

# SALONS OF THE NEW YORK MODE

A Tour of the Houses Whence Come Smart Fashions Reveals a Variety of Atmosphere from Lofty Studios to Ateliers of an Ecclesiastic Dignity

THE mode, the elusive flame of fashion, in pursuit of which women spend so many heart-breaking hours, is housed in all sorts of places. Sometimes it betakes itself to a studio set high in the air, presided over by some arbitrary dictator who argues that if the Mountain will not go to Mahomet, Mahomet will go to the Mountain. And he argues rightly, for as surely will the creator of a beautiful garment eventually be found by the world as the creator of an exquisite poem or a beautiful picture.

Fortunately, however, one has not always to hunt for the fulfilment of one's desires, be it gowns, poems, or music, and there are always benevolent *entrepreneurs* who search it out and present it to us in the most alluring surroundings.

## THE EASE OF SELECTION

My lady in search of the beautiful need no longer be faced by an "*embarras du choix*". On the first visit to almost any big dressmaking house, she may, if she so desires, be led to a room where her personality is studied. The creator then retires to his studio and emerges sometime later with a fully-fledged scheme for her adornment. The great designer will not create a gown alone. He will build up the costume from the most minute details—the underskirt and the shoes, the stockings, the head-dress, and even the jewels will be planned.

If, on the other hand, the visitor at the salon wishes to see the already created mode of to-day, young women who look like goddesses deigning to honour this mundane world with their presence for a few brief hours, file before her, wearing the gowns, the frocks, and the hats the designer thinks most suited to her. Every artifice that will enhance the beauty of the display is used, and the march of the manikins as they step onto the softly lighted velvet-hung stage and pose alone or in tableau, is often a thing of very real beauty. There is an intoxication about this scene that is well nigh overwhelming, and it is hard for the visitor to escape the delusion that she has only to possess the gowns to be miraculously endowed with the physical proportions of the manikins. Naturally, one is all too likely to experience much disappointment when one receives the clothes which have been so much admired in the sky blue salon and have been adapted to one's individual needs. However, woman has great recuperative powers, and each fashion show sees her back, gazing with æs-

thetic eyes on the manikin who is wearing once again the one garment she must and will have, although the interval may have added yet another ten pounds to her already ample charms.

The first visit to the famous fashion salons of a great city is very interesting, for here is reflected the taste and the standard of dress of the women of the country.

It was Paris that led the way to hiding the light of her famous couturiers behind plain fronts, with never a suggestion of the shop or all the loveliness that was hidden behind the plain brown walls; just as she introduced us to the manikin who has since become a part of every smart dressmaking establishment in the world. Poiret, whose original taste can always be counted on for something new, has transformed his courtyard into a veritable paradise of lawns and trellised walls, presided over by two bronze deer, where he originally gave charming fêtes which were the forerunners of to-day's fashion openings.

## FROM RESIDENCE TO SALON

It is characteristic of Paris that most of her famous designers house themselves on the first and second floors of the old hotels. Martial et Armand occupy the second floor of an hotel originally constructed during the reign of Louis XIV for Maubert, Minister of Finance. It was occupied during the Second Empire by Agado, who entertained lavishly, and in whose home it was said the beautiful Countess of Montigo met and charmed the third Napoleon.

Another old house which brings many a pilgrim in quest of fashions to the rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré is that of Lanvin. Formerly a residence, it was remodelled to suit the needs of this designer; and now grey-carpeted salons provide a promenade for manikins who pass by their mirrored reflections upon the walls, side by side with the quaint old fashion plates of years ago.

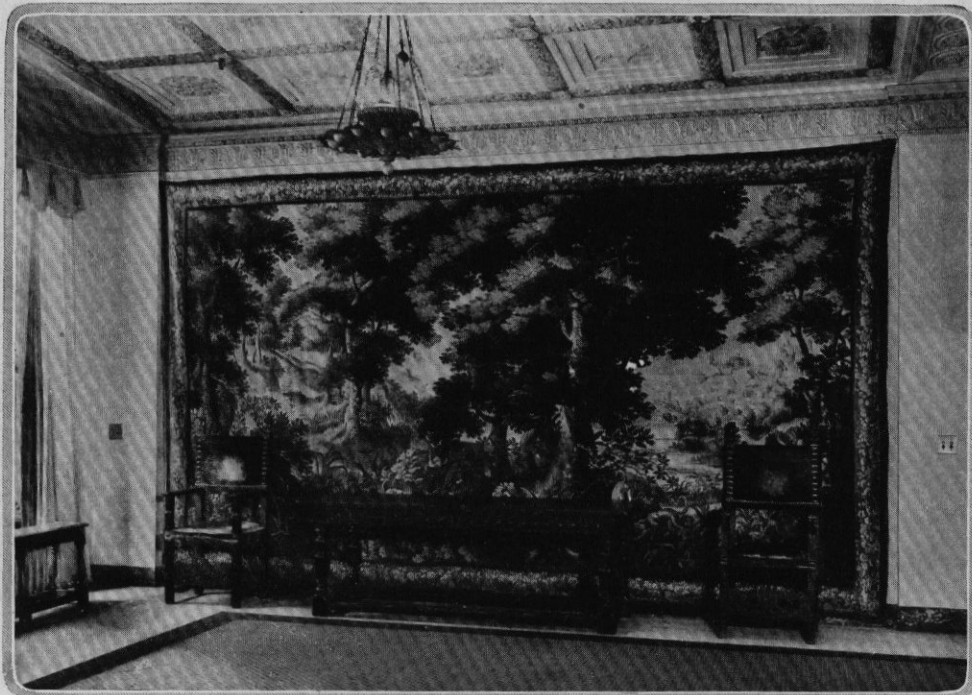
Beer likewise occupies a one-time private hotel—the stately Hôtel de Fleurieu, built and decorated in purest Louis XV style. The Callot sisters, who are likened to "The Three Fates", are always surrounded by an air of mystery. They still occupy the old-fashioned house situated on the rue Taitbout, with the iron bars that govern the approach to the second floor. There are few who have seen them, even though they go there year in and year out.

