable ostrich industry, or of feathers of edible birds or fowl—any more than the American law does. And the Dominions have presented a petition to the Colonial Secretary to help them carry out their own bird-protection laws, by closing the free market for smuggled skins and feathers which at present exists in London.

Since the courageous decision of America, a great change has come over the London Chamber of Commerce and, even, the trade sentiment of England. Admitting that egret birds have disappeared from Florida at the rate of 100,000 a year—"so that only a few pairs now survive there"—and that the so-called garceros preserves of Venezuela are "sinister traps of wanton cruelty," the very importers themselves confess the trade to be "distasteful." So, scarcely lesser, is admitted to be

the wholesale destruction of the paradise, the Brazilian rose spoonbill and many others.

Now—there is no getting away from it—such "borrowed" plumage looks extremely stunning on ladies' hats. So fashionable Paris women who don't want to be "alone" in the reputation for cruelty, began by asking: "Can't you imitate them?"

Two devoted fowl came forth and offered—I will name the ostrich and the peacock. Both said: "It don't hurt much." Peacocks drop their big tail-feathers on the lawn at certain epochs. And it is astonishing what money can do with the ostrich and the peacock. Lewis is, undoubtedly, the greatest man milliner in Paris. He is also amiable and willing to be advertised. I met him at a dancing-rupper at Duchon, and he promised to show me some curious things in imitation aigrettes and parades—"as beautiful as the real and quite as expensive." At Biarritz, where there is a grandiose Lewis annex, the great man had been hastily summoned by the Queen of Spain. So I saw the things, only last week, in Paris.

A magnificent Calonne's aigrette

That of Darker Brown
Lined with Black
Straw, with a
Knot of Ribbon
and Two Piquets
of Roses.

black, on a black treader toque, could not fool me. "But wait," said Miss B., she is blonde, she is rosy, and never worked anywhere but at Lewis'. She showed seal-colored picot straw hat, lined with satin and two scrumptious aigrettes, which I could see were subtly different, and finer at the ends. "This is the real one," I said. "I was almost fooled with that toque."

"Both are imitations," said she. "The toque aigrette is burnt ostrich, and the hat one pulled peacock!" She explained they fine it out with razor blades, then "pull" each sprig over the dull back of a knife. And there was another little toque, entirely of what seemed bird-skin of the softest spoonbill down and decorated with what I took to be "craze," or soft egret. "All

burnt-fancy, made from peacock," said she. "And this imitation Paradise?" I asked her. "Is it made from ostrich?" It nodded, grandiose, black and fleecy cloudlike, like a black flame on a tricorn of black picot straw, and I would have bet it was worth \$100 in Paris. "So it is," said she, "for it is real. An imitation Paradise of that effect would cost still dearer. There are not five workmen in Paris who can make them."

"Who wants imitations?" said the great man. "I have had these imitations made, at considerable trouble, to show that we Paris milliners are not advocates of cruelty to beautiful wild

No, This Is a
Real One.
Worth \$100 in
Paris, Any Day.



Black Picot Straw with a
Border of Rosebud Gar-
land and a Knot of Ribbon

birds. The goods are here, and they are beautiful—if Paris women want them. On the other hand, if Paris

women join the crusade of their American and English sisters, I am not sure they will desire to perpetuate the memory of past destructions by the use of imitations. What are they, after all, but imitations of cruelty?"

Also, there is cruelty and cruelty. The rose-ringed parrot is the peer of East Indian agriculture, and the extermination of 95 per cent of the race—they multiply so rapidly—would be a boon to the struggling Indian farmer. I rather that the ingenuity of these artistic "imitators" will rather be applied to the creation of elegant fancies from ostrich, fowl and such pest birds as the English law may admit from the Colonies. Fancies more beautiful, perhaps, than any bird has ever worn. And yet, and yet—

And yet, the thing has started. Who can foresee if feather trimming may not go out entirely—its associations being painful? And who, in America, is to discriminate between fancies from the rose-ringed parrot and the rosy spoonbill?

"Fortunately, we don't have to worry about it at present," said Mr. Lewis. "You can say that America has made a strong impression. For the moment, hers is all the victory. This Summer, hat trimming will be all in flowers, lace and ribbons. The lace will be very fine. The use of ribbon will be great—look at this big eagle-feather made of violet velvet!"

The velvet "eagle-feather" stuck up, proudly alone, from a toque form all sewed over with little violets—completely covered. Another such had a lone cocarde of heavy ribbed ribbon, pleated, of a kind of cormine verging on the reddest violet.

In this story—which is not a fashion story, but something nobler—all that is admirable is due to Mr. Lewis, and all that is not admirable is due to me. The greatest milliner of Paris must not be compromised or misrepresented. How could I take notes in those palatial halls, where innumerable maids-of-

honor stood patting their hair and powdering their cheeks in front of mirrors, when not answering in low, sweet tones to the foremost great ladies of Paris, who seemed to have one set phrase: "But you promised me faithfully."

