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Recklies, Karen Adele

FASHION BEHIND THE FOOTLIGHTS: THE INFLUENCE OF STAGE COSTUMES ON WOMEN'S FASHIONS IN ENGLAND FROM 1878-1914

The Ohio State University

Ph.D. 1982

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FASHION BEHIND THE FOOTLIGHTS:
THE INFLUENCE OF STAGE COSTUMES ON WOMEN'S FASHIONS
IN ENGLAND FROM 1878-1914

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
Karen Adele Recklies, B.A., M.A.

* * * * *
The Ohio State University
1982

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the following people for their help in preparing the dissertation: my advisor Alan Woods, George Crepeau, Firman Brown, Jr., Mary Millican, and my husband Don for his preparation of the illustrations.
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INTRODUCTION

The close relationship between stage costumes, haute couture, and the dress of English fashionable women in the latter part of the nineteenth is a subject which has not received the attention it deserves. Two books on haute couture, *Kings of Fashion* by Anny Latour and *Worth: Father of Haute Couture* by Diana de Marly, each devote a chapter to couturiers' designs for theatrical costumes but both deal with work done for the Paris stage and record almost nothing about gowns created for the London stage. Other references to fashionable dress onstage have been scarce and short. Some costume historians, like Francois Boucher, mention in passing that Paris couturiers designed clothes for actresses, an example of which is found in his *20,000 years of Fashion*. After writing about the couturier Redfern, Boucher added "He successfully designed theatrical costumes for celebrated actresses."¹ Other historians, like Ernestine Carter in *The Changing World of Fashion*, devote a paragraph to one or two examples of fashions which emanated from the stage. Still others credit the stage with having some influence on fashion

but date the beginning of the influence much too late, as Prudence Glynn did when she wrote:

It is traditional to see the arrival of the Ballets Russes in Paris in 1909, or the exhibition in 1906 of Russian Art at the Salon d'Automne organised by Serge Diaghilev, as the seminal influences of the performing arts on mass fashion.²

As Latour and de Marly have started to do for the French stage, this dissertation will show that the English stage played an important part in women's fashions in England long before the excitement caused by the Ballets Russes in 1909.

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the English stage became a popular place for the general public to study the latest fashions in female dress. Until that time, the principal arbiters of fashion in both Paris and London had been Empress Eugénie and members of the French Court. With the fall of the Second Empire in 1870, the logical choice for an English fashion leader was Princess Alexandra, daughter-in-law of Queen Victoria and wife of the Prince of Wales, who had already inherited the social duties of the aging queen. Unfortunately for the fashion designers in both countries, Alexandra was not interested in dressing in the more extreme modes of costume that often characterize new fashions, preferring instead to stick with some favorite elegant, but sensible, styles of dress. Alexandra's lack of interest in most of the new modes left
couturiers with less of an opportunity to show their wares to a large number of people. The theatre, in the form of well-dressed actresses in modern plays provided both a show-place for the latest fashions and, consequently, role models for women who needed guidance in matters of dress and deportment. The public's interest also extended to the costumes for historical plays, which served as inspiration for both contemporary fashions and fancy-dress costumes for numerous balls. Fascination with stage costumes sometimes exceeded interest in the play in which they were being worn, as the Sunday Times recorded:

Now-a-days, no matter what the importance of a new production, it must regrettfully be admitted that the costumes play the greater part. Listen to the scraps of conversation in the stalls between the acts:--

Q.: "How do you like the play?"
A.: "Well to tell the truth, I did not come to see it. I only came to look at the dresses!"

Poor author! all his best ideas wasted—all his high sentiment thrown to the winds!

Public interest in stage costumes began as early as 1878 and continued until sometime before the outbreak of World War II. Descriptions and illustrations of stage costumes were regularly disseminated to a general populace which far exceeded the members of a theatrical audience. Illustrated

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fashion columns in ladies' magazines and major newspapers reviewed theatrical costumes on a weekly or monthly basis, with reviews being printed one day to two weeks after the opening of the show. The columns indicated pretty features of particular outfits that could be copied, suggested how more extreme designs might be altered for street wear, noted which stage costumes were indicative of coming trends, and pointed out models for fancy-dress costumes. If the fashion columns did not provide the exact information needed by various readers, women would write in and request descriptions of costumes that they wanted to copy. Fashion columns also noted items for sale that were inspired by popular plays, one example being the "Nell Gwynne picture hats" inspired by their counterparts in Sweet Nell of Old Drury in 1900.

By the 1900s, the emphasis on beautiful and up-to-date stage dress was so great that complaints were heard from some drama critics, authors, and actresses. The complaints centered around the practice of using costly and fashionable outfits on all female characters regardless of their economic station and the emphasis on dress to the exclusion of other theatrical elements such as plot and dialogue. Despite criticism, the stage continued to display the latest fashions until well into the 1930s.
Although the stage continued to serve as a living fashion plate until the 1930s, the dissertation will cover stage fashions from 1878, the year that contains the earliest example of public interest in stage costumes, until the start of war in 1914, an event which costume historians such as Michael and Ariane Ratterberry, and art historians such as Philippe Garner, author of *The World of Edwardiana*, traditionally consider to be the end of the Victorian/Edwardian lifestyle.

Sources for this study are fashion columns containing descriptions and illustrations of stage costumes; articles in magazines and newspapers about stage costumes, fashionable actresses, and theatrical costume designers; personal memoirs, biographies, and interviews with playwrights, producers, actresses, couturiers, and theatrical costume designers; and documents indicating the success of various stage productions.

Using the sources listed above, the dissertation will detail the public's interest in stage costumes as examples of the latest fashions, the couturiers who created the stage fashions, theatrical costume designers and costumiers who were responsible for historical costumes seen on the English stage, producers who guided the use of fashionable dress in the theatre, actresses who were considered to be fashion leaders, and the widespread copying of stage fashions.
CHAPTER I

COUTURE CLOTHING ONSTAGE

The lavish display of costumes seen on the English stage at the end of the nineteenth century was the result of a number of changes in the fashion trade, the publishing industry, and the theatre. These changes involved the expansion of the fashion trade into an ever increasing industry, the growth of a market for inexpensive magazines and newspapers, and the regular attendance of the aristocracy and upper class at a number of West End theatres.

The technical innovations of the Industrial Revolution during the middle of the century enabled dressmaking to grow into an industry large enough to serve an increasing indulgence in feminine dress, an indulgence possibly fostered by those who manufactured and sold ladies' fashions. A veteran tradesman recalled in an article that "in his day window-dressing was an almost unknown art; ladies went to a shop for what they strictly required; and the idea of tempting them to purchase what they did not need by a lavish display of goods behind great plate-glass windows, was unknown."

A colleague declared in the same article that in his apprentice days, during the 1830s, "ladies of good position never expected more than two new gowns a year, and even those of exalted rank seldom had many more than
that—a summer and a winter new frock."¹ Commenting on the passion for dress in the latter part of the century, Charles Worth, the fashion designer, mentioned in an interview that "in the middle of the century women went through the Season with two silk dresses and a cashmere shawl."² In another interview about the buying habits of his clients in 1871, Worth spoke of the good business sense of the French, the extravagance of the Americans and Russians, and summed up the British by saying "But rarely does an Englishwoman get really wasteful."³ To have a dress made during this time meant that a lady would go to her dressmaker to pick out a French or English design, go to a different shop for the fabric, possibly visit another shop for the trimmings, then go back to the dressmaker for fittings, a process that could easily take weeks to complete. Given the time and trouble involved, it is not surprising that English women did not order many new dresses, but there was also a reticence about spending a lot of money on clothes in the earlier part of the nineteenth century.

¹ "The Ladies' Pages," The Illustrated London News, 128 (1906), 324.


³ "Mr. Worth," Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 157 (1895), 795.
Clothes on the stage did not fare much better before the 1870s. Chiding some French journalists who complained of luxurious stage toilettes on the French stage, The Women's World noted that "in the days gone by the stage was without the slightest influence upon fashion. If ancient, it was full of anachronism; if modern, it was poor and ugly." Writing of the costumes used in the 1860s, Clement Scott, an English theatre critic, explained:

The costumes of the ladies of fashion came out of the theatre rag-bag; the stage wardrobe supplied the dresses; so that the ingénue appeared in tumbled tarlatan, the leading lady in green and orange satin, the dowager in the black velvet and ermine of Lady Macbeth.

The proliferation of women's dress and the ease with which new clothing could be acquired were the results of technical innovations, the most important of which was Elias Howe's invention of the sewing machine in 1846. The sewing machine was followed by the use of steam power around 1865, then the introduction of the standard pattern, button-hole machine, pressing machines, and others. The spread of the railways across Britain and Europe increased the ease with which buyers and dressmakers could travel between London and Paris.

5 "Stage Dresses," The Queen, 98 (1895), 1127.
In England, improved transportation services not only facilitated the moving of fashionable goods but it also brought the prosperous upper and middle class shoppers from outlying areas into the large cities to shop for new clothes. To cater to the nouveau riche, stores that had previously sold only fabric expanded in the 1850s into department stores that carried a variety of merchandise for the entire family. The new department stores stocked a number of ready-made items along with their traditional fabric and dressmaking departments. Debenham & Freebody, for instance, had expanded to twenty-seven departments by 1870, a number that included silks, furs, a juvenile room, ball dresses, ribbons, family mourning, household drapery, lace, and dressmaking.\footnote{Alison Adburham, \textit{Shops and Shopping 1800-1914} (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1964), pp. 145-6.}

At the same time that mechanized garment factories and railroads were making fashions more accessible and less expensive, the Empress Eugénie, with her style and grace, was giving a new impetus to French fashion. With Napoleonic III on the throne, the Emperor and Empress set a pattern of splendour with state balls, ministerial and ambassadorial functions, imperial receptions, military parades, state visits, and gala performances of opera and ballet.\footnote{Diana de Marly, \textit{The History of Haute Couture 1850-1950} (London: B. T. Batsford, 1980), p. 19.} After 1864, Charles Worth, who was then just one of the Empress' dressmakers, was given the monopoly of supplying all of her...
evening and state wear. The position of "imperial couturier" sealed Worth's reputation as the top fashion designer because the women of France, England, America, and other countries followed the lead of the Empress Eugénie. Worth became the supreme arbiter of taste, a position which he retained until his death in 1895. His international reputation became such that when the Second Empire collapsed in 1870, Worth was able to reopen after a year and expand his business, now sustained by other European courts and millionaires from the United States.

Like his patroness Eugénie, Worth helped to glamorize the business of dressmaking. He dressed like a gentleman, built himself a luxury villa just outside Paris, and played the role of the artist by insisting that he did not make dresses but rather composed toilettes. Commenting on his influence L'Illustration wrote after his death that "We must do justice to Worth: he was the first to take female costume away from routine and bourgeois pettiness; the first to place Parisiennes upon the triumphant road of art, and to teach them not just to clothe themselves, but to adorn themselves." Though Worth may have acted the part of an artist, he was also a businessman who used the technological innovations

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9 de Marly, p. 22.
of the day. His system of stock patterns for sleeves, bodice, skirt, and drapery gave him a range of interchangeable parts with which to design a large number of dresses. The improvement of the sewing machine allowed his firm to turn out hundreds of ball gowns a week. He also sold model dresses and patterns to dressmakers and shops, who reproduced them for a wider market. The glamour of French fashions in general, and Worth's in particular, may have contributed to the renewed indulgence in fashion on the part of the English women, an indulgence which the *Ladies' Field* characterized in 1900 as "a passion for dress and ornament nowadays which has probably never been surpassed."  

During the 1870s and 1880s, a number of London "court dressmakers," relatively small firms known only to their elite clientele, grew into handsome dressmaking establishments which served a larger number of clients. The growth of these exclusive dressmakers was helped by the unlikely combination of the Franco-Prussian War and the demand in England and France for English tailormades. Paris fashion influence declined during the unsettled years following the fall of the Second Empire in 1870 and the occupation of

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11 de Marly, pp. 23, 40.

Paris by the Prussians in 1871. During these years English women were not going to Paris for their clothes and the travel of English buyers and dressmakers back and forth was curtailed. Even the much sought-after Charles Worth lost a year of business when he was forced to close in 1870; when he reopened, the brilliant fashion leaders of the French Court had been replaced by members of the European aristocracy and nouveau riche. With the interruption of Paris exports, London couturiers became more important, an importance that was enhanced by the growing demand for sports clothes like the jersey and tailormade. The tailormade (see Plate I), consisting of a skirt cut to allow more freedom and a jacket similar to a man's coat, was originally for women engaging in sports, since it allowed a greater freedom of movement than the couturier outfits of the 1870s and 1880s. The wives of the rich men now engaged in the popular sport of yachting were particularly fond of the tailormades. Since the design of the tailormade was so simple, the proper effect of excellent fit and cutting depended upon the particularly English skill of tailoring. The outfit grew in popularity until English women were wearing tailormades for ordinary morning wear, afternoon visits, and even smart occasions such as dances. Around 1886, tailormades were introduced in Paris as French couturiers followed the lead of English tailors and dressmakers in the area of clothes for "le sport." The
Plate I—Two of the costumes designed by Redfern for My Wife. The top costume is an example of a tailormade. Illustration from The World of Dress & Women's Journal, July 1907, p. 39.
resulting increase in business enabled the court dressmakers to expand and other dressmakers to establish their own firms. Before their expansion, the court dressmakers had never advertised because they were recommended by word of mouth; their names were no more known to the general public than their male counterparts in Saville Row. While they continued to shun advertising even as they were expanding, names such as Redfern or Russell & Allen were becoming famous throughout England as they were being written about in the increasing number of fashion magazines and fashion columns in newspapers and ladies' magazines.

The magazines responsible for spreading the names of the London courtiers went through a period of accelerated expansion from 1875-1910. As Cynthia White points out in Women's Magazine 1693-1968, the spread of state education and greater social freedom for women created a vast new market for inexpensive literature; technological advances that made the printing process cheaper, along with investments in publishing and the increased use of advertising, made the expansion possible. Counting women's publications alone, the number of titles more than doubled between 1875 and 1900 for a total of sixty magazines. The publications catered to a number of different groups, but the most important ones for fashion were the fashion journals and the "quality magazines" for the upperclass, which chronicled
Society at play. Fashion journals like The World of Dress or the English edition of Le Moniteur de la Mode dealt with the latest trends on both sides of the Channel. Magazines such as The Queen, Lady's Pictorial, and Madame reported on Court and Society functions, the latest fashions, the theatre, arts, music, sports, and etiquette. Coverage of the fashion world grew as the industry expanded in both Paris and London. The magazines were read by women who could afford to patronize the new London courturiers as well as by women who wished they could.

By the end of the 1880s, the London fashion industry had achieved a stature something akin to the couture business of Paris. The large department stores, famous houses, and small dressmakers continued to expand and prosper as they offered an extensive line of goods to a growing clientele with a passion for dress and ornament. This increase in business continued until the outbreak of war in 1914.

Parallel with the changes in the fashion industry was the improvement of modern costumes on the English stage. While earlier work by J. R. Planché and others at the beginning of the century had led to the custom of historically accurate costumes for period plays, it was the use of appropriate contemporary dress by the Bancrofts in their

13 White, pp. 58-63.
productions of modern plays from 1865-1880 that started a general upgrading of modern costumes. The *Sunday Times* explained their contribution:

During many successive years, ever since Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft took possession of the Prince of Wales's Theatre, the course of improvement has commenced. Before that time pieces were, so to speak, pitchforked upon the stage with no regard for accuracy, and very little care for propriety. . . . Year by year an improvement has been witnessed, and each successive piece produced at three or four principal theatres, has been an improvement upon what had gone before. 14

The occasion of this very brief history of stage costuming was a review of *Masks and Faces*, a production considered particularly noteworthy by the drama critics because the care taken with the costumes was directed towards a comedy of real life and not a poetic drama set in distant, unknown times. Taking place during the time of George II, it was praised by the reviewers for its historically accurate costumes.

Although the critic for the *Sunday Times* felt that the limits of the attainable had been reached by the costumes for *Masks and Faces*, producers lavished more attention and money on costumes for historical plays. Such attention to costume did not go unnoticed by the public, as the response to the production of *Theodora* in 1889 illustrates. The

actress-manageress Grace Hawthorne chose to open the play at the Theatre Royal before the fashionable assemblage in Brighton prior to taking the production to London. The Paris-made dresses were said to have cost £3,500 and consisted of robes of gold brocade, embroidered muslin and satin, and silk decorated with gems. The public interest in the magnificent costumes was so great that a fashionable tailor in King's Road secured permission to exhibit them during the day to people who had not been able to get tickets for the sold-out run in Brighton. 15

The return of the aristocratic and fashionable audience to the theatre after 1850 also helped to bring about the widespread use of expensive historical and modern costumes in theatrical productions of the latter part of the century.

The regular attendance of Queen Victoria at theatres such as the Haymarket and the Princess's and her institution of command performances at Windsor Castle until Albert's death in 1861 began to draw fashionable society back to the theatres. After Albert's death, the Prince of Wales continued his mother's patronage of the theatre with great enthusiasm until his own death in 1910. Edward frequently attended the theatre, continued command performances, and

even entertained leading actors at Marlborough House.  

From 1865 to 1880, the Bancrofts not only made the Prince of Wales's an elegant and fashionable theatre, they also became prominent social personalities in London, able to emulate the lifestyle of their upperclass audience. The good taste and prestige that characterized Henry Irving's management of the Lyceum from 1878-1898, along with the respectable enterprises of other actor-managers such as Charles Wyndham and George Alexander, helped to transform the West End into theatre suitable for the middle and upperclass. The knight­
hoods received by the various actor-managers, beginning with Irving in 1895 and Bancroft in 1897, were the ultimate approval of the Court and Society. Thus the audience for performances in theatres such as the Criterion, the St. James's, Daly's, and Wyndham's during the 1890s and 1900s included Royalty, the upper class, the fashionable, and the middle class. To cite just one instance, the first night audience for The Princess and the Butterfly at the St. James's contained Princess Christian, Lord and Lady Londonderry, Lady Helen Stewart, the Countess of Shrewsbury, Viscountess Galway, Lady Jeune, Lady Barnes, Lord and Lady Suffield, Lord

16 Lieut.-Colonel Newnham-Davis, "His Majesty the King, The Sketch Coronation Number, 38 (1902), 421.

Glensk, Sir Edward Lawson, Sir James Blyth, Sir Frederick Haines, Sir Douglas Straight, Mr. Bancroft, Mr. J. M. Barrie, Mr. Anthony Hope, Mr. G. S. Street, Miss Evelyn Millard, and Miss Cissie Loftus.18

This change in audience composition prompted a change in the types of plays presented. While historical plays continued with productions such as Olivia or Mademoiselle Mars, the comedies and dramas of Oscar Wilde, Sydney Grundy, A. W. Pinero and others made the ballroom, conservatory, and drawing room common settings; naturally upper-class characters inhabited the settings. As Michael Booth points out in Prefaces to English Nineteenth-Century Theatre, "A glance at the list of principal characters in a Wilde drama discovers that over half of them are titled and the rest moneyed and propertied."19 The sports and leisure activities of the aristocratic and upper-class life showed up in Drury Lane melodramas such as The Derby Winner, The White Heather, or Cheer, Boys, Cheer. The plots of musicals, such as The Merry Widow, involved noblemen, ladies, and a bevy of beautiful girls in lovely dresses. The new interest in accurate costumes meant that the upper-class characters must be dressed in the kinds of fashions that they wore in real life,

18 "First Night at the St. James's Theatre," The Queen, 101 (1897), 630.

19 Booth, Prefaces, p. 36.
thus the latest from Paris and London was needed. In one slightly extreme example, the costumes for the final scene of The White Heather, produced at Drury Lane in 1897, were the real dresses or exact counterparts of those worn at the Duchess of Devonshire's recent fancy-dress ball. The stage costumes were copied with the consent of the original wearers, judging from a remark by Lady Violet Greville that "It shows the love of publicity that prevails now, for a former beauty would as soon have allowed an actress to copy or wear her own gown as have offered her comb and brush for public use. . . ." Thus the stage faithfully mirrored the fashionable audience that it entertained.

Society's return to the theatre produced a mixing of the two worlds best summoned up by Henry James in 1879:

The theatre just now is the fashion, just as "art" is the fashion and just as literature is not. The English stage has probably never been so bad as it is at present, and at the same time there probably has never been so much care about it. It sometimes seems to an observer of English customs that this interest in histrionic matters almost reaches the proportions of a mania. It pervades society--it breaks down barriers. If you go to an evening party, nothing is more probable than that all of a sudden a young lady or a young gentleman will jump up and strike an attitude and begin to recite a poem or a speech. Every pretext for this sort of exhibition is ardently cultivated, and the

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20 Moy Thomas, "The Theatres," The Graphic, 56 (1897), 406.
21 "Place aux Dames," The Graphic, 56 (1897), 198.
London world is apparently filled with stage-struck young persons whose relatives are holding them back from a dramatic career by the skirts of their garments. Plays and actors are perpetually talked about, private theatricals are incessant, and members of the dramatic profession are "received" without restriction. They appear in society, and the people of society appear on the stage; it is as if the great gate which formerly divided the theatre from the world had been lifted off its hinges. There is, at any rate, such a passing to and fro as has never before been known; the stage has become amateurish and society has become professional.22

Following the lead of the Bancrofts, actors and actresses who could afford it became part of the upper class. They moved to smart addresses such as St. John's Wood, employed servants, took holidays abroad to Switzerland or Trouville, dressed in expensive clothes, and attended fashionable functions. Actresses were invited to the private art views, Ascot, Goodwood, fashionable dinner parties, and royal garden parties. In the area of good deeds, noted actresses worked at numerous charity bazaars and the aristocracy supported the Theatrical Ladies' Guild, a charity group run by actresses to help their less fortunate sisters in the profession. At the same time, a number of Society Beauties—most notably Lillie Langtry and Mrs. Patrick Campbell—took

to the stage for careers as actresses, Langtry in 1881 and Campbell in 1888.