On the other hand, Madame Georgette is the moving spirit and the most decorative



Harry Coutant

*Thurn occupies a fine private residence, and waiting clients may have tea in the conservatory, to which a playing fountain lends charm; Don Barber, architect*



Harting

*Some of New York's smartest fur fashions are shown against fine Gobelin tapestries in the Italian Renaissance room of H. Jaekel and Son; Starrett and Van Vleck, architects*

thing in her delightful salon, which, as the writer remembers it, was all snowy white—white wall-papers, white muslin curtains, and white carpets.

In New York this year, several of the best-known designers have opened new places of business—buildings which rival in magnificence and luxury anything that Europe can offer us. A striking feature of these new houses is that nearly every one has shown marked ecclesiastical tendencies. Whether this is a laudable intention to bring a less frivolous tone to the pursuit of fashion, we do not know, but the idea was simultaneously conceived by several well-known houses, and behold—the vogue.

The fur houses particularly seem to be wedded to this style of architecture. Revillon Frères, which occupies the same block as the Vanderbilt houses and is immediately opposite St. Thomas' Church, have a main entrance that is a copy of the library of the Château de Pierrefont, with furniture and fixtures in François Première style. Beautiful stained glass windows cast sombre reflections on the fine carved woodwork and, at the same time, provide the particular quality of light needed for the best selection of furs.

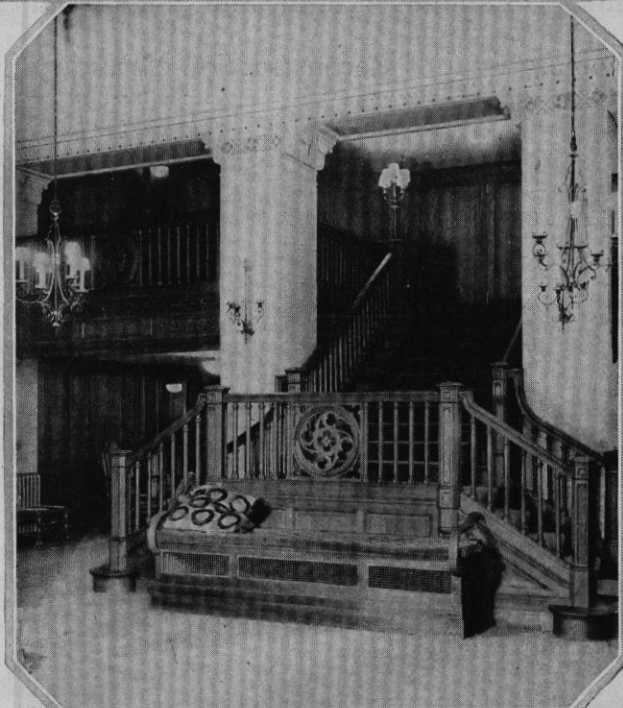
FUR SALONS

The nose of H. Jaekel and Son also has very elaborate arrangements for providing the clear bluish daylight required for the correct showing of their furs, and have, as well, a main showroom decorated in the style of the Italian Renaissance with fine Gobelin tapestries on the walls. Stein and Blaine, who also house themselves in a Gothic mansion,



Mattie Edwards Hewitt

*A light and gracious touch characterizes the salon of Frances; Warren and Wetmore, architects*



Harting

*(Left) Italian carvings provide a background for the mode at Hickson's; Augustus N. Allan, architect*

in fact, very little of the "shop" about the reception room with its finishing of antique gold and its tapestry upholstery. On the soft toned rugs which cover the floor lie huge cushions of gold lace and brocade in front of the inviting chairs of old French design.

Many of the best-known shops house themselves after the French style in old New York private homes. At Thurn's dignified mansion on Fifty-second Street, one must go through all the ceremony of calling at a private home. Madame Frances' Renaissance house was the home of Mr. Frederick Edey, and the fine curving marble staircase is a delightful introduction to the French salon above. Carmichael, Peggy Hoyt, and Lucille are only a few who have followed this Parisian fashion.



Mattie Edwards Hewitt

*Stein and Blaine are housed in a Gothic building with reception rooms which open onto a little garden in summer; Renwick, Aspenwell, and Tucker, architects*



Leo H. Bock

*The dignified house of Revillon Frères has a main entrance copied from the library of the Château de Pierrefont, with fine stained glass windows*

keep their austere first floor sacred to furs and contrive to give an atmosphere of frivolity to the upper floors; these are decorated in charming old-blue and cream with French furniture, which in summer puts on cool glazed chintz covers, and French doors that open to a little window-box garden at the rear. Here gowns and hats and other gay and lighter adjuncts to women's beauty are shown. Hickson's, on the other hand, have not hesitated to place their gayest and most frivolous stock in their purely Gothic interior on the first floor, though upstairs they, too, go in for ultra-modern interiors and gay French fitting rooms.

In the decoration of their New York shop, Boué Sœurs, who have had an establishment on the rue de la Paix for many years, have succeeded in conveying the impression of an historic French interior. There is,