How keep promises to customers who order three hats per day in the season? These hats average \$50 apiece. Do you think that even a rich woman throws away a \$150 Paradise? No, she brings her "furniture" back—her aigrettes and her "craze"—and puts them on another hat. And so the average is, say \$50. "And you mustn't count Sundays or fete-days," says Miss B., "or days when madame is not well. And on vacation, hats are ordered and sent irregularly." All the same, the number of hats which some women buy is flabbergasting. Therefore, I gather that the great milliners of Paris do not profit much on paradises and aigrettes—become so rare that the wholesale price is already formidable. And I gather that they return to roses, lace and ribbons with joy.

You see, flowers today are just expensive enough to justify any price for a hat. Ten years ago, one-tint roses, deemed quite elegant, cost 20 cents apiece. Today an artificial rose—more beautiful than nature, fit to pin on any corsage—can cost up to \$5, \$8 and even \$10. And all those little bud-rose garlands—each bud perfect, though so tiny—they can only be obtained from certain makers.

Mr. Lewis showed me a black picot straw hat whose only trimming was a border of such rose-garlands and a knot of ribbon. Another, of nearly black-brown lisere straw (very tight woven) lined with black straw had just a knot of ribbon and two "pickets" of roses and rose-leaves.

"Say piquet; it's more elegant than bouquet," said Miss B. confidentially. Don't you perceive the importance of all this elegance, even in the language we apply to our hats? Anyone can have a bouquet, but for a piquet you must go to Lewis.

But I think they reach their height of genius when they handle lace and ribbon. Anyone can buy them. How have they the nerve, then, to ask \$60 for a hat-form costing \$10 and \$20 worth of rose-garlands and a ribbon cocarde? I will tell you. Try yourself to plait that cocarde. Even try to make a simple knot or "cabbage" ribbon. You'll see. There are "turns of hand" that only three work women in Lewis' are capable of doing with a certain perfection. Twenty others can almost approach them. Well, try to approach those approaches and you can ask big prices for your hats.

Why, a delightful novelty this Summer will be flower and ribbon aigrettes. The French call them "montants" (things that mount up). Imagine a button-hole bouquet of violets. Put another on top of it, and another on top of that. It makes a kind of little pole—three slender violet bouquets superposed, wired up to stand stiff like an aigrette. The will do the same with other flowers.

And ribbon aigrettes! Any girl of taste who has deft fingers and transient genius can take 40 cents' worth of heavy ribbed ribbon and make a "stick-up" (as I believe you call them) that might cost \$7 in Paris. Or the good girl can compose herself a "fan" of stiff ribbon, or she can make a fluffy ribbon cocarde, and set it in the back of her hat, or let her make three eagles' feathers of velvet ribbon, sticking up at the exact angles of the Indian brave.

Ribbon, ribbon! A great deal of more ribbon and more on one side and satin on the other. Should you ask me the colors, I would answer—with natural hesitancy—brown, all shades of brown, grey, black, white, chestnut.

These ribbon "stick-ups" and others will be fastened to the hat, a great deal with jet "motifs"—like the "burnt ostrich" imitation aigrette in my photograph. The making of such motifs (or buttons) from heavy ribbon, often fine-pleated, is a high art. But jet motifs are very contrasty with ribbon stick-ups; and we are likely to see a quantity of fine hat-jewelry. There is a flitter-jet made of gelatine, and there is gilt stuff with semi-precious stones and imitations. I see no end of it when it gets started.

And then, this Spring, Greece will wield an influence that must be counted with. As the same influence that staged and costumed "The Minaret" will exploit the "Aphrodite" of Pierre Louys, there will doubtless be a run on "Greek" straws, the familiar Pampelonne forms, of decadent Greek and Egyptian influence, being more or less the model. Surely, there will be others. It was an aesthetic period when women would have shuddered to wear dead birds on their heads!

All of which is very wonderful, and almost fabulous. I see rude, hairy men in Washington, D. C., who make an edict; and the proud queen of society in all the world are conquered, moved, emotioned, influenced, led—I might say dominated and suggested—as to the sacred styles of their headgear.

France will have an Audubon law next year. France is proud that Audubon was of French parentage, born in the French province of Louisiana, was educated in Paris, and studied art under David, Antwerp and Hamburg will remain the only smuggling ports for bird skins and feathers. But who buys hats in Antwerp or Hamburg?

France will have an Audubon law—but will scarcely need it. The fair women of Paris are so used to being imitated by America that they cannot give up the sweet flattery. They'll wear fur and velvet next Winter—to make sure America will follow them!



But it is Not
Real
Aigrette.