Society and Stage mixed so well that a number of peers, prominent businessmen, and foreign nobles took their brides from the stage. Rosie Boote became the Marchioness of Headfort in 1901, Connie Gilchrist became the Countess of Orkney, and Gertie Millar became the Countess of Dudley, to name a few of the more famous stage marriages of the period. While before a few peers had married actresses of great stature, they were now marrying dramatic actresses, musical comedy stars, and even chorus girls in great number. During the 1893-94 run of A Gaiety Girl, George Edwardes lost approximately eighteen of his female players to matrimony. Edwardes finally lost so many actresses from both Daly's and the Gaiety that he added an anti-nuptial clause to his contracts, shortly before his death in 1915, that stated a lady would not be released from her engagements during rehearsals or the run of the play for reasons of matrimony.23 Seymour Hicks had the same problem with his Gibson Girls, although to a lesser extent. By 1908, The Graphic described the union of musical comedy and Society as "the apparent epidemic of aristocratic marriages among them. . . ."24

24 "Place aux Dames," 78 (1908), 702.
Their entrance into the world of high society in the 1880s made actresses part of the group that had traditionally led fashions. Generally, the creations of a London or Parisian designer would be worn by Queen Victoria, other members of the royal family, or ladies-in-waiting; these new outfits were shown at state ceremonies, social occasions, the theatre, the Ascot and Goodwood races, and the regattas at Cowes and Henley. Fashionable people who attended such functions would follow the lead of the Court and wear the favored fashions to other events such as Private Views of art exhibits at the Royal Academy or the New Gallery, weddings, and promenades in Hyde Park. Fashion magazines, ladies' magazines, and fashion columns in newspapers attended fashionable occasions to report on "who wore what." The reporters also made routine visits to the dressmakers and stores that provided the latest styles. Before the fall of the Second Empire in 1870, Queen Victoria, Princess Alexandra, and others vied with the Empress Eugénie and her Paris designers for the role of leader. Members of the English court bought part or all of their wardrobes from Paris, stores in London bought Paris dress models to copy or sell, and magazines and newspapers sent columnists to Paris to view the latest fashions or sometimes employed a regular Paris correspondent. The Paris influence was so strong that in at least one instance when Queen Victoria and Paris differed over an important question of
style, Paris won. The instance was the Queen's opposition to the crinoline in 1863; in spite of her public condemnation of the dangerous hoops, fashionable England wore them.

The interruption and waning of the Parisian influence in the 1870s provided an opportunity for the English royalty to assume a strong position as leaders of fashion. Queen Victoria's retirement from the social part of her duties made the popular Princess Alexandra the logical choice for the role of fashion leader, especially since Victoria's passing of her social duties to Edward and his wife made Alexandra the acknowledged leader of society. Her personal style of dress, however, was not the kind to allow Alexandra to take the position and exert a strong influence over fashion.

Considered to be a beauty well into middle age, Alexandra is credited with setting the example of looking as young as possible even when there were daughters out in society. Before her time, it was considered necessary for a woman with grown girls, regardless of her age, to hide herself in "unbecoming and elderly garb, and to be an old lady before her time." Always in the best of taste, Alexandra's style of dress was characterized by fashion writers as graceful, elegant, and gracious looking; but, unlike Empress Eugénie, she was not known for wearing the latest modes—whatever they

might be. Addressing the question of Queen Alexandra's leadership in fashion, The Illustrated London News explained the nature and limit of her influence:

But Queen Alexandra's taste was too good for her to assume the position of leader of the fashions, which, in the nature of the case, must be continually changing, and must include novelties that will at first appear odd and startling, however custom may make them presently commonplace. The changes implied in the very word "fashions" have plainly not been actually led by Queen Alexandra, who refused to accept the rôle by her tacit adoption of certain distinctive styles, to which she held firmly as long as possible. The little close-fitting bonnet, neatly tied under the chin by narrow strings, that she introduced and that was called after her, the "Princess," together with her chosen style of coiffure, fully curled all over the head with some boucles brought slightly over the forehead, were adhered to by her with a persistency, year after year, that at last left her almost alone in wearing the style. It is hardly possible to imagine her Majesty with her hair done in the fashionable style of the past six or seven years--rolled back à la Pompadour--and when she appeared last summer just once in an up-to-date hat, quite a sensation was created by the passing change from the long inevitable toque.

Now this steadfastness is not the way to be the leader of fashions. We all have too much reason to know that it is the changing mode and not the wear that compels us to buy new attire, and the manufacturers of our various forms of costume necessarily desire and compel frequent and great changes "for the good of trade." Yet often the Queen's influence has been felt. To her determination not to allow such a thing we have owed it more than once that we have been saved from the absurd horror of crinoline. . . . Indeed, her Majesty's very adherence to such simple, graceful styles as she prefers has
undoubtedly been a potent influence, though a subtle one, on the dress of her time.\textsuperscript{26}

As indicated, Alexandra's contribution to the fashion of her time was a sense of good taste and moderation, but her wearing of favorite styles left the English modistes without a model for most of the new modes.

The new breed of actresses could serve as substitutes that would reach an audience far beyond the immediate circle of the Court. While the dress of an actress for her private life might be noticed by the few in her social circle or fashion journalists covering the social events that she attended, the dress of the same actress onstage would be noticed by the playgoers, reviewers, and readers of various publications. There are indications that dressmakers consciously used actresses to publicise new fashions. As early as 1882, \textit{The Theatrical World} pointed out that tailors:

\begin{quote}
would frequently prefer to make a suit of clothes for an actor than for others, not because they are paid any better, or their bills are paid any quicker, but because they are aware that a well dressed actor is a better advertisement for them than other customers. So it is with a modiste, they will turn out a much better dress for an actress than for other ladies. A Society lady will turn up her aristocratic nose at an actress, but will look with envious admiration at her dress, and ten chances to
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{26} 28 March 1908, p. 466. The mention of crinoline refers to the effort of designers in the 1890s to bring back the crinoline.
one, will do her utmost to find the modiste who made that dress.\(^2\)

The Strand Magazine, perhaps a less biased observer, noted that:

It is an open secret that the leading modistes rely very largely upon the stage for the popularizing of the coming modes. Though a style may be said to be created by the modistes, and the hall-mark of approval given to it by Royalty and the Court, it through the instrumentality of the leading actresses that it becomes the fashion of the season.\(^3\)

As one who wore the fashions onstage, Gertrude Elliot decried the practice of lavish costumes, saying that "so many plays are simply used as a means of advertisement by the costumiers who supply the dresses."\(^4\)

Lavish stage costumes began to command space in fashion columns and engender public imitation at the end of the 1870s. The first costumes to catch the public fancy were those worn by Ellen Terry in Olivia, an adaptation of The Vicar of Wakefield that opened at the Court Theatre on 28 March 1878. The hat and handkerchief used by Terry as Olivia were soon

\(^2\) 22 April 1882, p. 8.
\(^3\) 33 (1907), 506.
\(^4\) "A Lightening Interview with Miss Gertrude Elliot," The World of Dress, July 1904, p. 21. This magazine changed format during its run; consequently citations for quotations from the magazine will change to correspond to the magazine's changes in format.
copied, sold, and seen everywhere. The Olivia cap was still appearing in the fashion columns as late as 1883. In 1881, Lillie Langtry's stage debut in *She Stoops to Conquer* attracted a great deal of attention, not only because of her reputation as a Society Beauty but also because of her costumes created by Charles Worth. *The Queen*, the leading "quality magazine," even published a page of sketches of Langtry's gowns. Children's garments were also being modelled after stage dress. The fashion column of *The Graphic* described a belt on a new child's frock as having "a girdle after that worn by Miss Mary Anderson as Galatea."  

The current Aesthetic dress, worn by cultured followers of the art movement with the same name in the 1870s and 1880s, was also attracting favorable attention, a fact that is somewhat surprising since they were exhibited in plays that satirized the movement. The first play to use Aesthetic dress was a satire entitled *The Colonel*, which opened in February of 1881; sets and costumes for the play were so attractive that several theatre critics considered them excellent advertisement for the art movement. The critic for *The Illustrated London News* was so taken with the

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31 30 (1884), 147.
production that he saw it twice in its first month and wrote of the dresses:

Miss Amy Roselle . . . looks charming in her riding-habit; but the subsequent short dress in which she appears is an altogether commonplace and garish transcript from the French fashion-books; while Miss Marion Holms . . . with her large hat and plume and robe of pale amber silk, looks handsome and graceful enough to have stepped bodily from the pages of the famous book of costume of Caesar Vecellio.32

Another production using Aesthetic dress was Gilbert and Sullivan's Patience or Bunthorne's Bride, also a satire of the Aesthetes, that opened on 30 April 1881 at the Opera Comique in London. The costumes were designed by Gilbert himself and were made of the high-quality oriental and Indian fabrics sold by Liberty's, a fact which was advertised in the theatre programs. After a successful run, D'Oyly Carte opened his Savoy Theatre in October with the same opera improved with new scenery, costumes, and expanded chorus. Both the original and new costumes prompted favorable responses from the critics.

By the end of the 1880s, fashion columnists considered stage costumes to be an important and influential item of a theatrical production. While reviewing the eighteenth-century costumes for the 1888 production of The Pompadour, the "Ladies' Column" noted that "Mr. Beerbohm Tree has had

32 78 (1881), 223.
the happy thought of sketching several of the figures on his programme, which will be preserved accordingly to give hints for fancy dress at balls of the future." In the same year, The Women's World proclaimed that the "stage is the mirror of fashion. It is from Dorothy (now being acted at the Prince of Wales's Theatre) the idea of the Sherwood coat has been derived." The same production also inspired a shoe, appropriately named the Dorothy. The next year Dorothy cropped up again when The Queen ran a two-page illustrated article entitled "Suggestions for Fancy Costumes from Popular Plays." The article explained that theatrical costumes of the day may be relied upon for correctness of style combined with artistic picturesqueness and such work from the professional costumier supplies valuable suggestions for fancy costumes. For their readers use, then, the magazine had provided sketches of costumes from recent plays. Their readers must have taken the opinion of stage costumes to heart because a reader wrote to the magazine later asking for a description of the dress worn by Mary Anderson in the first act of Romeo and Juliet at the Lyceum Theatre.

33 The Illustrated London News, 92 (1888), 356.
34 1 (1888); rpt. 1970, 140.
35 86 (1889), 177-79.
36 "Dress Notes and Queries," The Queen, 88 (1890), 919.
The offstage dress of actresses was also being covered by fashion columnists during the 1880s, as a look at "The Ladies' Column" will show. In 1886, the column provided its readers with a description of the light-green dress worn by Lillie Langtry to a meet of the Coaching Clubs. The outfits worn by Marion Terry, Mrs. Langtry, and Mrs. Bernard Beere at a Private View of the Royal Academy in the same year were deemed to be among those worthy of description. At another Private View, this one the winter exhibition of the Royal Academy in 1889, the grey silk dress, sealskin mantle, and large black hat worn by Julia Neilson were praised.37

By 1890, the stage was viewed as having a strong influence on feminine dress. The Woman's World explained to its readers:

With the present day drawing-room comedies and pretty reflections of the "life that all men live," dress across the footlights has grown to be one of the strongest factors in influencing fashion. No one's distinctive style has had more weight than that of Sarah Bernhardt, who has given us our clinging seamless bodies and high-set sleeves, while it is very doubtful whether the tea-gown would be the lovely well-worn garment it is had not Mrs. Bernard Beere shown us its capabilities. The "dressing" of a piece now has a decided place in determining women's visits to the theatre, and, therefore, managerial instincts are in favor of its richness and originality. That fashion

37 The Illustrated London News, 88 (1886), 532; 88 (1886), 477; 94 (1889), 60.
should be so much directed as it is by the theatre is a strong proof of the growing importance of the drama.\textsuperscript{38}

Other publications agreed with \textit{The Woman's World} as the stage costumes and private dress of actresses were given more coverage. In 1890, \textit{The Queen} began to review stage costumes with an illustrated weekly column and \textit{The Graphic}'s "Place aux Dames" added stage costumes to its list of subjects in 1892. Lady Violet Greville, the author of the column, felt so strongly about the importance of stage costumes that she wrote in a later column: "The woman who cannot dress to suit her own figure and her own idiosyncracy after she has imibed the lessons of the stage must indeed be a born imbecile."\textsuperscript{39} From its first issue in 1893, \textit{The Sketch} reviewed costumes worn in the plays of London in "Our Ladies' Pages," which often included illustrations of the dresses. The reason for the reviews was mentioned in an 1894 column that stated "I am not inclined to offer any apology for devoting so much space to theatrical gowns, for every woman I know has a burning desire to copy the stage attire of well-known actresses..."\textsuperscript{40} The \textit{Sunday Times} first began to describe stage outfits in a column entitled "Fashions and Fancies," but then the descriptions grew into a separate

\begin{thebibliography}{10}
\bibitem{3} 3 (1890); rpt. 1970, 336.
\bibitem{39} 52 (1895), 458.
\bibitem{40} 5 (1894), 322.
\end{thebibliography}
column in 1897 called "First Night Dresses." The World of Dress, a fashion magazine first published in 1898, devoted columns to London stage fashions, Paris stage costumes, New York stage fashions, and interviewed fashionable actresses and costume designers. Other magazines and newspapers that covered stage costumes include Lady's Pictorial (1881-1921) Madame (1895-1913), The Ladies' Field (1898-1928), The Ladies' Gazette (1895-99), The Lady's Gazette (1901-04), and Play Pictorial (1902-39). The columns devoted to stage costumes did more than just describe the dresses; they also pointed out which costumes were indicative of coming modes, mentioned which outfits would be the best to copy, and sometimes offered suggestions on how to translate some of the more extreme fashions into suitable streetwear. At the same time, coverage was given to the offstage wardrobes of the most fashionable of the actresses.

The use of lavish costumes for both contemporary and historical plays, and its corresponding coverage in print, continued to be a standard feature of theatrical production. As The Graphic reminded its readers in 1899: "The stage continues to form the mirror of fashion. One need scarcely take in a fashion paper if one pays constant visits to the theatre. Here one can study all the varieties of la mode and the latest and newest designs."41 By the 1900s, this

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41 60 (1899), 51A.
emphasis on expensive and up-to-date stage fashions was so great that complaints were raised from various corners. In a speech to the Playgoers' Club, Max Beerbohm proclaimed that while drama may be missing in the English theatre, nobody could accuse the managers of underrating the importance of theatrical costume. Figuring that the money spent on costumes "would provide the nation annually with a new battleship and two or three torpedo boats thrown in," he noted that costumes were "too new, too elaborate, too expensive for illusion." The venerated Mrs. Kendal, protesting against the sins of over-dressing on and off the stage, suggested that actresses should wear a simple uniform like that of a soldier or clergyman for their offstage garb--the great actress herself, however, would not start the reform by donning any proposed uniform. No less a person than the theatrical dress reviewer of the Sunday Times agreed with the complaints, protesting that the principal idea behind the costly dresses seemed to be the preparation and exploitation of the latest Paris fashions, irrespective of other important considerations such as their suitability for the character portrayed. Despite any complaints, the practice of dressing

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contemporary plays in the latest fashions did not change during the last years of the Edwardian era.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the world of fashion and theatre were closely entwined as the stage became an important extension of couture houses in London and Paris. The stage was constantly used to show the latest fashions from 1890 until the outbreak of war in 1914, and even after the end of the war. Fashion columns in magazines and newspapers published reviews of the latest stage fashions for readers throughout England. For the consumer, the stage offered an entertaining way to view the latest modes and provided a multitude of role models for the less imaginative women who needed someone to copy. For the growing number of courturiers and dressmakers on both sides of the Channel, the theatre provided a free form of advertising to a prosperous and fashionable audience.
CHAPTER II

COUTURE HOUSES

Costumes for society dramas, musical comedies, and some of the period plays generally came from famous couture houses in London and Paris, smaller dressmaking establishments in London, and department stores. With the exception of historical plays under the guidance of a costume designer, productions normally had more than one supplier of outfits and mixed costumes from any or all of the categories of suppliers. A star might have her gowns made by a Parisian couturier while the chorus would be clothed by a London dressmaker, or the modern fashions might be supplied by a couturier and department store while the fancy-dress ball scene would be the responsibility of a theatrical costumer. If Cecil Raleigh's opinion is an indication of general philosophy among producers, productions purposefully mixed costumes from various firms to create visual interest. When asked if he employed one firm to dress an entire play, Raleigh explained:

No; I think it is a mistake—it leads to monotony, while if each of your ladies goes to a dressmaker of her own you may get the same fashion, but you'll get it
treated from half a dozen points of view.¹

The fashion writer for The Sketch agreed with Raleigh and complained in 1897 that Lucile's dresses for The Liars showed a curious similarity, adding that "it would be wise not to let one dressmaker make all the gowns--each scene should show diversity of style, and, as your true artist always has an individuality, several true artists should be employed."²

While each actress often went to the dressmaker of her choice, as Raleigh suggested, the same firm might make costumes for a number of actresses in the same play. In the 1896 production of Gossip, for example, the Maison Jay created a morning-dress for Lillie Langtry and two gowns for Miss Skirving.³

The number of dressmakers working on a production ranged from one or two on up to twelve or thirteen, with four or five firms being the average. Cecil Raleigh's 1897 production of The White Heather used thirteen different costume suppliers including the couture houses of Worth and Jay, the department

¹ "A few words with Mr. Cecil Raleigh," The World of Dress, 4 (1901), 13.

² "Our Ladies' Pages," The Sketch, 19 (1897), 513.

³ Much of the information for this dissertation is taken from a large number of fashion columns, interviews, and articles in nineteenth-century British magazines and newspapers. In the interest of readability and space, it will not be possible to cite all of the sources for facts found in the text.
store Swan & Edgar, and the theatrical costumers Alias, Mrs. Nettleship, and Nathan.

Some productions required not only a large number of costume suppliers but also a large number of costumes. Messrs. Jay supplied The Talk of the Town with at least seventy costumes in 1905 and Debenham & Freebody made over fifty-two dresses for The Derby Winner in 1894. Requirements for historical plays could be monumental—H. B. Tree's production of Ulysses in 1902 required over two hundred costumes, while Henry Irving's Macbeth in 1889 used 408 costumes plus outfits for the principals. Lest this seem an impossible task, it must be remembered that the shops of some of the dressmakers and costumers were large operations. Charles and Jean Worth had approximately twelve hundred employees between 1871 and 1896, Charles Poynter Redfern employed a staff of five hundred at his Paris branch in 1891, and Madame Paquin had one thousand employees in her Paris workrooms with up to three hundred more at the London branch during the 1900s.\(^4\)

A play with dresses from top couturiers could create a lot of public interest, as illustrated by Sydney Grundy's 1902 comedy Frocks and Frills. The story of a dependent of an aristocratic family who becomes a famous modiste, the play naturally had many opportunities to show off the latest in

\(^4\) Blackwood's Magazine, p. 794; de Marly, pp. 47, 50.
dress. The managers, Frederick Harrison and Cyril Maude, and the author decided that each of the four acts should be dressed by a different firm. Interest in the play began as early as December 1901 when *The World of Dress* mentioned that it was looking forward to the production and that the leading artists of London were racking their brains to design suitable costumes. In January, the same magazine informed its readers that the best act of the play, which contained a scene in which the modiste shows off her latest creations, was designed by Mr. Hiley of Jay's, Ltd. The fashion writers for *The World of Dress* and *The Sketch* viewed some of the costumes on display at Jay's before the show opened. *The World of Dress* had to content itself with hinting that the dresses exhibited "the glorification of glacé, some marvels of painted muslins, dazzling diamonds, sable and lace, and silver tissue glistening through net and velvet appliqué, and wonderful ruchings of shaded chiffon, and garnitures of raised flowers. . . ." The writer explained to her readers that she could only hint at the sartorial glories because the magazine would be available one day before the play opened on 2 January and etiquette forbade her from writing detailed descriptions until the opening. Although

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it was known that Jay's was one of the costumers, speculation on the other two firms continued, with Paquin and Lucile being the favored choices.  

The dress reviews are not as specific as might be wished, but the final honors were apparently divided as follows: Mrs. Nettleship made at least one of the dresses for Act I, the supplier of the Act II costumes was not named, Jay's provided the gowns for Act III, and Paquin created the dresses for Act IV (see Plate II). The dresses earned praise from both fashion writers and drama critics, notably the drama critics for The Graphic and Sunday Times. The Sketch informed its readers that "the ladies have a rich treat in store, even as regards the frocks alone, which were, a few days ago, on view at the 'atelier' of the chief modiste concerned."  

The World of Dress began its review with:

The advent of "Frocks and Frills" at the Haymarket has if anything exceeded to the expectations of dress lovers. To those well-known establishments Messrs. Jay's, Limited, and Paquin must we accord superlative praise, and though the details of these beautiful gowns have been chronicled in all of our contemporaries, yet would it be unworthy of The World of Dress to omit to describe afresh these various creations.


7 "Musical and Theatrical Gossip," The Sketch, 36 (1902), 429.

8 5 (1902), 65.
Plate II—Three of the costumes worn in Procks and Frills. The dress on the left was created by Paquin. No designer was specified for the middle dress. The dress on the right was created by the Maison Jay and was made of lace, sable, and diamond trim. Drawings from The World of Dress, 5 (1902), 65.
The Queen praised the dresses in three different columns, two fashion columns and a review of the stage costumes. Mrs. Aria said of the gowns in "A Vista of Fashion":

With "Frocks and Frills," the Mecca of the feminine world of playgoers, fashion, even in the dead month of January, becomes a living thing of primary importance. We are accustomed to consider those weeks which are devoted to bargains as absolutely destitute of a novelty, but we have only to go to the Haymarket Theatre—and the delights of the frocks have no doubt been described elsewhere in these columns—to see all that is newest and best in gowns. Few of us can attain to the glorified of a dress set with diamonds, trimmed with Russian sable and silver, but nevertheless this costume is a monument of the magnificence of dress to-day. Great ingenuity may be recognized in the diversity of the black frocks which the assistants wear in the dressmaker's establishment Clothilde and Co. Each black dress bears some trimming of lace or embroidery, coloured cravat, or touch of velvet on the bodice, which makes it individual, and these might all serve as models for day costumes in the coming spring. ⁹

While the dress review in The Queen was almost exclusively made up of descriptions of the gowns, the reviewer offered the opinion that the model gowns at the heroine's dressmaking establishment "are worth coming a long way to see, especially the Empire dress made for the Queen of Spain in point de Venise and narrow bands of sable, the front glittering with cables of diamonds and magnificent cabochons of emeralds." ¹⁰

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³⁹ The Queen, 111 (1902), 102.
¹⁰ "Fashion Behind the Footlights in 'Frocks and Frills' at the Haymarket," The Queen, 111 (1902), 110.
As an added attraction, Sydney Grundy announced in April that Paquin, realizing their responsibility at the Haymarket, proposed to redress their act in the coming fashions of spring. The planned redressing did not happen, though, because the play closed on 25 April.

The firms whose costumes could prompt the kind of journalistic and public interest shown in Frocks and Frills were the Parisian couture houses of Worth, Paquin, Redfern, and Doucet—considered by Paul Poiret to be four of the five great designers of the 1890s—and the London establishments of Jay, Lucile, Reville & Rossiter, and Russell & Allen. These names insured that a female playgoer would be seeing the latest fashions during the course of an evening's entertainment.

The most revered of all the couture houses was the Maison Worth in Paris directed by Charles Worth until his death and then by his sons Jean Phillippe and Gaston. At the time of his death in 1895, Worth had been the supreme arbiter of taste in women's dress for almost thirty-five years and the firm was noted for its opulent creations. Although their clients were drawn from the rich and aristocratic of Europe and America and the sum involved could be a considerable

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11 "A Chat with Mr. Sydney Grundy," The World of Dress, April 1902, n. pag.

12 Paul Poiret, My First Fifty Years; from Shops and Shopping, p. 222.
amount, any woman with enough money could own a Worth gown. In an 1871 interview, Worth mentioned that a client could spend anywhere from £400 to £4,000 a year.\textsuperscript{13} Part of the expense of a Worth creation came from the fact that, while the design might be considered simple for the times, the fabrics and trims used were the finest and most extravagant. One of Worth's presentation outfits for Buckingham Palace consisted of a white brocaded velvet robe with a train of four yards of geranium-colored velvet lined with silver tissue and caught at the shoulder with diamond loops. Continuing his father's practices, Jean Phillippe designed a Louis XV fancy-dress outfit for the Duke of Marlborough in 1897 which consisted of a straw-colored velvet suit embroidered with silver, pearls, and diamonds, with a waistcoat of white and gold damask; the suit cost five thousand francs.\textsuperscript{14} Messrs. Worth used the same kind of fabrics and trim for their stage costumes, as can be seen from descriptions of two of Mrs. Langtry's gowns for the 1899 production of \textit{The Degenerates} (see Plates III and IV). The first was a gown of white brocaded satin with trim of strings of pearls and diamonds, caught by large diamond studs, across the bust, with more pearls and diamonds forming bracelet sleeves. The second costume was a gown of

\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Blackwood's Magazine}, p. 795.

\textsuperscript{14} de Marly, p. 42.
Plate III--Mrs. Langtry's gown of white brocaded satin with pearl and diamond trim created by the Maison Worth for The Degenerates. Photograph from The Sketch, 27 (1899), 341.
Plate IV--Mrs. Langtry's gown of Liberty satin with belt and shoulder straps of turquoise and diamonds created by the Maison Worth for The Degenerates. Photograph from The Sketch, 27 (1899), 341.
ivory Liberty satin brocade with belt and shoulder straps of turquoise and diamonds; the corsage and front slit of the satin tunic were bordered with inserted lace while the sleeves and trim were of another lace spangled with gold sequins, while the same lace showed down the front of the skirt and formed a flounce at the hem. Such opulent treatment was typical of stage fashions by the Maison Worth.

Along with Langtry, the establishment counted the actresses Elenora Duse, Mrs. Brown-Potter, and Mary Moore among its regular customers. Mrs. Langtry ordered her costumes for *She Stoops to Conquer* (1881), *A Society Butterfly* (1894), *The Degenerates* (1899), and *A Royal Necklace* (1901), plus many of her street clothes from Worth's. Jean Worth provided Mrs. Brown-Potter with her gowns for *Francillon* (1897), *The Lady of Lyons* (1898), *The Musketeers* (1898), and *Carnac Sahib* (1899). If Mrs. Brown-Potter's statement in 1899 that Worth always supplied her costumes is accurate,\(^{15}\) he also made her dresses for *Charlotte Corday* (1899) and *Dame aux Camélias*. Mary Moore had Jean Worth create her costumes for *Cyrano de Bergerac* (1900), *David Garrick* (1899), and the command performance of *David Garrick* (1903).

Worth provided some or all of the women's costumes for at least twenty-two productions on the London stage between

1881 and 1907. Most of the stage gowns were of the latest fashion but some were historical costumes including an eighteenth-century court dress of silver brocade for *A Royal Necklace*, another eighteenth-century dress of pink satin embroidered with white silk and decorated with silver tinsel for David Garrick (1903), and a seventeenth-century gown of white satin trimmed with lace and pearls for *Cyrano de Bergerac*. For the greater convenience of his English clients, Worth opened a London branch of his firm possibly as early as the 1880s, but more likely around 1900—the date being a subject of contention among costume historians. Alison Adburgham, in *Shops and Shopping*, lists Worth et Cie, Bond Street, as one of the firms often mentioned in fashion magazines of the late 1880s. In 1897, *The Queen* noted that Messrs. Worth of New Bond Street were responsible for some of the costumes in *The Princess and the Butterfly* at the

16 Because fashion reviews don't always mention who was responsible for particular stage costumes and the credits on play programs sometimes change after they have been printed, it is difficult to determine the exact number of productions that any dressmaker costumed. I have tried to list only those credits that can be established by more than one source, thus any numbers in the text or the appendix are only minimums.

17 "Place aux Dames," *The Graphic*, 4 May 1901, p. 630; *The World of Dress*, 6 (1903), 17; 3 (1900), 146.

18 Adburgham, p. 218.
St. James' Theatre. Diana de Marly, however, writes in *The History of Haute Couture* that a Maison Worth in London during the 1880s had nothing to do with the Paris house and that the real Worth opened his branch at 3 Hanover Square. It may be correct that the Worth in the 1880s was not Charles Worth, but Jean Phillippe opened a London branch of Maison Worth earlier than de Marly's Hanover Square address. In a 1902 interview in London, Lillie Langtry mentions that Mr. Worth wanted to copy an antique button of hers and that she was "just off to consult him now at the new place he has opened over here. . . ." The move to Hanover Square was done in 1911 for reasons of expansion, as the *Sunday Times* explained:

One of the most interesting events of the week, from the fashion point of view, has been the opening of the palatial new premises of Worth, of Paris, at 3, Hanover Square. The original premises in New Burlington-street had long since proved too cramped for the ever-increasing business of this famous Paris house, so that a move became imperative. . . .

Whatever its specific opening date, the London branch gave actresses and managers the option of ordering costumes at

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19 101 (1897), 630.
20 De Marly, pp. 111, 49-50.
22 "In Fashions's Footsteps," 15 Oct. 1911, p. 18.
home or taking a buying trip to Paris. Some, like Mrs. Langtry, still preferred to travel to Paris in order to purchase outfits from a number of couturiers and milliners at one time.

While Worth and son designed costumes for any period required by their clients, Paquin, Ltd. confined its effort to fashions for modern plays. Madame Paquin founded her house in Paris in 1891 after receiving training as a dressmaker at Maison Rouff. The business prospered so well that she was able to open a London branch at 39 Dover Street sometime before June of 1898. The London branch, sometimes referred to as Messrs. Paquin, actually supplied most of the costumes for the London stage with Madame Paquin personally designing special orders such as gowns for Sarah Bernhardt and Lillie Langtry. It is possible that Mme. Paquin designed some of the other stage gowns, but even if she did not, she must have retained control over the products of the branch workshop. For Mrs. Langtry, Mme. Paquin created the dresses for The Crossways (1902), The Degenerates (1911), The Sins of Society (1911), and A Fearful Joy (1908). Paquin or Paquin Ltd. of Dover Street designed and made all or some of the dresses for another thirty-three productions between 1895

23 The fashion writer for The Sketch wrote that she wandered into Paquin's of 39 Dover Street in search of new clothes in the 15 June issue, 1898, p. 337.
and 1914, including costumes for Violet Vanbrugh, Mary Moore, Alexandra Carlisle, and Kate Cutler. Some of the other titles are *The Great Ruby* (1898), *Mrs. Dane's Defence* (1900), *The Passing of the Third Floor Back* (1908), and *Bought and Paid For* (1913).

Whether the gowns originated in Paris or London, they were considered to be the latest word in Paris fashion. Referring to Langtry's dresses in *The Sins of Society*, the *Sunday Times* wrote that the "exquisite toilettes have been designed by Madame Paquin herself and represent the most chic and exclusive fashions for the coming season." In 1911, the *Sunday Times* also described Madame Paquin's gowns for *The Degenerates* as being "carried out in those rich fabrics and with that singular grace and distinction inseparable from the creations of the Maison Paquin." Gowns originating from Paquin of London were no less distinctive or esteemed, as can be seen by an examination of the 1904 production of *The Duke of Killicrankie*. The four principal ladies wore at least nine outfits, with Eva Moore wearing four of the nine. Outstanding costumes were Miss Moore's evening gown of silk mousseline trimmed with Malines lace; the accompanying cloak of Liberty satin which was trimmed with lace and embroidery

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24 2 April 1911, p. 18.
and lined with pink; and Miss Illington's frock of white tulle, embroidered with gold, silver, and diamonds, draped over yellow silk and trimmed with lace. The Queen called the gowns "far more beautiful and prophetic of the coming modes than any that have been seen on the stage for months past. . . ." The Sunday Times advised that those "who are anxious to have a glimpse into the future, as far as fashions in evening dress and summer frocks, too, are concerned, should make a point of paying a visit to the Criterion Theatre. . . ." Like Charles and Jean Worth, Paquin was known for the latest in glamour and luxury.

While Worth and Paquin created opulent and glamorous stage fashions from the start, Redfern & Sons began with exquisitely tailored outfits and branched into couture dresses later. John Redfern had started the business in 1842 or the 1850s as a draper on the Isle of Wight. By 1871, he had become a silk mercer and maker of mourning wear and, when Cowes became the center of the yachting world, Redfern added a tailoring outfit to make ladies' yachting suits. The ladies' outfits were so successful that Redfern opened a London branch at 26a Conduit Street. When his sons Ernest

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26 115 (1904), 219.


28 Anny Latour states in King of Fashion that Redfern started his business in 1842, but de Marly writes that he began in the 1850s.
and Charles Poynter joined the firm, the name changed to Redfern & Sons. In 1879, John Redfern created the Jersey Costume, an outfit consisting of a close-fitting, long-sleeved bodice of knitted wool united to a blue pleated skirt by a red sash. The costume was worn by Lillie Langtry in the summer of that year and became a public craze, with Jean Worth attributing its popularity to Langtry's perfect body. The popularity of the Jersey Costume attracted more business from the upper class and the aristocracy. By 1881, Redfern was advertising his firm as "Ladies' Tailors--by special Warrant of Appointment to H. M. The Queen, H. R. H. The Princess of Wales, H. I. M. The Empress of Russia." Charles Poynter Redfern founded a Paris branch in 1881 and continued to run it. By 1886, Redfern's business was so great that he had opened another branch in New York. The success of the tailored wear encouraged a demand for other fashionable clothes, so Redfern used 26 and 27 Conduit Street for a tailoring establishment and opened a separate house at

29 de Marly, pp. 59-60.


27 Bond Street for couture dresses. Other royal clients followed the lead of Queen Alexandra, who granted Messrs. Redfern her royal appointment. In 1904, The Sketch commented on its clientele:

Apropos of gowns and gauds, I see that Princess Henry of Prussia, who is always extremely well-equipped as to clothes and dresses in the utmost good taste, has appointed Messrs. Redfern as Court Dressmaker to Her Royal Highness. Soon there will not be a living Royalty to whom this enterprising firm is not accredited; and, if irreproachable fit and exquisite detail count for anything, they certainly deserve all the honour they get.33

Although the firm was technically an English one with a Paris branch, the French considered Messrs. Redfern one of their own and elected it a member of the Chambre Syndicale de la Haute Couture.

Messrs. Redfern's work for the English stage afforded them an opportunity to show off both their well-known tailored wear and their couture dresses. The Amazons, produced in 1893, used the firm's skills well for a number of ladies' shooting and riding outfits for Lily Hanbury, Pattie Browne, and Ellaline Terriss plus a few dresses for other ladies in the play. Messrs. Redfern created, among others, a grey travelling outfit; three shooting outfits, all consisting of pants or knee-breeches, waistcoats, and shooting coats;

33 45 (1904), 107.
three gymnasium outfits consisting of knee-breeches, long-sleeved tunic, and cape; and three dinner gowns. The shooting outfits were definitely masculine, while the dinner gowns were quite the opposite; Lily Hanbury appeared in an Empire gown of accordian-pleated gold silk trimmed with gold embroidered white silk, Pattie Browne donned a dress of green Bengaline, and Ellaline Terriss wore a pink silk dress beaded in crystal.\textsuperscript{34} While the shooting costumes were not adopted by the female population, the hats worn with them proved to be popular. Speaking of a visit to Redfern's, the fashion writer for \textit{The Sketch} mentioned them:

\begin{quote}
The hat, which was modelled on the same lines as that worn by Miss Hanbury in "The Amazons" --a piece, by-the-way, which has made these self-same hats the rage of the autumn seasons--was of green felt, trimmed with a red feather.\textsuperscript{35}
\end{quote}

Two of the other plays using Messrs. Redfern's tailoring skills were \textit{My Girl} (1896) and \textit{My Wife} (1907). For \textit{My Girl}, Messrs. Redfern provided the ladies of the chorus with yachting costumes of blue and white serge, made Ethel Haydon an elaborate long-tailed Directoire coat of white velours moiré with revers piped in turquoise velvet, and created gowns for some of the other principal ladies. \textit{My Wife}

\textsuperscript{34} "Emancipated Costumes in Mr. Pinero's Play, 'The Amazons,'" \textit{The Queen}, 93 (1893), 374; \textit{The Sketch}, 1 (1893), 446.

\textsuperscript{35} 4 (1893), 226.
required at least three tailormades for Marie Löhr and others as well as some day frocks and evening gowns (see Plate I). 36

Whether tailormades or evening gowns, Redfern's stage costumes represented the latest in fashion. The Queen advised its readers that the costumes for My Wife were "Quite the latest thing in Parisian tailor-mades. . . ." 37 When The Sins of Society opened in the same year, The World of Dress published a page of sketches of four Redfern gowns worn in the production with the note that "On the opposite page we have sketched four typical gowns which will practically give the keynote for the coming season in the matter of smart garments." 38 The Sunday Times wrote of the costumes:

The beautiful dresses worn in the course of the play by Miss Constance Collier, Miss Fanny Brough, and Miss Adrienne Augarde were all specially designed and made by Redfern, a fact which in itself is sufficient to attract to the theatre all who are interested in the forthcoming fashions, since these frocks, coats, and hats represent naturally the most chic and exclusive modes as they will be seen in the immediate future. 39

36 The Sketch, 14 (1896), 546; The Queen, 121 (1907), 1074.
37 The Queen, 1074.
38 10 (1907), pp. 38, 39.
In 1908, the *Sunday Times* described Redfern's costumes for *The Explorer* in an article entitled "Suggestions for Ascot Gowns and Millinery." The columnist advised that:

> Many suggestions for smart Ascot gowns may be found among the charming frocks which were worn last night at the Lyric Theatre on the occasion of the first performance of Mr. Somerset Maugham's new play "The Explorer." . . . These beautiful gowns were specially designed and executed by Redfern, of Conduit-street and Bond-street, and are doubly interesting from the fact that they undoubtedly represent some of the most exclusive fashions of the moment.40

Excluding the work that Charles Poynter Redfern did for the French stage, Messrs. Redfern provided all or some of the latest fashions for at least thirty productions between 1893 and 1910. Some of the actresses who wore stage costumes by Messrs. Redfern were Ellaline Terriss, Rose Leclercq, Marie Tempest, Fanny Brough, and Mrs. Cecil Raleigh.

Unlike the other three top French couturiers, Jacques Doucet confined most of his theatrical work to the French stage, specifically to making costumes for Réjane. In fact, he designed some of the gowns for only four English productions—two productions of *Madame Sans-Gene* in 1897 and 1898 for Henry Irving, *The Marriage of Kitty* (1902), and *The Man of the Moment* (1905). Doucet probably designed Ellen Terry's costumes for the 1897 *Madame Sans-Gene*, since the *Sunday Times*...
Times remarked that the costumes "are, practically, copied from those worn by Madame Réjane. . . ."\textsuperscript{41} In addition, Doucet created at least one gown for Lillie Langtry's personal wardrobe and a number of gowns for Annie Dirkens.

Of the London couturiers, Lucile was probably the most famous during the 1890s and 1900s, principally because of her work for the London stage. Lucile had established her dressmaking business as early as 1890, but it was her gowns for Charles Wyndham's production of \textit{The Liars} in 1897 that first brought her widespread notice.\textsuperscript{42} Noteworthy gowns in the production included Mary Moore's evening dress of cream lace embroidered with rose sequins over a foundation of four skirts made of silver glacé, cream lace, and two shades of pink moiré antique; Irene Vanbrugh's first gown of primrose mousseline de soie lined with deep orange glacé and trimmed with silver chiffon and jet; and Janet Steer's dress of emerald green mousseline de soie over silk, trimmed with emerald sequins, and sleeves of tucked écreuil chiffon. In all, there were some twelve outfits for the show. Not surprisingly, \textit{The Queen} wrote that the costumes were "on the most lavish scale, and open up a dazzling vista of the possibilities

\textsuperscript{41} 11 April, 1897, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{42} Lady Duff Gordon, \textit{Discretions and Indiscretions} (New York: Frederick A. Stokes; 1932), p. 45.
of brilliance which this winter's fashions are to possess." Lucile later redressed the piece on its one hundred and fiftieth performance in 1898. One of Mary Moore's new dresses attracted such attention that one of The Sketch's readers requested that the ladies' page publish a sketch of the gown—it kindly complied. By the end of 1898, Lucile's fame had grown because of her creations for The Liars, The Physicians, and The Gipsy Earl. In its review of costumes for The Gipsy Earl, The Queen mentioned that the establishment had "made itself a name of note by its exquisite stage dresses. . . ." Lucile counted actresses among her regular clients and created many dresses for Mary Moore, Lily Elsie, Gertie Millar, and Gaby Deslys. Ellis Jeffreys was also one to be dressed by the Maison Lucile, as well as Irene Vanbrugh, who had her gowns made by Lucile or Madame Hayward. Seymour Hicks used Lucile's dresses for many of his productions because he thought she was one of the best dressmakers. Except for the costumes in Becky Sharp, Lucile's gowns were used in modern plays, a few of the more well-known plays being

43 102 (1897), 692.
44 104 (1898), 432.
45 Lady Duff Gordon, pp. 46, 220, 110, 113.
Hearts are Trumps (1899), Peril (1902), and The Admirable Crichton.

In 1904 Lucile's "psychological dresses" became the rage. These were apparently an extension of her "personality dresses," which were designed to harmonize with the characteristics of her clients. Although Lucile mentions in her autobiography that it was her "personality dresses" that brought her to the attention of Charles Wyndham in 1897, specific mention of the "psychological dresses" does not show up in reviews until 1904 when The Sketch noted that "'Madame Lucile' has inaugurated the notion of psychological costumes, and it is said that every frock, among the many which are shortly to be seen brightening the stage of the Vaudeville Theatre, will express some definite emotion or feeling." The article referred to Lucile's designs for The Catch of the Season at the Vaudeville (see Plate V) and the forthcoming The Golden Light.46

The gowns for The Catch of the Season, at least nine gowns for the principals plus those for the Gibson Girls and the Lucille Girls, were made in such soft and romantic colors as rose pink, pale blue, mauve, copper, and creme.47 Although none of the reviews mentioned any specific

46 47 (1904), 337.
47 "Fashions Behind the Footlights," The Queen, 116 (1904), 431.
Plate V—Some of the costumes by Lucile for *The Catch of the Season*. The left figure is Zena Dare, the middle is Ruby Ray, and the right is Molly Lowell. Illustration from *The Queen*, 116 (1904), 43.
correspondence between the colors and emotions, publicity from the Vaudeville explained their purpose:

Lucile believes that gowns may express ideas from grave to gay, even emotions and passions. So she has gone to the silent worlds of desires and temperaments and sensations and translates their secrets into wondrous colors and entrancing forms.

Lucile added later that the "publicity agent for the Vaudeville Theatre must have been worth his money!" The inventive explanation of "psychological gowns" was part of a private showing of the costumes held at Lucile's a few days before the opening of the play. Lucile turned part of the space at Hanover Square into a small theatre complete with a tiny stage equipped with background curtains and footlights. Invitations were sent out to clients of the house and various fashion writers. During the show, the gowns were shown by models who apparently posed on the stage for a time, descended a set of stairs, and walked among the spectators. Favorably impressed with the fashion show, the reviewer for the Sunday Times thought that it was a happy compromise, since the dwindling number of dress rehearsals for reviewers and illustrators meant that fashion writers had to run around to each modiste to catch a glimpse of forthcoming stage fashions. The columnist hoped that such private views would continue and mentioned that they should bring prompt orders to the

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48 Lady Duff Gordon, p. 93.
dressmaker and afford theatre managers opportunities to titillate the curiosity of half-hearted playgoers. Whether seen on the stage of Lucile's or the Vaudeville, the costumes proved so popular that the firm could scarcely cope with the number of orders placed for similar dresses. While it is unclear whether Lucile continued to hold private views of her stage costumes, she did continue to use her little stage for fashion shows.

Mrs. Brown-Potter's costumes for The Golden Light further inflamed the passion for Lucile's psychological gowns. One of the dresses worn in the show matches the description of "'Consolable Sorrow' (mauve chiffon over pale grey, with a deep-sleeved short coat in horizontally pleated black chiffon edged with silver lace)" designed for Mrs. Brown-Potter which was described in The Changing World of Fashion. Whatever its name, the gown of grey and mauve inspired many copies, as The Sketch recorded:

As one result of Mrs. Brown-Potter's play, one hears that every woman in London with the least soupcon of an interesting past is en route to her dressmaker for a gray gown with those touches of mauve which indicate

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49 11 Sept. 1904, p. 6.

50 Lady Duff Gordon, p. 93.

51 In 1908, the 13 June issue of The Illustrated London News published a drawing of the stage and praised Lucile's ingenious adaptation of the methods of the playhouse.
chastened sorrow without excluding the possibility of future uplifting of spirit. 52

Ironically, The Merry Widow, the 1907 production for which Lucile is most remembered today, did not receive as much press coverage as some of her other shows. A dress review in The Play Pictorial may give a clue as to the reason:

They are essentially stage gowns, and so lavishly are they strewn . . . with gold and silver . . . The highwaisted bodices, the long trailing skirts, the tinted aigrette floating from perfectly dressed heads, how well they suit the tall, graceful Daly girls and the Daly stage! but alas! how very little practicable for the average woman with the average dress allowance. But still, let us admit it, their effect is undoubtedly artistic.53

If the gowns were out of reach of the public's pocketbook, the hats were not and Lily Elsie's wide-brimmed, plumed hats became the rage of the season, as costume history books have recorded. The hats were so popular that Lucile received orders for them from other parts of Europe and America. In fact, de Marly feels that the popularity of the hat alone established Lucile as an international name.54

Along with Lucile, there were a number of small but exclusive couture houses in London that supplied fashionable dress for the stage, two of the most famous being Russell & Allen and Reville & Rossiter. Russell & Allen, of Old Bond

53 10 (1907), 106.
54 de Marly, pp. 173-74.
Street, was an exclusive dressmaking establishment that expanded during the 1880s. The Queen characterized them as "a firm whose name is synonymous with elegance." Of their stage designs, the most noteworthy are those for The Fringe of Society, Lillie Langtry's gowns for Agatha Tylden, Olga Nethersole's dresses for The Transgressor, and Mrs. Raleigh's gowns for The Great Ruby. Founded in 1906 by two buyers from Jay's, Reville & Rossiter provided gowns for plays such as The Dancing Girl, Olive Latimer's Husband, and The Hope.

Although the Maison Jay began as a department store, it attained the stature of a couture house in the 1890s; however classified, the firm supplied a larger number of stage fashions than any of the other couture houses or department stores. The Maison Jay started out as Jay's General Mourning Wearhouse, a fabric and dressmaking store that provided any kind of garb or accessory required by grieving ladies. Founded by Mr. W. C. Jay in 1841, the firm occupied the whole of three houses in Regent Street, Nos. 247, 248, and 249. As late as 1886 Jay's was still advertising its services as mourning for families and, secondarily, experienced dressmakers.

During the early 1890s, Jay's expanded into fashionable gowns, shortened their name, and added Mr. Hiley as fashion designer. The first play to use a costume from

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55 92 (1892), 678.

56 Adburgham, p. 65.
Messrs. Jay was Gudgeons (1893), in which Janet Steer wore a walking dress and coat of black satin. The next year Jay's supplied costumes, some of which were mourning wear, for three productions. For The Case of Rebellious Susan Mary Moore wore a gown of white cloth with steel buttons and a cloak from Jay's. In A Society Butterfly Rose Leclercq wore two evening gowns, one of pearl grey satin trimmed with black jet and the other of black Lyon velvet with panels and collar of point lace.  

For the third play, Slaves of the Ring, Messrs. Jay supplied all of the gowns, which included: two wedding gowns, a matron's gown of grey brocade trimmed with steel embroidery and white lace, and another gown of white moiré, black satin, and pink chiffon for Act I; mourning outfits for everyone plus a night dress of white silk and lace for Act II; an Empire evening gown of yellow satin trimmed with gold sequins, another evening gown of white satin embroidered with silver butterflies, a third evening gown of orange velvet decorated with gold sequins and diamond ornaments, and one more evening gown of petunia velvet adorned with pale yellow lace, jet, and fur for Act III. 

Although Messrs. Jay retained a mourning department, it is apparent from the descriptions of the costumes that they had

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57 "Fashions Behind the Footlights," The Queen, 95 (1894), 800.
58 "Fashions Up to Date," The Sketch, 8 (1895), 590.
made the transition to dressmaker of fashionable garments. By 1907, Jay's was devoting half of their effort to fashionable creations.59

Judging from remarks in The Queen and The Sketch, the Maison Jay was considered a top fashion house by 1894. The Sketch wrote of the costumes for Slaves of the Ring:

the most famous modistes are now called in to aid in the apotheosis of the stage-dress, with the result that we often have an extensive series of "living (fashion) pictures" presented to us at our leading theatres, to our great edification and the consequent elaboration of our own attire—and also of our dressmakers' bills. Take, for instance, the ill-fated "Slaves of the Ring," at the Garrick, which was entirely dressed by Messrs. Jay, of Regent Street. So altogether beautiful were the costumes that, although the piece has already run its little allotted span, they remained in my mind as such excellent representations of genuinely up-to-date fashion that I cannot resist presenting them to you as such.60

Speaking of the gowns for A Society Butterfly, The Queen said of the collaboration of dressmakers:

If anyone set herself ("anyone" being inevitably a woman) to imagine one of the strongest sartorial combinations, she could but suggest that Worth should join hands with Redfern and Jay, that a dressmaker of the cachet of Mme. Phillippe should supply a gown or two and Heath add some of his hats—and behold a ministry of all the

59 "Frocks of the 'Stronger Sex,',' The Queen, 121 (1907), 221.

60 8 (1895), 590.
talents, against which the mere individual should contend in vain!\textsuperscript{61}

Thus Jay's was classed not only as one of the best in England, but also on a par with the couturiers of Paris.

The Maison Jay continued to be both fashion establishment and a supplier of theatrical costumes for the next twenty years, providing outfits for over seventy productions between 1893 and 1908. For Augustin Daly, the firm created gowns for the two editions of An Artist's Model (1895) and The Geisha (1896). In 1897 Mr. Hiley of Jay's provided dresses for Juliette Nesville, Miss Boote, Miss Trelawney, and Maud Hobson for their American tour under the direction of George Edwardes. The Queen published sketches of the gowns, with Jay's permission, so that their detail would be available to the magazine's English readers. For Seymour Hicks, Jay's supplied fashions for One of the Best (1896), The Catch of the Season (1905), and The Talk of the Town (1905), for which Hicks ordered some seventy costumes from them. In fact, Mr. Hicks mentioned in an interview that Lucile and Jay, the two best firms, made the bulk of the costumes for his modern productions, with Mr. Hiley designing the Jay creations.\textsuperscript{62}

Other productions to use Jay fashions were The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith (1895), The Princess and the Butterfly (1897),

\textsuperscript{61} 95 (1894), 800.

The White Heather (1897), The Gay Lord Quex (1899), The Whirl of the Town (1901), and The Spring Chicken (1905).

The list of actresses dressed by Jay's is, not surprisingly, extensive and includes Lillie Langtry, Rose Leclercq, Marie Tempest, Mary Moore, Charlotte Granville, Ellis Jeffreys, Ellaline Terriss, Fanny Ward, Kate Cutler, Violet Vanbrugh, and Olga Nethersole. In addition, Ada Reeve mentioned in an interview that Jay's were always responsible for her frocks, which would include the gowns for The Shop Girl (1894), All Abroad (1895), Florodora (1899), and Kitty Grey (1901). Kate Rorke, Violet Vanbrugh, and Fanny Ward also took Jay's creations with them on their American tours.

The stage gowns from Messrs. Jay used the same fabrics employed in their other creations—gold or silver tissue, satins, velvets, taffetas, and lace for evening wear; chiffon, voiles, and cashmere for day dresses. In an interview with The World of Dress, Mr. Hiley explained the care with which he designed stage costumes:

In the ordinary way I content myself with gleaning a general idea of the various situations, and the age, social standing, prominence, and tastes of each character. I also pay particular attention to the colour scheme of the different scenes, so that the costumes may not clash with the stage setting. When these details have been duly mastered I

Mr. Hiley was not part of the group of fashion designers who were accused of dressing actresses with no regard to the social station of their roles. While the designers at Jay's might take such care with the original designs, they were known to change their minds later on. The reviewer for The World of Dress mentioned their habit of altering creations in her column on the gowns for Miss Hobbs. After describing and praising the dresses seen at the dress rehearsal, the reviewer added that she could not be sure of their exact description "as Messrs. Jay, like all great artists, are never really satisfied, even with their most successful creations, and have a somewhat disconcerting habit of varying their masterpieces even after a dress rehearsal of a play."  

A number of other department stores and shops supplied costumes for the stage. The major names were Lewis & Allenby, the most famous silk mercers in London during the middle part of the century, Swan & Edgar, Debenham & Freebody, Marshall & Snelgrove, and Peter Robinson. Even Harrod's was not above providing costumes for the stage; in 1909 George Edwardes ordered approximately fifty dresses for Our Miss Gibbs. Harrod's provided not only the dresses, but also lent

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64 Dec. 1904, p. 37.
65 Jan. 1900, p. 29.
the design of two of its departments so that the play used representations of Harrod's Royal Exchange and Millinery Departments for two scenes.66 Liberty and Company, oriental silk specialists, provided both fabric and gowns for a number of theatrical productions starting in 1881. The Liberty silks were so famous that they received notice in fashion reviews even when the dresses had been made by a firm other than Liberty's. The exotic silks were an essential ingredient for the Aesthetic costumes on and off the stage in the early 1880s; other Liberty silks were used for opulent historical costumes and Liberty tea-gowns were frequently seen onstage.

Theatrical fashions were also made by a number of small dressmaking establishments throughout London. Madame Hayward, of Bond Street, was a favorite of Irene Vanbrugh and George Alexander, to name just two. She provided some or all of the dresses for such plays as The Great Ruby (1898), The Gay Lord Quex (1899), An Interrupted Honeymoon (1899), and Kitty Grey (1900). Other dressmakers were Mme. Yorke, Mme. Viola, Mme. Savage, and Mme. Purdue.

Providing costumes for the theatre offered advantages for the couturiers, department stores, and small dressmakers. Primarily, they received free publicity in the form of program credit and mention in various dress reviews. Lucile's

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66 Adburgham, pp. 244, 274.
growing fame and consequent growing business is a prime example of the effectiveness of such publicity. The exposure could also extend to other countries when actresses took the English or Parisian fashions with them on their foreign tours, particularly tours to America.

Another advantage over magazine features or advertisements was that it might have lessened the amount of illegal copying of a firm's designs. Magazines dealt in the publishing of engravings of the latest fashions and, since it was common practice for dressmakers to copy engravings of the new fashions, a couture house could lose business from unlicensed copies of its designs. Stage costumes offered a safer form of advertising because the public saw the new fashions under conditions that made it more difficult for a pirate to copy designs. A consumer could study an outfit, find out from her program which house was responsible for it, and then order a copy from the house itself. As just one example of such practice, Marie Tempest recounted that within a week of the opening of The Freedom of Suzanne in 1904, the Paris firm that had made her Act I coat received orders for seven copies.67 Advertising by way of the theatre does seem, on the surface, to be as much of a double-edged sword because fashion columns reviewing stage costumes sometimes included

illustrations of the described gown—illustrations that could be copied by a dressmaker as easily as fashion engravings in a magazine. Yet such illustrations were published with the permission of the producer or the couturier. It might be that the advantages of free advertising and the amount of business engendered by providing stage costumes offset the possibility of petty piracy by small dressmaking establishments.

Showing fashions on the stage could have been preferable to the practice of sending a designer's latest creations to social functions on the backs of live mannequins. Although writing of the French stage, one explanation of advertisement on the stage holds true for the English stage as well:

While criticism continued to be levelled at the luxury of the dresses on the stage, the creation of stage costume was the best advertisement for the couturiers. They continued to send their mannequins to the races, but here only the expert eye knew how to differentiate between the creations of the great fashion houses. They passed and received only a fleeting glance. It was quite different in the theatre. The name of the couturier stood in black and white on the programme. And on the stage were the beautiful dresses, framed by a décor expressly designed to suit their splendour—the pastel-coloured boudoir to the fragile muslin negligee, the elegantly furnished salon to the evening gowns, the gardens with their flowering shrubs to the dainty summer dresses.68

In terms of modelling the clothes, conditions on the stage could be preferable to those in the couture houses. To ensure that standards of propriety were maintained, the Parisian--and later English--houses that used live mannequins used plain-looking women who wore maillots, black long-sleeved underwear reaching from chin to toe, under each outfit modelled. The convention of the maillot continued until the 1900s. Lucile described the effect of the black garments on possible buyers:

I shall never forget being taken to see the models of a famous house in Paris and the positive shock I felt when I saw lovely evening dresses in pale shades being worn by girls whose arms and necks, in dingy black satin, emerged from the low-cut décolletés. I decided that nothing on earth would induce me to show such atrocities.

Realism on the stage allowed actresses to wear costumes unencumbered by such a maillot, no matter how revealing the outfit. The clothes would certainly look more inviting on a beautiful actress than on the plain mannequins of a couture house. Also actresses came in all shapes and sizes from young girls to older matrons; such a range allowed women to note which styles looked well on which particular figures or what styles might look nice on a particular group, matrons for example.

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69 Adburgham, p. 247.
More importantly, perhaps, the stage provided fashion makers and theatrical costumers with a great deal of business. From the middle of the 1890s through part of the 1900s, an average of fifty shows each year used costumes worthy enough to be described in at least one dress review. There were, of course, many other productions that needed costumes besides those singled out by the fashion columnists. Costumes for the noteworthy shows ranged from a few to the hundreds. A small comedy like *Gossip* (1896) required five dresses and one evening cloak for Mrs. Langtry, three dresses for Miss Calhoun, two dresses for Miss Skirving, and at least one gown for Esme Beringer. *The Princess and the Butterfly* required some thirty women's costumes, *The Flood Tide* used approximately eighty dresses, and *The Derby Winner* needed fifty gowns for the crowd alone. For a musical like *An Artist's Model*, over twenty dresses were needed: four day dresses, nine ball gowns, two cloaks, two fancy "flower" dresses, and at least one set of frocks for the chorus. At the top of the scale, a historical play could require hundreds of costumes, especially if it was produced by Henry Irving or H. B. Tree. As mentioned before, Irving's 1889 *Macbeth* used over four hundred costumes, while Tree's production of *Herod* (1900) needed 250 costumes.

Considering the cost of some of the stage costumes, a theatrical order could generate quite a bit of money. Seymour Hicks estimated that he spend £6,500 on the dresses for The
Catch of the Season and £7,000 for the frocks in The Cherry Girl, not including the price of redressing one or both of the plays. On a less extravagant scale, George Alexander paid £155 for costumes in The Man of Forty and £143 for the ones in Rupert of Hentzau. Mrs. Langtry said that several of the costumes, apart from hers, in A Royal Necklace cost over eighty pounds each; presumably hers cost more. Amounts charged by Lucile give an indication of the prices that actresses and producers might have paid for stage fashions, although there are rumors that couturiers did not always charge full price for stage costumes because of their publicity value. In any case, when Lucile opened her New York branch in 1910, she was charging eighty pounds for an evening gown, eight hundred pounds for an evening wrap, sixty pounds for an afternoon gown, twenty pounds for a parasol, and up to three thousand pounds for a fur coat. This was at a time when a middle-class man earned between £160 and £700 a year, while an average worker was making up to £77 a year. Even charging less than couture prices, dressmakers could increase their business by providing stage costumes.

70 The World of Dress, May 1905, pp. 21-22.
73 de Marly, pp. 126-27.
Whether it was the free publicity, increased business, or just the glamour of the stage, top couturiers and other dressmakers in London and Paris seemed more than willing to design or make what was required for the ladies of the theatre. Some of the firms, like Worth, created both modern and historic gowns while others, such as Redfern, confined themselves to contemporary fashions. Whatever the period of the gowns, fashion creators did not skimp on stage costumes, rather they often provided the best, latest, or costliest that could be managed. With such talent and care being lavished on theatrical dress, it is no wonder that fashion columns of the time looked to the stage for guidance. Although couturiers and dressmakers made most of the modern stage fashions, producers and actresses also used the services of theatrical costumiers in London.
CHAPTER III
THEATRICAL COSTUME DESIGNERS AND COSTUMIERS

While couture houses and dressmakers were responsible for most of the modern fashions on the stage, theatrical costumers made the majority of historical and fantastic costumes, as well as some of the modern gowns, required for stage productions. The separation between costumier and couturier was not as distinct as one might think. Mr. Fox, costumier and wig-maker, also specialized in Court-dress, examples of which could run as high as three hundred guineas.¹ The aristocracy and upper class were just as likely to order their fancy-dress costumes from the designer/costumier Charles Alias as from Charles Worth and the costume house of Nathan's had a great deal to do with the tableaux vivants of Princess Beatrice and others at Osborne House during the reign of Queen Victoria. B. J. Simmons started business as a theatrical costuming house and later expanded to add a fashion department. As with the employment of the couture houses, theatrical producers and designers often used more than one theatrical costumer for the same production.

¹ One guinea equalled twenty-one shillings, which was more than a British pound since twenty shillings made a pound.
The preparation of stage costumes was guided by theatrical costume designers or painters who were noted for their expertise in archeological research. Laurence Alma-Tadema, Byam Shaw, Seymour Lucas, and Edward Burne-Jones were considered to be the artists who knew the most about historical costumes, settings, and properties. Because the four painters were considered experts in antiquarian and archaeological research, costumes designed by them were viewed as the epitome of historical accuracy by producers, dress reviewers, and the public. The Magazine of Art summed up the general opinion when it wrote that "When Mr. Alma-Tadema, Mr. Seymour Lucas, or some other well-known artist of antiquarian knowledge and instincts, supplies the designs for the dress, we may be pretty certain of accuracy and beauty...".\(^2\) Alma-Tadema designed costumes for at least five productions, three productions of Julius Caesar (1898, 1900, 1904) for H. B. Tree, Hypatia (1893) for Tree, and Coriolanus (1901). Byam Shaw designed the costumes for The Twin Sister (1902), tableau costumes for Irene Vanbrugh in The Princess's Nose (1902), Much Ado About Nothing (1905), and Tristan and Iseult (1906). Seymour Lucas designed some or all of the costumes for Richard III for Mr. Mansfield (1889), Ravenswood (1890) starring Henry Irving and Ellen Terry, Charles I (1891) for Irving, and Henry VIII (1892) with Irving and Terry, and The

\(^2\) 12 (1889), 98.
Armada (1888). Burne-Jones also worked with Irving when he
designed the costumes for King Arthur (1895) at the Lyceum
Theatre (see Plate VI).

The artists attempted to make their costume designs as
historically accurate as possible. For example, when Charles
Cattermole and Hawes Craven designed the costumes and sets,
respectively, for Irving's Macbeth in 1889, they spent a
month in the British Museum and South Kensington Museum (now
the Victoria and Albert Museum) finding models for the
costumes, weapons, furniture, and domestic utensils needed
for the production. Some of the embroidery patterns for the
dresses were copied from an eleventh-century cope at South
Kensington, while other costumes were based on the Bayeux
tapestry and illuminated manuscripts.  
Seymour Lucas went
farther afield to gather information for his costume designs
and travelled to Belvoir Castle and the Herald's College to
do part of his research for Henry VIII.  

Lucas also made sure that the costumes for theatrical
productions were appropriate to character and mood as well
as being historically accurate. In an article on stage
costuming, Lucas explained that the first concern of the
artist was color and that each play would have its own clear
requirements of color. His Ravenswood called for treatment

3 "A Shakespearean Revival: 'Macbeth,'" The Magazine
of Art, 12 (1889), 98.

4 "The Art of Dressing an Historical Play," The Magazine
of Art, 17 (1894), 278.
Plate VI--Three of the costumes designed by Edward Burne-Jones for King Arthur. From left to right is Lena Ashwell, Genevieve Ward, and Ellen Terry. Illustration from The Sketch, 8 (1895), 590.
in somber greys with touches of red, while *Henry VIII* needed gold and brilliant reds. Also, Lucas believed that principal actors needed more than just beautiful costumes, they needed costumes that would make them the focal point in a color scheme. To obtain the desired color scheme for a play, Lucas would collect a large number of fabric swatches and play with combinations under conditions approximating stage lighting until he achieved the effect that he wanted. Then, Lucas would shop for the required fabric and oversee construction of the costumes to ensure that his designs would not be misinterpreted. Comments in the article by Lucas and in dress reviews of the costumes designed by the painters indicate that the other artists shared Lucas' methods of costume design.

Painters who designed for the stage went to such lengths to obtain the effects desired in costumes that they sometimes had fabric specially woven, dyed, or embroidered. For *Macbeth*, Charles Cattermole had Macbeth's second costume of heavy bullion-gold damask hand embroidered with maroon silk. According to the review of *King Arthur* in *The Queen*:

> in order to achieve the result aimed at by Sir Edward Burne-Jones, the dyer, the weaver, and the embroiderer have each been called upon to share in the designer's plan,
and to become artists according to their measure and degree.

Some of the special orders for Ellen Terry were a dress of gold-embroidered green crepe and a vest of gold cloth embroidered with jewels, a gown of specially woven tinselled chenille, and a cloak of gold cloth decorated with silver discs, appliqued by means of jewelled chenille, silver birds with emerald eyes, and a border of peacock feathers. On a smaller scale, Byam Shaw had a red brocade specially woven in Italy for one of Winifred Emery's costumes in Much Ado About Nothing. Such special work could add a considerable amount to the total cost of the costume, but accuracy and beauty came before cost.

Percy Macquoid, artist and decorator, turned to costume design after beginning a career as a painter. Having studied at the Royal Academy and in France and exhibited paintings at the Academy in 1882, Macquoid worked as an artist in water-color and black-and-white for a time. His early theatrical work was for George Alexander, designing costumes for In Days of Old (1899), If I Were King (1902), and Paolo and Francesca (1902). For H. B. Tree, he designed costumes for Anthony and Cleopatra (1906), Nero (1906), and The

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7 "Dresses at the Lyceum," The Queen, 97 (1895), 127-28.
8 "Dresses in 'Much Ado About Nothing' at His Majesty's Theatre," The Queen, 117 (1905), 180.
9 "Death of Mr. P. Macquoid," The Times, 21 March 1925, p. 16.
Winter's Tale (1906), and the costumes, furniture, and properties for Henry VIII (1910). All of his designs before World War I were for historical plays.

Like the other artists, Macquoid was fond of using beautiful materials and often designed fabric that was specially made in France for his costumes. According to The Graphic, such was the case for most of the fabric used in In Days of Old. Two of the more elaborate costumes for the production were a white velvet robe with fleurs de luce embroidered in diamonds and pearls for Fay Davis and a gown for Violet Vanbrugh that was made of crimson satin embroidered in an all-over pattern of velvet roses outlined in gold and bordered around the hem with more embroidery.10 When designing for Tree, Macquoid could reach even greater heights of opulence, as can be seen by the description of Mrs. Tree's first act dress in Nero. The costume was a tunic of a mesh of Roman pearls over a long tunic of silver tissue, both of which were half concealed by a long mantle bordered with a broad band of silver. A piece of drapery embroidered with silver sequins was placed somewhere on the costume and the head was covered with two chiffon veils, one of grey and the other of heliotrope.11


11 "Costumes at His Majesty's," The Queen, 119 (1906), 209.
Besides being described as beautiful, Macquoid's costume designs were also considered to be historically accurate, although he was sometimes described as using poetic license for effect. *Nero* was a play that exhibited this approach to historical costumes by putting what were viewed as accurate costumes slightly ahead of their correct time period. In its review of the costumes, *The Queen* chided Macquoid because "Heliogabalus was the first Emperor to wear a robe of pure silk, and his date is A.D. 218 to 222, whereas Nero was born 68 A.D., and it certainly was only at the decline of the Roman empire that glittering fabrics were introduced." That quibble aside, the review noted that "The fashioning of all the dresses is notably accurate, and the crowds that throng the stage at times might have lived in Rome in 68 A.D. as far as their appearance is concerned. . . ."\textsuperscript{12} If *Nero* is any indication, dramatic or visual effect took precedence over strict accuracy in his work.

Macquoid was also known as a decorator of houses and theatres, a collector of antiques, and author of several books. In 1900 he redecorated the St. James's Theatre in a fifteenth-century style for George Alexander. His own house was reported to have been arranged with antiques so that each floor represented a particular period. Known as an

\textsuperscript{12}119 (1906), 209.
authority on costume, tapestry, needlework, silver, and furniture, Macquoid wrote a book in 1916 on the costume, furniture, and domestic habits of Shakespearean England. Collaborating with Ralph Edwards, he contributed to the Dictionary of English Furniture from the Middle Ages to the Late Georgian Period, the first volume of which was published in 1924. Macquoid died on 20 March 1925 at the age of seventy-three.  

Percy Anderson, considered by his peers to have been one of the top costume designers of the period, also began his career as a painter and later switched to costume design. During the 1880s, Anderson exhibited with the New Watercolour Society and painted watercolor portraits of many distinguished people. Some of his portraits were Sir Sidney and Lady Colvin, Coquelin in the Louvre, Joseph Conrad at the National Portrait Gallery, and Sir Charles Phillips at the British Museum. Sometime before he began designing costumes, Anderson spent quite a bit of time travelling through central and southern Europe studying peasant costumes, research which was put to use years later when he designed the costumes for Tree's production of Twelfth Night in 1901. According to the artist himself, commissions for stage work

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13 The Times, 21 March, 1925, p. 16.
came as a result of his costume designs for an opera written by a friend. Among his first commissions was The Yeomen of the Guard at the Savoy Theatre in 1888. From then on, he was responsible for all the D'Oyly Carte productions at the Savoy, the costumes for Arthur Sullivan's Ivanhoe at the English Opera House, and the revivals of H. M. S. "Pinafore," The Gondoliers, Trial by Jury, and Ruddigore. Around 1894, Anderson began to work primarily as a costume designer. During his theatrical career, he planned the costumes for over forty productions in London, some pantomime costumes, and costumes for a number of American productions. Some of the American productions were Becky Sharp and Mary of Magdala for Harrison G. Fiske, A Gentleman of France and Quality Street for Charles Frohman, and The Tempest, Henry IV, and The Merchant of Venice for Augustin Daly. Most of Anderson's designs were for historical plays, although he also designed a few modern dresses. He designed many productions in a variety of periods for Tree including King John (1899), Herod (1900), A Midsummer Night's Dream (1900), The Last of the Dandies (1901), and The Merry Wives of Windsor (1902). For Daly's Theatre he designed costumes for The Geisha (1896), A Greek Slave (1898), San Toy, and The Merry Widow (1907),

16 The Times, 31 Oct. 1928, 16.
for which he probably designed the national dress. Seymour Hicks used Anderson or Wilhelm to design his costume plays, which included Anderson's designs for *The Talk of the Town* (1905).

Anderson was usually called upon to create a large number of sketches for a production with deadlines that varied from months to days. *Ulysses* required approximately two hundred and fifty sketches, while *Herod* required somewhere over two hundred designs. He had six months to design *Ulysses* but was required to draw up the costumes for *The Three Musketeers* in three days.

Like Seymour Lucas and the others, Anderson went to great lengths to research the costumes for historical plays. For *Ulysses* he spent six months of continuous work examining sources and drawing the costumes; his research included studying terra-cotta vases at the British Museum, looking at Mycenean mural decorations from Knossus, and searching classical writers for allusions to the manners and customs of the ancient times.\(^\text{17}\) For *Ivanhoe*, he travelled to the cathedrals of Hereford, Shrewsbury, and Canterbury to view the costume details found on the brasses and effigies, borrowed the design for King Richard's cloak from the effigy on the tomb of Richard's mother, gathered ideas for other costumes

from a book of early Limoges enamels in the British Museum, and took some of the patterns in the dresses from embroideries in the Museum at Munich.\textsuperscript{18}

Anderson was also one for magnificent costumes that sometimes required special measures. Two of Lily Brayton's costumes in \textit{The Prayer of the Sword} (1904), for instance, were made of specially woven and dyed brocades.\textsuperscript{19} To mention just a few of the elaborate costumes, Julia Neilson in \textit{King John} wore a white gown with gold embroidery on the bodice and a gold belt set with turquoise and a large diamond; over the dress was a Court mantle of white samite, a silk fabric interwoven with gold or silver.\textsuperscript{20} In \textit{The Termagant}, Olga Nethersole wore a dress with a petticoat and bodice of gold brocade, the bodice being encrusted with jewels while chains of diamonds, pearls, and crystal fell from her neck; her Court train was entirely made of gold cloth sewn with diamonds (see Plate VII).\textsuperscript{21} Anderson wrote that "The old-fashioned idea that all stage glitter is meretricious, and all stage finery tinsel, is no longer an acceptable axiom."\textsuperscript{22}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{18} \textit{The Magazine of Art}, 17 (1894), 7-8.
\item \textsuperscript{19} "An Interview with Miss Lily Brayton," \textit{The World of Dress}, Sept. 1904, p. 14.
\item \textsuperscript{20} "Stage Costumes," \textit{The Queen}, 106 (1899), 554.
\item \textsuperscript{21} "Stage Dresses," \textit{The Queen}, 104 (1898), 432.
\item \textsuperscript{22} \textit{The Magazine of Art}, 17 (1894), 7.
\end{itemize}
Plate VII--A portrait of Olga Nethersole by Percy Anderson. Miss Nethersole is wearing one of the costumes designed by Anderson for The Termagant. Photograph from *The Magazine of Art*, 27 (1903), 285.
His talent served him well and his designs received much acclaim from dress reviewers. By 1903, The Magazine of Art gave the opinion that:

as a designer of costume for historical and Shakespearean plays, Mr. Percy Anderson, with his wonderful constructive power of color blending, originality in the treatment of drapery, and accurate knowledge of and attention to detail, together with a peculiar power of stamping with a touch of individuality all work which passes through his hands, has reached the top-most step.23

Along with his belief in historical accuracy, Anderson felt that the stage costumer was often handicapped by an unsuitable background and that more attention needed to be paid to the harmony of sets and costumes. In terms of color, he preferred to start designing with the supernumeraries and minor characters in order to plan their costumes as a background for the principal characters. Regarding form, he felt that it was important to avoid anything that was unbecoming to a woman's figure and that long graceful perpendicular lines were always satisfactory.24 Such opinions indicate that Anderson favoured artistic considerations over strict historical accuracy, merging the two as best he could.

When Anderson died in 1928 at the age of seventy-seven, The Times described him as a link between the older and modern school of theatrical designers, explaining that:

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23 The Magazine of Art 27 (1903), 280-81.
24 The Magazine of Art, 17 (1894), 7-12.
By virtue of the strong decorative sense, particularly in colour, which he combined with historical accuracy and knowledge of heraldry, Anderson escaped from the pedantry of his predecessors and paved the way in the most interesting manner for the developments we have seen in the hands of Bakst and the other Russian designers, the late Claud Lovat Fraser, and Mr. Gordon Craig.²⁵

Sometime before his death a representative collection of his costume designs were added to the Art of the Theatre section in the Department of Drawing, Engraving, and Design at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Karl was another top-ranking costume designer who came to the theatre by way of painting. While that much is certain, there are conflicting stories about the beginning of his theatrical career. Archibald Nathan, in his history of the costuming firm of Nathan's, wrote that Karl had trained to be a doctor but had then gone to Antwerp to study art. There he met and became friends with Sir Alma-Tadema, with whom he collaborated on a number of projects over the years. Nathan wrote that Karl started with Nathan's in 1885 as a junior designer and soon moved to chief designer because of his talent and great personal charm.²⁶ Karl told an interviewer from The Sketch that he had begun his art education at South Kensington but left because the departamental

²⁵ The Times, 31 Oct. 1928, 16.
training did not satisfy him. After that he went to Antwerp and Paris, where he studied under the best masters, and furthered his education in a few German cities. After finishing his training, he went to London and started painting. Karl explained in the interview that his chance to design costumes came when a hitch developed in the costumes to be used in the one-act play The Ballad-Monger, in which Tree was to play Gringoire. A mutual friend asked Karl to have a try at the costumes, which he did, and the designs were finished and approved within thirty-six hours. As a result of his work, he received more orders, and designed everything for Tree until 1898. Since the first production of The Ballad-Monger wasn't until September of 1887, Karl's version of his start in costuming puts it two years later than Archibald Nathan's. Given the fact that Nathan quotes from a letter presented to Karl in 1934 which states that the occasion of the letter was Karl's retirement and fiftieth anniversary with the firm of Nathan's, it would seem that Karl did join the firm around 1885. Perhaps Karl was still working as a junior designer when he was asked to produce the designs for The Ballad-Monger and the play represents his first solo design work. Judging from dress reviews of the time and program information in J. P. Wearing's The London

27 "How I Dressed 'Peter.' A Talk with 'Karl,'" The Sketch, 20 (1898), 410.
Stage, Karl is probably correct in saying that he designed costumes for Tree's productions through 1898, with *The Termagant* of that year as an exception. Regardless of when he began his career in design, it is certain that Karl retired from Nathan's in 1934 and died in June of 1942.

During his fifty years in the theatre, Karl designed costumes for producers such as Irving, Tree, George Alexander, Julia Neilson and Fred Terry, Frank Curzon, and Lewis Waller. For Irving, he did part of *Cymbeline* (1896) and *Peter the Great* (1898). Some of his projects for Tree were *Hypatia* (1893) with Alma-Tadema, *Once Upon a Time* (1894), *The Seats of the Mighty* (1897), *The Musketeers* (1898), and most of *Carnac Sahib* (1899). For Frank Curzon, Karl designed the costumes for *The King of Cadonia* (1908), *The Balkan Princess*, *The Chocolate Soldier*, *Dear Little Denmark*, and *Miss Hook of Holland* (1907). For George Alexander, Karl did part of *The Prisoner of Zenda* (1896) and part of *Much Ado About Nothing* (1898). Most of Karl's costume designs were for historical plays, although some of them, like *Carnac Sahib*, required modern dress.

Karl's working methods were much like those of Percy Anderson or Seymour Lucas. He described his routine as having "to turn up authorities, make my notes, and finally design new costumes built up of the materials I have collected."[28]

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[28] *The Sketch*, 20 (1898), 410.
Karl was not a stickler for authenticity because John Nathan mentioned in an interview that Karl was:

more inclined to temper historical exactitude with pictorial fancy than I should be. My own feeling is for the real thing as it was actually worn, rather than the beautiful thing, as it ought to have been worn. But this is an idiosyncracy, and Mr. Karl is right.29

Speed must have been part of Karl's working method, since both John and Archibald Nathan insisted that Karl designed all of the productions costumed by Nathan's. As one example of his quick work, Karl received the script for Peter the Great in September of 1897, finished his research and designed over forty costumes for the principal characters plus costumes for the other in under two months, received approval from Irving, and had them built at Nathan's for the opening of the play on 1 January 1898. Even if Karl only designed costumes for major productions and left the others to junior designers, he would have been very busy because Nathan's supplied costumes for a large number of London shows.

Mrs. J. Comyns Carr was one of the few women working as a costume designer. A devotee of Aesthetic dress, Mrs. Comyns Carr started designing theatrical costumes in 1883 when Ellen Terry noticed a dress that she had made of crinkled white muslin. Terry liked the dress so much that she asked

for a copy of it for her next theatrical role and appointed Mrs. Comyns Carr to be her costume designer. In 1907, Ellen Terry described her as "my friend Mrs. Comyns Carr, a gifted and charming woman who for many years designed the dresses that I wore in different Lyceum plays." One of the productions with costumes by Mrs. Comyns Carr was Terry's English version of Frou-Frou, known as Butterfly, which was performed in the provinces. She also designed some of the dresses for Ravenswood (1890), Henry VIII (1892), King Lear (1892), Becket (1893), and Dick Sheridan (1894); all of the plays were produced by Irving with Terry acting in the first four listed. Mrs. Comyns Carr's designs were primarily for historical plays and all were done in collaboration with Seymour Lucas, Charles Cattermole, Karl, or Mrs. Tree.

Two other costume designers of the period were Mr. C. Wilhelm and Signor Comelli, both of whom specialized in costumes for spectacles. Wilhelm was primarily a designer of ballet and extravaganza costumes, but he also contributed to a number of musical productions, including The Cherry Girl (1903) for Seymour Hicks. The majority of Wilhelm's work was with George Edwardes, for whom he designed costumes

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for *In Town* (1892), some of the costumes for *My Girl* (1896), *The Toreador* (1901), *The Spring Chicken* (1905), *The New Aladdin* (1906), and *Don Juan Junior*. He also dressed the original productions of *The Mikado*, *Princess Ida*, and *Ruddigore* at the Savoy Theatre. Signor Comelli was best known for his designs for Arthur Collin's Drury Lane pantomimes, however he also planned the costumes for a number of historical dramas and musical plays. Some of these productions were *The Gay Parisienne* (1896), *The Circus Girl* (1896), *The Royal Star* (1898), *Ben Hur* (1902), *The Prodigal Son* (1905), *Castles in Spain* (1906), and *My Darlings* (1908).

Working with the designers, theatrical costumiers actually made the required garments. Some costumiers merely built costumes from a designer's sketches, while others could both design and construct theatrical costumes. William Clarkson was part of the latter category, earning his living as a theatrical designer/costumier, fancy-ball costumier, theatrical perruquier, and perruquier to Queen Victoria and the Royal Family. Clarkson was best known for his prize-winning fancy-dress costumes such as the "Not so Green" one that carried off first prize at the Covent Garden Fancy Dress Ball in 1900. Some of his stage productions were *The Duchess of Malfi* (1892), *Once Upon a Time* (1894), *Eros e Leandro* (1898), and *When Knights were Bold* (1907). He was a very popular and colorful fellow, as Archibald Nathan recounts:
One of the famous theatrical costumiers of all time, and one who will be well remembered by the present generation, was the late Willy Clarkson. He was a friend of my father's although their ways of life were poles apart and, despite this, they were to some extent business competitors, but they never clashed, for Willy had his own line of flamboyant creation. Willy was a great London character and a supreme wigmaker. His wigs, of course, were far more famous than his costumes and he was also master of the art of make-up—an art which he extended to his own person. He was hardly real, in the sense of ordinary, everyday humanity, but was something essentially of the theatre and everybody knew him.32

Nathan was undoubtedly correct about Clarkson's talent with wigs since Who's Who in Theatre listed him as "leading perruquier to the principal theatres and opera houses for fifty years." The article also referred to his work in designing and supplying costumes.33

L. & H. Nathan, the firm that employed Karl, was the oldest of the costuming houses, having been founded in 1790 by Lewis Nathan, a tailor of Tichborne Street. In 1843, Jacob Nathan opened a branch at 94 Berwick Street, described as a "Masquerade Warehouse & Fancy Costumes," and the premises in Tichborne Street were enlarged. In 1846, Lewis Jacob and Henry Nathan, two brothers, renamed the business L. & H. Nathan. Although Nathan's dressed some professional

32 Nathan, p. 87.

productions in the middle of the nineteenth century, much of their business was devoted to supplying costumes for amateur theatricals and fancy-dress balls. For the professional theatre, Nathan's supplied costumes to William Charles Macready, Samuel Phelps, Charles Kean, and the Kendals. In the 1880s, John Lewis Nathan, sometimes referred to as "The Great Nathan," joined the firm, which now moved to 17 Coventry Street, W. 34 Nathan's was by far the largest supplier of costumes in London at the end of the century, supplying some or all of the costumes for over 168 professional productions between 1890 and 1909 plus amateur theatricals and fancy-dress balls. As one example of their capacity, John Nathan showed an interviewer an estimate for an upcoming production that would require between two and three hundred costumes, each costume consisting of some ten different articles. 35 In 1903, Nathan estimated that the firm kept many thousands of costumes on hand for rental that ranged from something suitable for a farce to something for a Shakespearean drama. To ensure that their costumes, whether specially built or pulled from stock, looked correct onstage Nathan's had a large dressing room for


35 The World of Dress, 1 (1898), 320.
ladies fitted with mirrors and electric lights that gave the same effect as footlights. 36

The firm specialized in historical costumes and attempted to be as historically accurate as possible in the building of the costumes. In an 1898 interview, John Nathan explained that the firm had a collection of original costumes—beginning with some from the reign of Queen Anne—that were used as models for costumes; Nathan estimated that the collection held between 130 and 140 Georgian costumes alone. In addition to the research collection, Nathan often consulted artists who specialized in historical research to ensure that fabric for a costume was correct. If a fabric for a costume could not be found, Nathan would have it specially woven, painted, embroidered, or imported from the East. 37

Nathan's continued to supply costumes for amateur theatricals, fancy-dress balls, and other occasions. It had a good deal to do with the tableux vivants of Princess Beatrice and other members of the Royal Family at Osborne House beginning in 1888. During the early 1900s, Nathan's dressed a series of tableux vivants taken from well-known pictures by living artists, who were sometimes called in to

37 The World of Dress, 1 (1898), 320-21.
supervise the details of the costumes being copied. In 1903, Nathan's sent a number of 1803 costumes to Calcutta for a fancy-dress ball in honor of the Coronation Durbar. In addition to such orders, Nathan's constantly supplied painters such as John Millais, Sir Alma-Tadema, Seymour Lucas, and Sir James Linton with historical costumes for their models.

While not as large as Nathan's, Mrs. Nettleship, of 58 Wigmore Street, was the second largest theatrical costumier/designer in terms of the number of productions dressed. Between 1892 and 1908, she made modern and historical costumes for approximately sixty-seven productions. The World of Dress wrote that Percy Anderson worked with Mrs. Nettleship when modern dresses were needed and the pair collaborated on The Termagant (1898), The Three Musketeers (1898), The Princess of Kensington (1903), The Prayer of the Sword (1904), and Romeo and Juliet (1905), some of which required historical dress. The exact division of labor in the Anderson-Nettleship collaboration is unclear, but Mrs. Nettleship did more than just build costumes from Anderson's sketches because The World of Dress explained that "when modern dresses are introduced, Mrs. Nettleship, of Wigmore Street, both designs and carries out whole scenes, working from Mr. Anderson's

38 The World of Dress, 6 (1903), 24.
39 The World of Dress, 1 (1898), 321.
scheme of colour."\(^{40}\) She designed Olga Nethersole's dresses for *Frou-Frou* (1895), Mrs. Patrick Campbell's gowns for *Macbeth* (1898), Winifred Emery's costumes for *The Rivals* (1900), and collaborated with Karl on the women's costumes for *Cymbeline* (1896) and *Under the Red Robe* (1896). Describing Mrs. Nettleship's work on her costumes, Miss Emery said that "We get a lot of engravings of the period; I select what looks suitable and becoming, and she copies it, and there you are! Yes, we have sometimes to modify the details a little, for the sake of prettiness."\(^{41}\) Mrs. Nettleship made costumes for Winifred Emery for her roles in *Sowing the Wind* (1893), *Dick Sheridan* (1894), and *The Manoeuvres of Jane* (1898). For Ellen Terry, Mrs. Nettleship designed or made costumes for *The Medicine Man* and *Peter the Great*, both in 1898. Mrs. Nettleship's ball gown for Ellen Terry in *The Medicine Man* was a most impressive costume. The gown appeared to be a web of gold lilies with silver leaves and diamond hearts embroidered on gauze which covered an underdress of white satin; a trail of pink roses fell from a great cluster on the left shoulder to the hem of the dress, while more rose petals outlined the bodice and edged transparent white and


\(^{41}\) "A Chat with Miss Winifred Emery," *The Sketch*, 30 (1900), 62.
The gown elicited praise from a number of fashion columns, the most interesting comment coming from the Sunday Times, which wrote that "when Miss Ellen Terry, as the Hon. Sylvia Wynford, appeared in all the glory of a lovely ball-dress, even the drowsy men in the stall sat up to gaze in open-eyed wonder. . . ." As mentioned earlier, Mrs. Nettleship was also chosen to join the firms of Jay and Paquin in dressing the much talked about Frocks and Frills in 1902.

Monsieur and Madame Alias were two other important designer/costumiers who created costumes for productions on the English and French stages. Charles Alias had been a member of the Clodoche Troupe in Paris and his wife had been the wardrobe mistress of the Paris Opera House. They were regarded as authorities in historical clothing both in France and later in London. Describing the couple in 1902, The Sketch wrote that:

Like Mr. Macquoid, these two costumiers are experts in this period, and, indeed, in most periods. Indeed, Madame Alias was long regarded in France as the best authority on historical costumes, and M. Alias's tomes on costume are the envy of many an artist.

42 "Fashions Behind the Footlights," The Queen, 103 (1898), 871.

43 8 May 1898, p. 2.

The couple settled in London as the firm of Alias sometime before 1890, when they made some of the costumes for Marjorie, Captain Therese, La Cigale, and other productions.

It wasn't until April of 1896, with the costumes for The Gay Parisienne, that Alias was mentioned by name in the fashion columns. The Sketch indicates that Alias had a reputation for excellence by then since it pointed out that:

Naturally, one expects a good deal from "Gay Parisienne" in the way of dress, especially when she is represented by Miss Ada Reeve, and she and all her comrades are gowned by Alias; and, as realisation for once comes up to expectation, feminine eyes will be kept busily occupied with the elaborate details of the numberless gowns which grace the stage during the entire progress of the new piece at the Duke of York's.45

Costumes for the show included a number of dresses, a cycling costume, a boating dress, and costumes for dancers representing England, France, Spain, and Russia. Costumes by Alias for The Little Genius in June received more praise:

Alias has made about thirty gorgeous evening-dresses, which are nearly all marvels of embroidery, a novelty being introduced by sprays of flowers (which are artificial only in name and not in appearance) being arranged in such a way that they seem to grow out from the embroidered and appliqué leaves. The effect is wonderfully good, but the process is such a costly one that it is not likely to be largely imitated, I fancy.46

45 13 (1896), 489.
46 "Dresses at the Play," The Sketch, 14 (1896), 382.
The next year, Monsier and Madame Alias hired Madame Floret to head the establishment, presumably as supervisor under the direction of the owners. Madame Floret was a French costumière who had received her training as assistant to her mother, the Chef Costumière at the Opéra Comique Theatre in Paris, and worked at the Opéra Comique for eight years. In 1880, Madame Floret was nominated Chef Costumière to the National Opera. She remained at the position for over twelve years, making the costumes for all the opera, ballet, and other productions which took place at the national theatre. In 1897, she joined the firm of Alias in London. Although she was working in London at the time, Madame Floret was awarded the "palms" of an Officer de l'Academie by the French in 1899. Madame Floret's skill in costuming was such that she was entrusted with the making of important orders at Alias such as the majority of costumes for the royalty and nobility at the historical ball held by the Duchess of Devonshire in 1899. It is not known how long Madame Floret remained with Alias, but in 1899 she indicated to a journalist writing a story on her that she liked England so well she was determined to stay.47

Alias continued to supply costumes for comedies, dramas, musicals, pantomimes, and ballets. Percy Macquoid employed

47 "Small Talk of the Week," The Sketch, 25 (1899), 369.
the firm to construct his designs for *If I were King* (1902), *In Days of Old* (1899), and *Paolo and Francesca* (1902), all of which required historical dress. The firm supplied fancy-dress for such productions as *The Circus Girl* (1896), *The White Silk Dress* (1896), and *Lord and Lady Algy*. Modern dress productions included *The Topsy-Turvy Hotel* (1898) and *The Love Birds* (1904), which was designed by Signor Comelli. Throughout the 1890s and 1900s, the firm's name was linked in the fashion columns with such qualities as excellence of construction, novelty of effect, and historical accuracy.

When Charles Alias died on 11 May 1921, while living in France, *The Times* called him "for many years one of the best known theatrical costume designers for both the London and Paris stage." He left all of his property, including estate in the United Kingdom valued at £6,376, to his widow.48

Two smaller firms which also worked with Percy Macquoid, as well as Percy Anderson and Byam Shaw, were Miss Fisher and Messrs. Simmons. The two firms jointly made costumes for a number of productions designed by Percy Anderson, including *The Termagant* (1898), *Herod* (1900), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1900), *Last of the Dandies* (1901), *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1902), and *Richard II* (1903). Miss Fisher also made costumes

for King John (1900) for Anderson, while Messrs. Simmons worked on Rip Van Winkle (1900), Twelfth Night (1901), The Eternal City (1902), Ulysses (1902), and Resurrection (1903). Messrs. Simmons also made costumes for Nero (1906), A Winter's Tale (1906), and Antony and Cleopatra (1907), all designed by Percy Macquoid, and Much Ado About Nothing (1905) designed by Byam Shaw.

Established around 1858, Simmons & Sons was a mixture of theatrical costumier and dressmaker. In 1893, The Queen mentioned that:

Messrs. Simmons, Coventry House, 35 Haymarket, W.C., besides their many fancy and theatrical costumes, are achieving fame as court dressmakers. At the present moment, they have some excellent specimens of their stock.49

A few months later, writing of a Nautch Girl fancy-dress costume for Lady Corry, a columnist for The Queen added that the costume:

was made by Messrs. Simmons and Sons, of Coventry House, Haymarket, who scored such a success with the gentlemen's dress in the recent minuet at Lady Winifred Gardner's. . . . But this firm do not devote themselves exclusively to fancy dress; they have been extremely successful with their tailor-made gowns.50

49 "Messrs. John Simmons and Sons' Pretty Gowns," The Queen, 93 (1893), 22.
50 "Dress Echoes of the Week," The Queen, 93 (1893), 600.
The *Sunday Times* included the firm in columns devoted to describing the latest wares in various shops, which indicates that Messrs. Simmons continued to make fashionable items of dress while supplying costumes for theatrical productions. In 1899, for example, the fashion columnist for the *Sunday Times* mentioned that dresses for Ascot or Henley and boating dresses were available at Simmons & Sons.\(^{51}\) The firm may have abandoned the making of fashionable dress later on since a 1933 advertisement lists it as "Theatrical Costumiers to the Principal Theatres and Cinematograph Corporations."\(^{52}\)

Edith Craig, daughter of Ellen Terry, spent part of her theatrical career as a designer and costumier. During what she called her "mother's little tour" before 1899, Craig looked after Ellen Terry's costumes and occasionally made new ones for her. In 1899, Craig worked as wardrobe mistress for the season at the Lyceum Theatre, where she supervised the making of two hundred of the costumes for *Robespierre*, kept the dresses in order, and renewed them when necessary.\(^{53}\) During her career, Craig made costumes for at least ten productions and designed some of the dresses for *Olivia* (1900), *Mademoiselle Mars* (1902), and *The Exile* (1903). When she died on 27 March 1947, *The Times* recalled that "She was her

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\(^{51}\) "In Fashion's Footsteps," *Sunday Times*, 11 June 1899, p. 4.

\(^{52}\) *Who's Who in the Theatre*, 7th ed. (1933), n. pag.
father's daughter in a genius for costume, which expanded into the designing of scenery and the staging of plays."54

Edith Craig, while explaining in an interview that the ideal wardrobe mistress should be able to design, make, and repair costumes, asked "Why should a manager have to employ artists to make sketches, designers to look up styles and details, and costumiers to make the clothes?"55 Her comment would indicate that there was a strict division of labor among the persons involved in designing, drawing, and making stage costumes at that time, yet an examination of the major designers and costumers does not support such a view. Percy Anderson, Karl, and the others previously mentioned could research styles, make sketches, and shop for fabric. Monsieur and Madame Alias were highly regarded as historians, designers, and builders of costumes. Mrs. Nettleship carried out designs by Percy Anderson, collaborated with Anderson and Karl on costume designs for some productions, and designed and made costumes herself for other productions. The people responsible for the lavish costumes mentioned in fashion columns could accomplish some or all of the steps required to complete a costume.

54 "Miss Edith Craig," The Times, 28 March 1947, p. 7.
55 Sunday Times, 23 April 1899, p. 5.
Fine artists, costume designers, and costumiers worked together to create the splendid, historically accurate costumes required by actor-managers such as Henry Irving and the impressive modern or fancy-dress costumes needed by producers such as George Edwardes at the Gaiety Theatre. Just as theatre audiences grew accustomed to seeing the latest couture clothing worn in modern plays, they came to expect the same level of costuming for historical plays. The expectation was so widespread that:

a London manager would now scarcely venture to produce a play of even minor importance unless he had the imprimatur of some well-known artist's name upon the programme as having designed, or at least supervised the designing of, the costumes.56

Using the talents of Sir Alma-Tadema, Percy Anderson, Alias, and the others, producers and actor-managers presented playgoers interested in costumes with dresses that would hold their attention.

CHAPTER IV
PRODUCERS

Regardless of whether they were made by couturiers or theatrical costumiers, stage costumes were seen as such an important part of theatrical production that the dresses, or lack of them was thought to affect the success or failure of a play. For a majority of the audience, the costumes were more important than the play. The World of Dress referred to the importance of costumes in an article on stage fashions:

The costume play is to-day much in fashion, while fashion has a good deal to say to the costumes of the play of to-day. Were it not ungracious to the dramatist, it might almost be said in some instances that the costumes are the play; in which case, one might add that the tailor makes the manager. Yet, if it be true, as Rosalind says, that a good play needs no epilogue—not even the now conventional managerial speech—it is certain that a good play gains considerably in attractive powers by being well dressed.  

The Sunday Times was more blunt, writing that "most people we are told going [sic] to a theatre to see the new dresses rather than the new play."2  More specifically, The Graphic

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2 Sunday Times, 4 Sept. 1904, p. 5.
explained that *An Old Jew* by Sydney Grundy failed to attract an audience because "He reckoned without the factor of woman, there is no love interest in the piece, and, what is more, there are no frocks."³

The appeal to women was considered an important element in the production of any play and managers were cautioned by the press not to ignore it:

> It has been stated lately, on excellent authority, that the feminine members of London theatre audiences are largely in the majority, and bearing this fact in mind, the manager of to-day does very wisely when he devotes a considerable amount of time, money, and attention to the smart frocks worn on the stage by the ladies of his company.⁴

Producers and actor-managers also acknowledged the importance of the female portion of an audience. When asked if he believed that the present extravagance of stage clothes was necessary, theatre producer Seymour Hicks answered:

> Yes, I do, undoubtedly. If you want people to come to the theatre, you've got to give 'em the best of everything. It's so difficult to get plays nowadays that you must dress them up. Those who don't care for the play come to see the pretty girls, and those who care for neither, come for the frocks. Women, for instance, often come for the dresses alone, and it's they who bring the men and make the success.⁵

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³ *49* (1894), 130.

⁴ "In Fashion's Footsteps," *Sunday Times*, 17 Nov. 1907, p. 12.

⁵ Maud Churton Braby, "How Seymour Hicks was Interviewed After Many Dangers and Perils," *The World of Dress*, May 1905, p. 20.
As might seem painfully obvious, the society plays of Oscar Wilde, Sydney Grundy, Arthur Wing Pinero, Henry Arthur Jones, and others were the most useful vehicles for exhibiting magnificent gowns. The Drury Lane melodramas of Augustus Harris, Cecil Raleigh, and Henry Hamilton, with their scenes set in Rotten Row, Hyde Park, Goodwood, and various ballrooms, afforded more occasions to show the latest in fashions. Historical plays like The Musketeers by Sydney Grundy, Trelawny of the 'Wells' by A. W. Pinero, and the plays of Shakespeare provided opportunities for sumptuous period costumes.

Playwrights were aware of the attention given to fashionable dress in their plays, although they were not always happy about it. Cecil Raleigh considered costumes so important that he cautioned:

> it is such a popular accessory to the drama of the day that one has to be very careful in dealing with it. If a number of ladies in new and striking frocks suddenly come upon the stage at the same time, people look at them and don't listen to the dialogue, and if something important has to be said it is always best to keep it for a moment, when the

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6 Moy Thomas, theatre critic of The Graphic, described a society play as "The familiar story of the married lady who flirts with an old flame till she tempts her worthy humdrum husband to express himself rather strongly, whereupon the married lady, mightly offended, writes a compromising letter to her former suitor, and prepares to place herself under his protection." "Gossip," The Graphic, 53 (1896), 259.
frocks do not intrude too much upon the attention of the audience.7

Speaking of his successful Frocks and Frills, Sydney Grundy admitted the lure of fashionable dress:

I suppose that every woman is at heart a fashion-plate, and the frockery and frillery of this light and airy adaptation of mine has a stronger appeal for her than the serious dramatic studies of life one would like to be writing.8

In an interview with The World of Dress, A. W. Pinero complained about the practice of placing the dressing of a play in the hands of modistes who make stage costumes models of the latest fashion and disregard any distinction of characters' individual taste or circumstance. He further protested that:

the costumier has come to be regarded as of such extreme importance, it is requisite for the playwright to protest that, after all, it is quite as necessary to preserve a congruous relation between personality and costume as to illustrate the fashions of to-day--and to-morrow.9

Although many producers and directors used fashionable dress in the plays under their control, a number of them did so on such a regular basis that their theatres were

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7 "A few words with Mr. Cecil Raleigh," The World of Dress, 4 (1901), 13.
8 "Stage Frockery and Frillery. A Chat with Mr. Sydney Grundy," The World of Dress, April 1902, n. pag.
identified in the fashion columns as places in which the latest modes could almost always be found. The most notable were George Alexander, Charles Wyndham, George Edwardes, Seymour Hicks and the trio of Augustus Harris, Cecil Raleigh, and Henry Hamilton at Drury Lane.

At Drury Lane, Harris, Raleigh, and Hamilton wrote and produced plays with a large number of timely and costly fashions (see Plate VIII); the number of costumes worn ranged from fifty dresses in The Great Millionaire to eighty gowns for The Flood Tide. The Illustrated London News described the production philosophy at Drury Lane in its review of the costumes for Cheer, Boys, Cheer:

The dresses—put on the mere "supers" as well as on the principal ladies—have been ordered regardless of cost from the first houses in London and Paris, and it is truly a sign of the times that Sir Augustus Harris advertises them as "showing the coming fashions." In at least two scenes the stage is like a Lady's Pictorial page grown big and walking about.10

After the death of Augustus Harris in 1896, Raleigh, Hamilton, and Arthur Collins continued the practice of using lavish and fashionable costumes, as can be seen by the reaction to The White Heather:

Plate VIII—The Vice-Royal Ball scene in the Drury Lane sporting drama The Hope produced by Arthur Collins. Photograph in the Drury Lane file of the Enthoven Collection, the Victoria and Albert Museum.
Fashion papers must gradually lose their importance, and those good ladies who tell us how to dress, find their professional experience rudely snatched from them, where one can see the admirable examples of costume in all its aspects as put on the stage at Drury Lane. The theatre ought to be filled with women, for here at least one notes what to wear and how to wear it.11

One costume that women particularly noted was a lace gown trimmed with narrow ermine worn by Violet Vanbrugh in *Hearts are Trumps* in 1899. Miss Vanbrugh recalled that it was a strange combination that she thought had not been worn before, "and yet that season everyone was wearing ermine in conjunction with lace or chiffon, until it got so terribly overdone that it ceased to be fashionable."12 In 1903, one fashion columnist summed up the general opinion of Drury Lane costumes by writing that "For a good lesson in autumn styles one always looks forward to the Drury Lane drama."13

The St. James's Theatre under the management of George Alexander earned a reputation as a place to find "A smart play, smartly dressed, and a smart audience."14 Premieres fitting that description, according to the fashion columns,

11 "Place aux Dames," *The Graphic*, 56 (1897), 432.
included Lady Windermere's Fan and The Importance of Being Earnest by Oscar Wilde, The Second Mrs. Tanqueray by A. W. Pinero, and The Masqueraders by H. A. Jones.

George Alexander also produced and acted in plays which required historical costumes such as Much Ado About Nothing and In Days of Old, a romantic drama set in the fifteenth century. As indicated by a comment in The World of Dress, the public looked to the St. James's for smart gowns:

So many recent plays at the St. James's Theatre have offered opportunities for rich and elegant costumes—opportunities of which Mr. George Alexander, aided and abetted by his skillful wife, has taken the fullest advantage—that we have come to expect in every St. James's play a feast of fashion and a flow of models.

Beautiful dress, whether modern or historic, became such an important production element at the St. James's that deviations were not appreciated by the fashion columnists. When Alexander mounted The Wilderness in 1901, the Sunday Times chided him for the uninteresting costumes:

It is almost difficult to realise that this is a St. James's play, so few and unremarkable are the dresses, for even in the third act there is no culminating situation especially devised with a view to the coming fashions.

15 The World of Dress, 3 (1900), 375.
16 Sunday Times, 14 April 1901, p. 6.
Of the fifty-three full-length plays produced by Alexander between 1891 and 1914, forty-two were reviewed by at least one dress column with only *The Wilderness* and *The Conquerors*, a play about the siege of Paris during the Franco-Prussian War, receiving unfavorable comments.

The costumes worn in *The Prisoner of Zenda*, a romantic play that ran for 255 performances, typify the modern dresses found on the stage at the St. James's Theatre and Alexander's practice of redressing a play. Of the costumes for the opening on 7 January 1896, the fashion columns were most impressed with one of the gowns worn by Evelyn Millard as Princess Flavia. It had an underdress of silver sequins on white net and a train made of white and silver brocade bordered with clusters of white roses (see Plate IX).¹⁷ Most of the ladies of the court received new dresses at the beginning of May, the old ones having worn out. Judging from a review of the new dresses in *The Sketch*, Lily Hanbury's white satin robe, which was treated roughly during the play, and Evelyn Millard's court-dress had been replaced with replicas many times before the redressing in May. The replacement dresses in May were of a different design than the originals so that Lily Hanbury, for example, exchanged a mauve glace dress for one of green moiré with an accompanying green cape that

Plate IX—Evelyn Millard, as Princess Flavia, wearing one of the costumes for The Prisoner of Zenda. Illustration from The Illustrated London News, 108 (1896), 86.
the reviewer designated "one of the most desirable garments which I have met this season." The most notable of the new gowns was Olga Brandon's court dress of orange satin. The bodice was a mass of beetle's-wing embroidery with threads of gold interwoven through it, with the same trim forming shoulder straps and a band down each side of the skirt. Her original train of white silk brocaded with a design of grey roses and green foliage received a new lining of orange to match the dress. When the play returned to London on 20 October 1896, after a summer tour of the provinces, it had a new Princess Flavia with new costumes. Thanks to the kindness of Alexander, The Sketch provided its readers with an early look at the new costumes for Julia Neilson made by Lewis & Allenby, the most notable of which was the court costume. The gown was white satin covered with net which was embroidered with diamonds, crystal, and silver and burnished steel paillettes. The train was of white moiré velours lined with silver tissue. Miss Neilson wore two other dresses during the play, one of white silk with silver embroidery and the other of grey crêpe de Chine.

18 "Dress at the Play," The Sketch, 14 (1896), 130.

Florence Alexander supervised the design of almost all of the costumes for the modern plays produced by her husband. When he first started as a theatre manager, she made most of the dresses and trimmed the hats herself, along with making her own wardrobe. Once Alexander moved to the St. James', Mrs. Alexander continued to design or oversee the designing of the gowns but left the actual sewing of costumes to Mrs. Evans, Mme. Savage, Mme. Purdue, and other dressmakers. She later wrote that she was "rather extreme with clothes on the stage, for in those days people went to see the St. James' plays before ordering a new gown. 

Mrs. Alexander was a familiar figure in the fashion columns of the period because of her own smart dress (see Plate X). The columns described her clothing for such events as the 1896 Ascot, the opening of The Princess and the Butterfly in 1897, the Private View at Burlington House in 1898, and the Royal Garden Party at Windsor Castle in 1907. In addition to describing her gowns at public functions, fashion columnists interviewed Mrs. Alexander in order to provide their readers with a more extensive look at her wardrobe and reminded their readers that "Mrs. Alexander's name stands very high in the

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21 Mason, p. 233.
Plate X--Mrs. George Alexander modelling a black silk cloak with Japanese embroidery in red, white, and green. Illustration from The Sketch, 9 (1895), 489.
list of the most perfectly dressed women in London, so her clothes are veritable treasure-troves to the seekers after smart things."^22

The fashion columns regularly mentioned Mrs. Alexander's guidance in the matter of costumes at the St. James's. One such acknowledgement came from *The Sketch*:

she is a most valuable artistic aid to her husband, although she never acts, and apparently doesn't want to. I need not inform those who have the pleasure of knowing this most cheery lady that not only is she one of the best-dressed women in London, but she also knows how to dress other people. Not a play, especially a modern play, goes on to the St. James's stage the costumes of which have not been suggested or decided upon by this able actor-manager's very able wife."^23

Although acknowledgements such as this credit Mrs. Alexander with suggesting or deciding upon all of the costumes, Percy Macquoid, Percy Anderson, Karl, Graham Robertson, and Louis Edwards were listed as the costume designers of the various historical plays, which indicates that Mrs. Alexander's help on costumes for period plays was more indirect.

Women wishing to see extravagant historical costumes and, more importantly, the latest modes could also attend the productions of Charles Wyndham at the Criterion, Wyndham's, and the New Theatre. Wyndham was best known for

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^22 "Fashions Up to Date," *The Sketch*, 9 (1896), 489.

^23 *The Sketch*, 33 (1901), 23.
his productions of light comedies, such as The Case of Rebellious Susan by H. A. Jones, and modern dramas like The Bauble Shop. In addition he presented a number of historical-dress plays including David Garrick by T. W. Robertson and Cyrano de Bergerac.

Wyndham and his actresses employed the skills of such firms as Worth, Redfern, Lucile, Paquin, Russell & Allen, Messrs. Jay, and Lewis & Allenby to dress his modern plays and some of the historical ones. With dresses from the top couture houses in London and Paris, it is not surprising that a magazine such as The Queen would advise its readers that "She who goes in quest of the very newest ideas in dress may always find them at the Criterion Theatre, if so be Miss Mary Moore is there playing the heroine of a modern piece, as she is now doing."24 Mentioning a specific idea, the Sunday Times suggested that Ellis Jeffreys' first gown in The Altar of Friendship was "certainly one of the most desirable designs as a dress to be copied, as it would look as well in white, black, pink, or green as it does in its native brown."25 Such was the public's expectation for the latest modes that when Wyndham and Mary Moore deviated from

the path of fashionable modern plays to present a tragedy
set in the fifteenth century, The Queen wrote in its review:

There is no denying that women playgoers are
"just a little—just a little—disappointed"
when Miss Mary Moore fails to show them the
latest subtleties of fashion. But they accept
the inevitable with good grace when it comes
in beauteous guise, as it does in this play
of "The Jest." Miss Moore's dress of the
first act would at least form a charming model
for a tea gown."26

Even the historical dress could provide ideas for modern
clothing.

The musical plays produced by George Edwardes at the
Gaiety and Daly's Theatre offered women "a profusion of
ideas for the beautification of womanhood," as The Queen
called the costumes for A Gaiety Girl.27 The "Merry Widow"
hat was just one of the ideas that the public copied from
a George Edwardes' production. Plays set in historical
times also offered ideas for modern fashions, as in the
case of The Little Michus. In its review of the play, The
World of Dress advised its readers that there were "many
pleasing gowns of the Empire period, which could serve as
models for the dress of today," while the Sunday Times
pointed out that "Ideas for bridesmaids' frocks may be

26 The Queen, 104 (1898), 886.
27 The Queen, 94 (1893), 719.
gleaned in Act III." Firms such as Lucile, Redfern, Messrs. Jay, and Liberty & Co. made costumes for Edwardes' productions (see Plate XI), helping the Gaiety to gain a reputation for plays with "a good cast, tuneful music, pretty dresses, and the best setting that money and taste can give." 

While he didn't mount as many plays as Edwardes, Seymour Hicks co-authored or produced musical plays and dramas that used many costly and fashionable costumes, including The Cherry Girl and The Catch of the Season. Hicks employed Lucile or Mr. Hiley at Jay's to design the modern costumes and Percy Anderson or Wilhelm to design the fanciful or historic costumes for his plays. The fashion columnist for The Queen thought that "Anything associated with the name of Hicks presupposes pretty frocks and pretty girls wearing them. . . ." 

Although H. B. Tree is remembered for spectacular, historically accurate productions of plays set in earlier times, modern productions under his direction used the same fashionable dress employed by Hicks and other producers. In fact, The Queen called the costumes for A Woman of No

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29 "Before the Footlights," The Queen, 134 (1913), 756.

30 The Queen, 121 (1907), 451.
Importance "not the fashions of to-day, but the fashions of the day after to-morrow." Some of the costumes were regarded by fashion columnists as capital models for copying, an evening cape worn by Eva Moore in Carnac Sahib being one suggested model. More numerous than the modern costumes, the sumptuous historical dresses served as models for either fancy dress or modern gowns. Olga Nethersole's dresses in The Termagant offered several suggestions for tea-gowns, in the opinion of The Illustrated London News, and the costumes for The Darling of the Gods were credited with popularizing eastern embroideries and kimono-shaped evening cloaks in 1907.

Fashion columns also believed that historical costumes in the productions of Henry Irving made good models for women's gowns, Ellen Terry's riding dress in Ravenswood being a prime example. Costumes in Irving's productions also served as models for fancy-dress costumes. For example, The Queen, in separate answers to two questions on fancy-dress suggested that the readers copy dresses from the 1893 production of Becket. Even if the costumes were not suggested

31 The Queen, 93 (1893), 773.
as models to be copied, their beauty guaranteed description in various dress reviews.

Popular actor-managers and producers shared some common costuming practices, starting with the use of expensive fabrics and costly couture gowns. Drury Lane had a reputation for the consistent use of expensive gowns. *The Illustrated London News* described a black satin evening gown covered by net hand-embroidered with jet seqins worn in *The Derby Winner* as being "so costly as to be out of the question for ordinary dress allowances." Mrs. Tree wore two costumes in *The Flood Tide* that were described by the same newspaper as being "beyond the dream of copying by the ordinary woman." One costume was a 22-carat gold gown with silver roses around the hem while the other was an Empire-style gown of ermine with an accompanying Russian sable stole lined with ermine. Other theatres spent as much money on costumes as Drury Lane. *The Sunday Times* estimated that one of the evening gowns worn by Ellis Jeffreys in *The Noble Lord* at the Criterion cost fifty pounds. In *The Gaiety Girl* at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, Miss Hobson, who was supposed to be poor, friendless, and stranded in a foreign country, appeared in a green brocade cloak that was said to have cost

33 *The Illustrated London News*, 105 (1894), 478; 123 (1903), 500.
forty guineas. As mentioned earlier, Seymour Hicks estimated that the dresses by Lucile for *The Catch of the Season* cost 6,500 pounds and those for *The Cherry Girl* cost 7,000 pounds before the play was redressed. Hicks also explained to the interviewer that they recouped the cost of the costumes in a few weeks through ticket sales, so he considered the expenditure worthwhile.

Producers spent almost as much money on costumes for the "supers" as they did on costumes for the principal women. Describing the dresses for *The Gay Parisienne*, which were designed by Signor Comelli and made by Alias, *The Sketch* wrote that:

so lavishly has the production been costumed that the ladies of the chorus as well as the principals glory in real lace whenever lace is employed at all.

Writing of earlier actresses who had to costume themselves out of a stock wardrobe in its review of costumes for *The Great Ruby* at Drury Lane, *The World of Dress* guessed that:

surely it were enough to make them turn with envy in their graves to hear of the very supers in an autumn drama being provided with costumes of the very finest materials, made in the very latest models by West End

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36 *The Sketch*, 13 (1896), 489.
dressmakers who gown duchesses and prima donnas.\(^{37}\)

While producers lavished money on modern fashions for their plays, they spent even more for historical costumes. Commenting on the practice of using sumptuous stage costumes, The World of Dress informed its readers that:

> the materials used in stage-land are always of the best, and modern Desdemonas wear brocade at a guinea a yard; whilst on one very recent occasion a stage queen's train has cost a hundred pounds for its embroidery alone, whilst the whole dress cost five hundred guineas.\(^ {38} \)

The practice of having fabric specially woven, dyed, or embroidered for costume designers who could not find what they needed undoubtedly cost more than buying cloth already manufactured. Referring to the spectacular productions of plays by Shakespeare, Herbert Trench, a theatrical manager, wrote in 1910:

> Presently we shall have upon us an avalanche of Shakespearian upholstery. There will be the familiar glitter of stage-crowds, batinselled cavalades, 'built-up' palaces and chapels, of coronations modelled upon fancy balls. The cloth of gold in these will cost fabulous sums, and the lace and velvet robes of the cardinals will later furnish forth valuable dining-room curtains for illustrious actor-managers.\(^ {39} \)

\(^{37}\) The World of Dress, 1 (1898), 247.

\(^{38}\) Feb. 1904, p. 14. The queen's train might well have been the one worn by Ellaline Terris in The Cherry Girl. Her train was made of satin embroidered with gold, pearls, and diamonds and was described in the "Theatrical Supplement," The World of Dress, Jan. 1904, p. 3.

The costumes for H. B. Tree's 1910 production of King Henry VIII give an idea of the level of splendor on the stage that Trench was writing about in his article. There were approximately 375 or 380 costumes designed by Percy Macquoid and built by B. J. Simmons. As to fabric costs, the "double-width specially woven silk" for Wolsey's robe cost one pound a yard, with sixteen yards being used in the train alone. The King's shot-silk dress fabric was two pounds a yard, while the specially woven silk for the Queen's under-dress was also two pounds a yard. The total cost of the costumes, including payment to B. J. Simmons, was 2,756 pounds (compared to 545 pounds for the properties). Although not all historical productions rivalled Tree's in terms of expense, King Henry VIII gives an idea as to the amount of money that could be spent on period costumes.

To the twentieth-century accustomed to inexpensive substitutes for gold and silver, pearls, and gem stones, the question might arise as to whether or not substitutes were used on stage costumes, particularly those involving gold or silver embroidery. It was not until 1946 that Lurex, an aluminium-base yarn protected by a clear plastic film, was introduced as an inexpensive and versatile substitute for

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metal threads for either embroidery or metal cloth. Before then, metal embroidery thread was made from gold, a debased gold mixed with copper, a silver-gilt made from a thin film of gold over a silver base, silver, or copper. To understand the expense of metal thread embroidery, one must first understand the nature and technique of it, since the cost of the metal is only a part of the final expense. Because it is difficult to manage a single, thin, metal thread, the thread has traditionally been wrapped in spirals around a central core of silk or linen to make it easier to handle. To decorate a fabric, the metal threads are laid on the surface and sewed down with another thread usually composed of silk. This method is used because the heavy metal threads cannot take the abrasion of being pulled up and down through the ground fabric and because it allows the maximum amount of metal thread to stay above the surface of the fabric, metal thread being expensive. To lessen the amount of tarnishing, the thread must be handled as little as possible and tweezers or gloves are often used by embroiderers. Between the cost of the materials and the required labor, metal thread embroidery was and still is an expensive form of decoration.


The production of fabrics made of gold or silver involved some of the same problems, and subsequent cost:

The use of metallic yarns on a production basis was, until the early 1940's, confined to a relatively few "novelty" mills. Traditionally yarns such as lamé and laminette were not suited to wide use because of cost, the difficulty of running a highly abrasive yarn from a small package, and the fact that the yarns tarnished.43

Until the 1940s, stage costumes were decorated with expensive metal thread embroidery or made of real gold or silver cloth.

The question of imitation pearls and jewels is more difficult to sort out since they were used on stage costumes in the nineteenth century. One indication of their use was a description of the sandals worn in the 1883 production of Claudian:

They were jewelled more or less all over with imitation pearls, rubies, emeralds, cameos, amethysts, &c. all set in elegantly wrought gilt work, on a foundation of scarlet or crimson.44

The costuming house of Nathan's kept a stock of paste jewelry for use with their costumes. It cannot be assumed, however, that all stage jewels were imitation because some of the actresses wore real jewels with their stage costumes. Miss Fanny Ward wore jewelry in The Marriage of William Ashe that

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44 Victorian Spectacular Theatre, p. 67.
was reportedly valued at 200,000 pounds. Mrs. Langtry, known for her collection of expensive jewelry, wore a necklace of antique Egyptian scarabei mounted with variegated enamels and a ring made of an amethyst carved with hieroglyphs dated at 1500 B.C. for her role in *Anthony and Cleopatra*. For her performance in *Gossip*, Langtry wore a coronet of diamonds, a necklace and brooch of diamonds and rubies, and other gems that were estimated to have cost 100,000 dollars.\(^{45}\) When asked about using real lace and jewels onstage, the actress Ada Reeve answered that it depended on circumstances. She felt that using real lace in musical comedy, where there are so many people onstage, would be too expensive and probably not noticed. In a comedy playing in a small theatre like the Criterion, however, real lace and jewels could easily be detected by the audience.\(^{46}\) It is apparent that, like Ada Reeve's costumes, the use of real or imitation lace and jewels on stage costumes depended on the circumstances, actresses, couturiers, and producers for each production.

Producers not only spent money on original costumes but they also replaced worn costumes during the run of the show. The new costumes were either replicas of the originals or,


more often, fashionable garments of a different design. For example, The Whip opened at Drury Lane on 9 September 1909 with costumes of the latest fashion, of which The Play Pictorial wrote:

The woman whose happy fate takes her to this latest Drury Lane success will do well to keep her eyes open for hints as to le dernier cri with regard to feminine fashions. Such a galaxy of lovely gowns should provide many valuable suggestions as to the requirements of la Mode. 47

The play ran until 8 December 1909 when it was forced to close because of the Christmas pantomime. It was revived in February of 1910 with new gowns for Nancy Price, Fanny Brough, Jessie Bateman, and possibly others. On 12 September the production celebrated its birthday with more new dresses of the latest style. The Queen wrote of the new gowns that "It was to be noted that all the gowns had elbow sleeves, and that quaint daring is characteristic of the latest millinery modes." 48 In another instance, The Spring Chicken opened on 30 May 1905 and was redressed in April of 1906. The actress playing the title role wore the same costumes but other ladies were "regowned regardless of cost," which meant new costumes for her mother, sister, friends, and the chorus. 49 Sometimes productions were redressed especially

47 The Play Pictorial, 14 (1909), 302.
48 The Queen, 128 (1910), 533.
49 "The 'Spring Chicken' Refeathered," The Queen, 119 (1906), 691-92.
for command performances, as was David Garrick in 1903 when Worth designed a new costume for Mary Moore to wear at the performance before King Edward, Queen Alexander, and the King and Queen of Italy.

Producers arranged for fashion columnists to attend dress rehearsals or previews, presumably to ensure that the costumes received proper attention in the columns. The unlucky columnist for The World of Dress mentioned the practice of dress rehearsals when she did not receive the required invitation on two separate occasions. The first reference came in 1900 when she informed her readers:

I cannot tell you the details of the dresses worn in "The Messenger Boy" at the Gaiety Theatre, for Mr. George Edwardes, unlike all other managers in London, did not invite me or my artist to the dress rehearsal or the first performance: this sin of omission on the part of Mr. George Edwardes surprises me as much as it distresses me, for I am told that the play is a success, that the frocks were quite worthy of being described in The World of Dress. . . .

George Edwardes' sin of omission did not extend to the Sunday Times because it published a review of the costumes the day after the play opened. The second time the columnist was not invited to a dress rehearsal was in 1903 when "an erring management failed to send to this office an invitation to

50 The World of Dress, 3 (1900), 106.
witness the new play at Wyndham's theatre. . . ."51 The
Sunday Times mentioned the practice of dress rehearsals in a
review of the costumes for The Catch of the Season:

> The dress rehearsal, erstwhile the opportun­
> ity for the artist and the dress-describer, is
> becoming a thing of the past. Those who eked
> out a precarious existence by sketching and
> laudation have had of late to snatch their
> opportunities at a disadvantage mitigated only
> by the sense of a saving of time, i.e., the
> gowns and hats to be worn can be hastily viewed
> at the modiste's, the beauties of the former
> being largely discounted by their invertebrate
> limpness.52

The rest of the article concerned the private view arranged
by Lucile and Seymour Hicks to show the costumes to clients
and dress reviewers. In 1902, Frederick Harrison and Cyril
Maude went so far as to arrange to have typed descriptions
of the costumes, designed by Lucile, distributed to the
fashion columnists who came to review The Unforeseen to
ensure that descriptions of the costumes were as accurate as
possible.

Producers occasionally allowed descriptions and illustra­
tions of stage costumes to be published before the opening of
a play. As previously discussed, George Alexander allowed
The Sketch to examine the new costumes for the second redres­
sing of the Prisoner of Zenda before they were used onstage.

51 "Theatrical Gowns and Gossip," October 1903, p. 28.
In 1896, *The Sketch*, presumably with the permission of the management, published an illustration of one dress and descriptions of others in *The Little Genius* the day before the play opened. When Mrs. Langtry appeared in *A Royal Necklace* in 1901, she gave *The Sketch* permission to include photographs of her Parisian costumes in an issue of the magazine published five days before the play opened on 22 April.

The responsibility of arranging and purchasing stage costumes did not fall solely on the shoulders of actor-managers and producers. Seymour Hicks and his co-producers paid for the costumes, repair bills, gloves, and new costumes, but other producers had arrangements whereby actresses supplied their own costumes. Ada Reeve explained in an interview that in musical comedy, only gloves, shoes, and accessories were supplied by the management. She added that she gave her used stage costumes to some poorer actresses who might have the chance of getting an engagement provided they could supply their own frocks. Arthur Bourchier and associates paid for Violet Vanbrugh's costumes unless she chose something that was deemed a mistake, in which case she bought the mistake for her personal use from the syndicate and used another costume of their choosing.53

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Collaboration between producers and actresses did not always go as smoothly as it did between Arthur Bourchier and Violet Vanbrugh, who were husband and wife offstage. At Daly's Theatre, for instance, the actress often had the final say over what she wore onstage in spite of the wishes of the playwright or costume designer. Speaking of the power of any popular actress in a musical comedy, Owen Hall gave The World of Dress interviewer a few examples of times when managers were forced to bow to actresses in matters of dress. One example was Marie Tempest's insistence upon wearing 1899 gowns in A Greek Slave, which was set in Rome of 90 A.D. Mr. Hall explained that, although the author, manager, and costume designer strove for historical accuracy in productions, incongruities arose because leading actresses wore what they considered to be best for their own style of beauty. While he was speaking specifically of the circumstances at Daly's Theatre, Hall's philosophy of theatre management might have been true of other managers: "With the charming artist—and you will admit that the Daly Company is rich in charming artists—concession is nine points of the law of management."54

As much as authors may have complained about well-dressed actresses who insisted on wearing what was becoming to them

instead of what was dramatically appropriate, producers still allowed actresses to wear the latest fashions onstage because the interest of the audience in the costumes was so great that it sometimes surpassed interest in the play in which the costumes were being worn. Successful producers and actor-managers gave the public what it wanted and arranged to clothe the female members of their company in costumes from leading couturiers, costume designers, and costumiers. If period costumes were required, they were designed to be historically accurate and made of costly fabrics and trim. If modern costumes were needed, they were of the latest fashion. To ensure that the costumes received the full attention of fashion columns, producers and managers arranged for dress reviewers to see a dress rehearsal or a special preview of the costumes. When a play had a long run, the original costumes were replaced with new and different ones, presumably to create more public interest in the production and attract more business. Some producers paid for all of the costumes worn in a production, while others had the actresses supply their own costumes for an engagement. Actor-managers and producers became associated with certain styles of dressing, so that Henry Irving was known for his lavish, historically accurate costumes that made good models for fancy-dress costumes, the St. James's under George Alexander was associated with the latest modes, and productions by George Edwardes had a reputation for a good cast and pretty
dresses. Sometimes the producers had the duty of choosing the costumes that appeared in their shows, but more often the task and credit for the results went to the actresses, the people who actually wore the costumes.
CHAPTER V

FASHIONABLE ACTRESSES

There were approximately forty "charming artists" during the thirty years before World War I who were considered to be well-dressed models of fashion. Some of the actresses, like Lillie Langtry or Mrs. Patrick Campbell, were Society Actresses; others, such as Mary Moore or Mrs. Beerbohm Tree, were highly regarded for their dramatic talents; some, like Marie Tempest or Ellaline Terriss, were musical theatre stars; still others, like Sarah Bernhardt or Eleanora Duse, were great foreign stars. A few of the other fashionable actresses were Olga Nethersole, Julia Neilson, Irene and Violet Vanbrugh, Ellen Terry, Mrs. Kendal, and Evelyn Millard.

Since so many of them played fashionable women onstage, actresses were seen as leaders of fashion. Writing of the costumes in Diplomacy, The Queen commented that "Actresses in their time play many parts, and amongst them that of fashion leader to the multitude. . . ."¹ As mentioned in the previous chapter, fashion columnists were quick to record their disappointment when an actress who normally wore the

¹ *The Queen*, 93 (1893), 358.
latest fashions onstage, such as Mary Moore, appeared in costumes that did not typify new styles. The expectation for fashionable dress worn offstage was just as great, as shown by one reaction to the unavoidable absence of actresses from the Private View at the Royal Academy in May of 1901. The fashion columnist of The Illustrated London News lamented:

Actors and actresses were absent this year, as, owing to the fact that the customary royal and academical dinner was suspended out of respect to the late Queen, and Private View was transferred to Saturday—matinee day. The absence of the ladies of "the profession" means a loss of much good dress.\(^2\)

The public thought so highly of the wardrobes of actresses that 27,572 readers of The Pelican voted Fanny Ward first in "The Smartest Lady of the Season" contest run by the magazine in 1899. In 1901, Miss Ward again came in first in the same contest with 23,721 votes while Mrs. Langtry came in third with approximately 1,700 votes. In an article entitled "How Actresses Set Fashions," The Queen gave three reasons why women looked to actresses for fashion guidance:

they can insist on having things made for them, and made according to their own ideas. The expense of carrying out a special design which might trouble the private individual is of no consequence when the success of a stage performance is in question. Moreover, the actress

\(^2\) The Illustrated London News, 118 (1901), 688.
is bound to make a most careful study of what really suits her and looks well from all points of view.³

Because actresses came in all shapes and sizes, women could choose an actress with the same type of figure and study her costumes to determine what styles worked best on that kind of figure. Women who were tall and majestic could study or copy the costumes of such actresses as Julia Neilson or Lily Hanbury. Ladies who were small and slight could model their dress after that worn by Eva Moore. Women who were shorter than average could examine the costumes of Marie Tempest. Sometimes the actresses gave advice on the best styles for their type of figure. Eva Moore told an interviewer that simple styles worked best on her because:

I am such a small, slight person, that if I were over-loaded with a quantity of elaborate trimming, jewelled embroideries, ruffles and ruches, lace flounces, pearl necklaces, diamond brooches, and so on, I should be positively swamped.⁴

Speaking to an interviewer about her height, Marie Tempest passed on the wisdom that:

I cannot afford to have two or three lines going straight across my figure and cutting me up into slices; nor can I have my neck muffled and ruffled up to the eyes, and my

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³ The Queen, 121 (1907), 1034.
shoulders loaded with heavy cloaks, without feeling perfectly swamped and overwhelmed—and looking it, which is worse.\(^5\)

As *The Queen* had pointed out, actresses made a careful study of what clothing really suited them and dressed accordingly. Women in the audience could follow the guidance of actresses who were experts on their own types of figures.

Lillie Langtry was one of the actresses who guided women in matters of dress for over thirty years. As a Society Beauty, Langtry was a leader of fashion before she took to the stage, the Langtry toque and the Jersey costume being two of the fashions launched by her in her Society days. Once she began her acting career, Langtry continued to wear the latest in dress onstage and off. In 1885, the drama critic for the *Sunday Times* wrote of her costumes for *Peril*:

"Mrs. Langtry's dresses are, as usual, exquisite.\(^6\)

The fashion columns held a high opinion of Mrs. Langtry's gowns throughout her stage career. In 1894, *The Illustrated London News* said of her:

Mrs. Langtry dresses so beautifully and wears her things so well that she has a great influence on fashion. In "A Society Butterfly" she wears a series of new and first-rate dresses, not at all stagy, but just such as any woman would be glad to possess.\(^7\)


\(^7\) *The Illustrated London News*, 2 June 1894, p. 694.
The World of Dress said of the actress in 1899: "As I have once before observed, what Mrs. Langtry does not know about the art of costume is not worth knowing." Even as late as 1908, when Langtry was fifty-five years old, the dress columns praised her style and fashions. The Sunday Times said of her costumes for A Fearful Joy:

Famous always for her perfect taste in dress, it is doubtful whether Mrs. Langtry has ever looked more beautiful than she did last night in the charming gowns which she wore in the new play. . . .

The Illustrated London News wrote of the same costumes:

Mrs. Langtry has been, from her first appearance on the stage, a model wearer of the newest thing in chiffons; and she has such style and can display with grace and un-self-consciousness the smartest and newest fashions. Her gowns in her new play at the Haymarket are all prophetic of the season's modes.

Agreeing with the others, The World of Dress wrote that "When Mrs. Langtry first steps on the stage in 'A Fearful Joy,' she presents a perfect picture of the prevailing fashion at its best."

For her roles in various society plays, Langtry wore stylist garments from the Parisian houses of Worth, Paquin,

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8 The World of Dress, 2 (1899), 553.
9 Sunday Times, 19 April 1908, p. 10.
Doucet, and Laferrière. She did most of her clothes shopping in Paris, travelling there three or four times a year to consult with dressmakers, milliners, and corsetières.

Fashion columnists were just as interested in the gowns worn by Langtry offstage as they were by the ones worn onstage. Their columns were full of descriptions of Langtry's outfits for social occasions, such as her white silk crépe dress for a garden party given by Augustus Harris in 1892, her three gowns for Goodwood in 1897, her muslin dress at Trouville in 1898, and her scarlet satin coat for Goodwood in 1901. For some, her private wardrobe was more interesting than her stage costumes. In 1902, The World of Dress interviewed Mrs. Langtry at home in order to see her latest gowns, explaining that "Everyone can see Mrs. Langtry on the stage, while her private wardrobe is for the privileged few." 12

Considering her reputation as a fashion leader, it is interesting to note that Langtry periodically insisted that she never paid much attention to her costumes. In an 1893 interview she told the writer from The Sketch that she never gave her costumes a thought until it was time for the dress rehearsal and had sometimes not seen the costumes until then. Langtry further explained that:

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12 "Dress and Mrs. Langtry," The World of Dress, April 1902, n. pag.
designed their own stage dresses that was published in the Daily Express, a columnist for The Sketch remembered that "many years ago, when interviewing Mrs. Langtry on this point, the famous beauty declared that, in her opinion, 'the play's the thing'. . . ." Other comments by Langtry to the contrary indicate that her indifference to costumes was more of a pose than reality. During an interview about her upcoming production of The Degenerates, Langtry told the Sunday Times that there would be some very lovely costumes in the show but that she couldn't say anymore about them because "I do not see Mr. Worth until the 17th, when I go to Paris to meet him and settle all the details of that most important part--the dresses." Clearly Langtry was giving costumes a thought long before the dress rehearsal. In 1901, Langtry made another special trip to Worth's in Paris to try on her costumes for A Royal Necklace. More telling than the trips to Paris was the special mirror in Langtry's office at the Imperial Theatre which she used to check her stage costumes. The large mirror was lit with electric lamps to mimic the conditions of stage lighting so that Langtry could tell what the effect of stage lighting would be on her

16 "Small Talk of the Week," The Sketch, 30 (1900), 102.
17 Sunday Times, 16 August 1899, p. 8.
the little gown which I wore in the last act of "Agatha Tylden," and which was said to be one of Worth’s latest creations, had been my home dinner dress for ever so long. Often my leading lady and I toss up as to who shall wear one or two frocks, yet whichever falls to my lot is always picked out as being extra showy.13

The next year Langtry told The Sketch that there was not another woman in London as fond of pretty things who paid such small attention to her gowns. The reason was that "I have so little time, and it is rather wearing to do twenty things at once; therefore I am obliged to trust largely to luck and to my dressmaker."14 Speaking of her costume play A Royal Necklace, Langtry impressed upon a journalist from The World of Dress that:

she paid as much attention to the dresses of the rest of the company as to her own. She does not believe in "starring" her own gowns at the expense of others, and she mentioned incidentally that there are several dresses in the part apart from hers that would cost over £80 each.15

A comment by one of her interviewers suggests that such protestations could have been an attempt to convince journalists and reviewers that she was a serious actress and not merely a beautiful woman wearing couture clothing.

Writing of an interview with a number of leading ladies who

13 The Sketch, 1 (1893), 67-68.
14 The Sketch, 6 (1894), 116.
15 The World of Dress, 4 (1901), 165.
costumes. Such a mirror was not a common item in 1901 and indicates that Langtry took care to study the effects of stage lighting on her costumes. Regardless of her supposed indifference to her costumes, the public was interested in her gowns. At the time of her death, Theatre Magazine recalled that "Throughout her life, in New York, as well as in her native Island, whatever the Lily wore, from shoes to feathers, became instantly the rage."19

Mary Moore was another actress whose role as a fashion leader spanned most of her career (see Plate XII). Acting parts of fashionable women, such as her role of the daughter of a millionaire in An Aristocratic Alliance, gained Moore a reputation as "one of the best-dressed women on the English stage."20 Speaking of her costumes in The Bride and Bridegroom, The Queen said "Miss Mary Moore is one of the fortunate few who not only knows what to wear, but how to wear it."21 The Sunday Times asked its readers "Has anyone ever seen Miss Mary Moore in an unbecoming frock? I think not. Everything she wears is well-considered, well-thought-out,

21 The Queen, 115 (1904), 811.
Plate XII—Mary Moore wearing a costume by Lucile for The Liars. Illustration from The Sketch, 21 (1898), 354.
well-made, and expensive.\textsuperscript{22} Public interest in Moore's clothing did not lag far behind that of the fashion columns. Referring to one of Moore's dresses in The Squire of Dames that had two prominent ornaments of diamonds, The Queen ventured "to prophesy that by Christmas there will be quite a mania for these links à la Mary Moore."\textsuperscript{23} During the fashion battle of the long train and the short skirt in 1901, the Sunday Times informed its readers that Mary Moore had discarded the trailing skirt in her costumes for The Mummy and the Humming Bird.\textsuperscript{24}

Fashion columns were also interested in Moore's clothes for her frequent social outings and described in great detail her gown for the 1894 Ascot, a party at the Cecil Restaurant in 1901, Mr. Hayden Coffin's "At Home" in 1889, and an 1896 vacation trip to Switzerland, Scotland, and around England. So great was the interest in Moore's dresses that The Sketch devoted most of a page to the enumeration of her new wardrobe for the vacation.

Although she was known for introducing many of the latest modes from Paris, Moore is reported to have designed most of her stage costumes. She told interviewers that her method

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\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{22} Sunday Times, 9 April 1899, p. 4.
\item \textsuperscript{23} The Queen, 98 (1895), 886.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Sunday Times, 13 Oct. 1901, p. 2.
\end{itemize}
was to pick up ideas from Paris, Russia, and other places and amplify or alter the original inspiration with the help of her dressmaker until the desired effect was achieved.\textsuperscript{25} Some of her dressmakers were Messrs. Jay, Worth, Paquin, and Lucile. One of Moore's designs was for a pink gown, made by Paquin, which she wore in the 1902 production of \textit{The Tyranny of Tears}. Fashion columnist characterized Moore's style of dress as simple but chic.

One of the most fashionable musical and comedy stars was Marie Tempest. \textit{The Queen} said of her fashion leadership:

\begin{quote}
Nobody knows better how to manage a frock than Miss Marie Tempest, fashion having no kinder exponent of its whims and fancies. All she wears possesses charm and attraction from that moment forthwith, and when she occupies the boards, every woman's attention in the audience is riveted on her clothes. Marie Tempest can launch a fashion as easily as she can create a character.\textsuperscript{26}
\end{quote}

Zena Dare, a fellow actress, said of her costumes that

"Dressmakers I know are sent to copy the gowns of Miss Marie Tempest, Ellis Jeffreys, and others of note."\textsuperscript{27} Marie Tempest told an interviewer that nearly everything she wore was copied and mentioned a coat in \textit{The Freedom of Suzanne}.

\textsuperscript{25} "Miss Mary Moore," \textit{The Sketch}, 6 (1894), 106; "An Interview with Miss Mary Moore," \textit{The World of Dress}, 2 (1899), 150.

\textsuperscript{26} \textit{The Queen}, 135 (1914), 1153.

\textsuperscript{27} "Fashion and the Footlights," \textit{The Strand Magazine}, 33 (1907), 511.
and a French sailor hat in *The Marriage of Kitty* as examples. Like Mary Moore, Tempest claimed to have a great deal to do with the designing of her costumes since she didn't like to slavishly follow fashions but rather preferred to make a style her own. She went to Paris to buy nearly all of her clothes, but also wore costumes from Messrs. Jay and Messrs. Redfern.  

English actresses were not the only ones who provided examples of the latest modes for women to study. Because of their numerous foreign tours, Sarah Bernhardt, Réjane, and other French actresses brought English women the latest fashions from Paris. Madame Bernhardt travelled with an extensive wardrobe of theatrical costumes and personal dresses made by Parisian houses such as Doucet and Paquin. On one foreign tour, she took twenty-six theatre costumes, twenty-five town dresses, eight furs, evening dresses, and peignoirs. For her 1891 American tour, Bernhardt took 123 cases containing her theatrical costumes and properties.  

Unlike other actresses who wore the latest modes onstage, Bernhardt chose to dress in a distinctive style of her own, a style which was widely copied by English women (see Plate XIII). Her dresses were made in long, flowing lines of the

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28 *The Strand Magazine*, p. 507.
29 Latour, p. 136; *The Queen*, 89 (1891), 231.
Plate XIII—Sarah Bernhardt wearing two gowns from *La Dame aux Camélias*. Illustration from *The World of Dress*, 8 (1905), 12.
Princess order, of soft and supple fabrics, and girdled low. Part of her graceful style was attributed to her habit of not wearing corsets.\textsuperscript{30} The Queen summed up her influence when it wrote of her costumes for Lysiane:

Every time one sees Mme. Bernhardt, one is impressed anew with her unerring perception of the graceful and elegant, to women in general, and to herself in particular. There are certain notions in dress to which she has converted the whole fashionable feminine world, as, for instance, the low waist line, the full straight lines of the front drapery (so different from the pouter-pigeon style of bodice which the average Frenchwoman used to affect, the clinging skirt, the long glove, or its substitute, the long finely rucked sleeve, and the wide-brimmed style of millinery. Consequently Mme. Bernhardt presents now the appearance of dressing more like other women than she did, because, in reality, other women dress more like her.\textsuperscript{31}

Writing of more indefinable qualities, The Graphic credited Mme. Bernhardt with teaching the English the arts of willowy grace, draping the human figure, and studied languor.\textsuperscript{32}

Rédane brought to England the latest creations of Jacques Doucet, who specialized in gowns of pastel-colored silk and lace inspired by eighteenth-century paintings. Typical of his costumes was one that Rédane wore in Divorcons, performed in London in 1897. The gown was made

\textsuperscript{30} "Dress and Madame Bernhardt," The World of Dress, 2 (1899), 356.
\textsuperscript{31} The Queen, 104 (1898), 29.
\textsuperscript{32} The Graphic, 49 (1894), 755.
of rose velvet with cream embroidery, a wide belt and high collar of mauve velvet, and a lace jabot at the throat. A cape of mauve velvet falling in wide pleats from a cape of chinchilla fur trimmed with lace and having a collar of grey fox was worn over the dress.\textsuperscript{33} The English fashion columnists held the opinion that "one always expectsto see quite the latest thing in frocks when Réjane is leading lady. . . ."\textsuperscript{34} Although Réjane had a reputation for showing the latest in dress, she emphasized in an interview that a woman should always dress in the most becoming way to suit her own style. Réjane also mentioned that her stage dresses were selected in accordance with the demands of the part and that a dressmaker was a secondary personage who embroidered variations of the themes that she chose.\textsuperscript{35}

From the United States, Camille Clifford brought the pompadoured, S-shaped figure of the Gibson Girl based on the drawings of American illustrator Charles Dana Gibson. In a much publicized contest held in New York in 1904, Gibson chose Clifford as the woman who most successfully embodied the attributes of his drawing.\textsuperscript{36} Two years later,

\textsuperscript{33} "Place aux Dames," \textit{The Graphic}, 55 (1897), 8.
\textsuperscript{34} "Dresses at the Royalty Theatre," \textit{The Queen}, 119 (1906), 1133.
\textsuperscript{35} "An Interview with Madame Réjane," \textit{The World of Dress}, 3 (1900), 260.
Clifford's high-piled hair, daring neckline, small waistline, and S-shaped stance were seen in London in The Belle of Mayfair. Clifford recalled in an interview that when she arrived in London she ordered a Princess robe from a well-known modiste who told her that it was not in fashion. She insisted on having the gown made anyway and it was soon copied by the women of London. The photograph which accompanied the story (see Plate XIV) paid tribute to her influence by stating "Miss Camille Clifford, whose hair, gown, and manner of walking have all affected the fashion." Seymour Hicks presented the Gibson Girl look in his 1904 production of The Catch of the Season, which contained Camille Clifford and a Gibson Girl chorus. The Queen called the Gibson Girls "very striking, their dresses being many and varied." Zena Dare, one of the principal actresses in the play, said that "when I played in 'The Catch of the Season' I noticed repeatedly that the 'Gibson Girls' were copied a great deal, particularly their manner of dressing the hair."

Like Réjane and Tempest, a number of actresses designed their own costumes. Olga Nethersole said in an interview that she designed her costumes so that the color and form

37 The Strand Magazine, p. 508.
38 The Queen, 116 (1904), 431.
Plate XIV—Camille Clifford, the embodiment of the Gibson Girl. Photograph from The Strand Magazine, 33 (1907), 508.
typified the mode of the character she was playing. Ellis Jeffreys used to study styles suitable to the woman she was playing until she knew how she should be dressed and would then visit either Madame Hayward or Lucile, her usual dressmakers. Gertie Millar told The World of Dress that she designed her own dresses, adding:

that's the worst of it, the way one's gowns are copied. One struggles to find something new and original, and then in no time there are reproductions to be met everywhere. It's most aggravating and that is the reason I keep altering my dresses during the run of a piece; besides which I get terribly tired of my stage costumes, and like something fresh as often as possible.

Eva Moore made her own and her sister Decima's dresses when they were first getting started in the theatre; by 1901 her sewing skills were confined to her son's clothes because of a lack of time for any other sewing.

Fashionable actresses shared a few common opinions, regardless of their professed interest or lack of interest in clothes. The most widely held opinion was a belief in the close relationship between stage costumes and the world of fashion. An article entitled "Fashion and the Footlights"

40 "An Interview with Miss Olga Nethersole," The World of Dress, June 1902, p. 21.
in The Strand Magazine recorded some comments from actresses on the subject. Marie Tempest said that the smart people go to Paris for their clothes, but the majority of people do follow the fashions as seen on the stage. Speaking of her own costumes, she added that "a novel idea cannot be called one's own for any length of time, so quickly is it picked up and often made into a veritable craze. . . ." Mrs. Langtry had no doubt "that many women model themselves on a favorite, smart, and up-to-date actress." Lilian Braithwaite felt that many women "looked upon the stage as a sort of shop-window, where the newest ideas can be seen with comfort and leisure." Violet Vanbrugh thought that it was wonderful that the stage had acquired the power of a fashion leader since it was no longer necessary to visit Paris to find out what was going to be worn. In another interview, Evelyn Millard said that actresses can let their dresses be in advance of the modes "because there can be no doubt that a great many people go to the theatre only to see the newest fashions." While some actresses, such as Mrs. Kendal, may have denounced stage costumes as extravagant and inappropriate, no actress denied that the stage was a leader of fashion.

44 The Strand Magazine, pp. 506-12.

Not surprisingly, many actresses considered comfort an important element of costume and personal dress. Sarah Bernhardt dispensed with corsets and wore less constricting dresses like tea-gowns. Marie Tempest felt that comfort was a consideration because she liked "to be able to breathe, both on and off the stage." She ventured that her early training as a singer may have been responsible for her dislike of tight lacing and wasp-waists.46 Mrs. Kendal insisted that her dress must allow absolute ease and never impede her voice, "chest notes," or gesture.47 Speaking of her tailormades in Dandy Dick, Violet Vanbrugh said that they were "delightfully comfortable" and gave her "a delightful sense of freedom." She was not at all certain that she would care to go back to long trains and clinging draperies.48 Wishing to feel "perfectly free and unhampered while on stage," Evelyn Millard went so far as to never wear corsets onstage if possible.49

A number of actresses preferred simple styles in either their stage costumes or their personal dress. Ellis

48 "A Chat with Miss Violet Vanbrugh," The World of Dress, 3 (1900), 76.
Jeffreys confessed to The World of Dress that, although she wore stage costumes that were exceedingly dressy to portray frivolous, fashionable women, her own taste ran towards the plain and simple in dress. Julia Neilson said that she was happiest wearing a blouse and skirt and was bored by elaborate dress. This preference for simple styles did not, however, mean boring or inexpensive clothing. The example of simple clothing that Neilson showed an interviewer was a tailored skirt of black serge worn with a blouse of turquoise silk trimmed with silk fringe and a scarf of old lace, which was caught at one side with a diamond and ruby crescent. Like Neilson, Mrs. Kendal believed in a simplicity that had nothing to do with economy. In her costumes, she aimed for the perfection of simplicity: "Fit must be perfect, absolutely perfect, material must be of the finest, and there must be a certainty of effect." Kendal felt that bead fringes, jet passementerie, and other trimming distracted attention from the actress's work. Violet Vanbrugh's preference for simple clothes was a reaction to her stage costumes. While she felt that all women were happiest when well-dressed, she didn't bother much about her offstage


51 "An Interview with Miss Julia Neilson," The World of Dress, 2 (1899), 486.

clothing because she was tired of clothes after her performances. Explaining in detail, Vanbrugh told an interviewer that her part in *Hearts are Trumps* at Drury Lane had tried her love of dress to its utmost:

Eight-an-a-half changes every night, the half-change was merely slipping into a skirt and overcoat and hat; but all the others entailed changing petticoats, shoes, stockings, jewellery, hair-combs, everything! We played four matinees a week, so the average was eighteen changes of dress a day. It is since then that I have insisted on my home clothes being done up by one button or one hook and eye.53

Vanbrugh was not the only one who found so many costume changes tiresome. Gertie Millar told an interviewer that she "would like to get hold of the tiresome person who invented matinees, which often mean as many as twelve or thirteen changes of dress during the day."54 It was not uncommon for the actresses to have to make many costume changes during the run of a show, a fact which might explain part of the preference for simple styles expressed by others actresses.

Whatever their personal preference in terms of style, actresses unanimously said that they wore whatever they thought was best to express the characters that they were

portraying. Mary Moore said that she chose her costumes as her character would have chosen hers. When reminded that she always seemed to appear in the latest fashions, Moore explained that she had been regularly playing women of fashion.

Nancy Price told an interviewer that fashion was important, but it should be subordinate to personality.

Lena Ashwell tried to dress according to her visualization of what her character would wear and thought that no detail was too trifling if it helped to interpret the character.

Olga Nethersole went so far in her philosophy of appropriateness as to proclaim that an actress was justified in making herself look plain or dowdy if the dramatic circumstances demanded it. As an example she mentioned that she had made herself positively ugly in the first part of The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith so that her transformation would show as much contrast as possible.

In spite of the fact that they were characterized in the fashion columns as wearing the latest in dress, most actresses insisted that they wore the styles that were

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55 "An Interview with Miss Mary Moore," *The World of Dress*, 2 (1899), 150.


58 "A Few Words with Miss Olga Nethersole," *The World of Dress*, 1 (1898), 204.
most becoming to them and not what was necessarily the newest modes. Mrs. Tree thought that:

A woman's taste in dress may be always a law unto itself if only she knows her own points, realises what she looks like to the general eye, makes the becoming and the appropriate her study before the fashionable, and takes care to wear only what is good, however simple.59

Gertie Millar told The World of Dress that she personally did not adhere closely to whatever style happened to be the vogue but rather wore what suited her.60 Kate Cutler said that "I am not--tho' tell it not in Gath--devoted to fashion for its own dear sake; I would rather choose the becoming than the new. . . ."61 Dorothea Baird also thought that women should ignore fashion and "dress firstly according to her figure and personality, secondly according to her means. . . ."62 The strongest opinion on the matter came from Lillie Langtry:

Man wears what he pleases, and is guided by only two rules. He dresses for comfort, and to enhance his appearance. Woman is entitled to the same privilege, and if society won't give it to her, she must take it for herself. What looks attractive on someone else might be hideous if I wear it, and vice versa. Every woman is entitled to her independence.

60 The World of Dress, 7 (1904), 14.
61 "An Interview with Miss Kate Cutler," The World of Dress, 7 (1904), 25.
It is her right to ignore the dictates of fashion and dress in a manner that is most becoming to her own character and personality. In these days when woman is being granted the vote everywhere, we hear she is at last man's equal, but she will not achieve true equality until she breaks the chains of fashion's tyranny and strikes out on her own.63

Ironically, such advice—no matter how many times it was repeated—was not followed by many women. Writing of the actress's careful study of what suits her, The Queen lamented:

This last consideration does not always seem apparent to the woman in the stalls, who thinks that a certain actress is simply wearing some novelty because it is the latest fashion, and forthwith goes home and orders the duplicate of the new gown or hat without pausing to think whether it will be becoming to her own style.64

Most women who copied stage costumes undoubtedly did so because the costumes were believed to be the latest styles from designers in Paris and London. Other women may have copied stage costumes in order to capture some of the glamor that the stage was thought to possess. From the 1880s on, actresses became popular public figures whose offstage activities held a fascination for a public eager to learn the particulars of a popular actress's private life. Referring to the widespread interest in the details of Evelyn

64 The Queen, 121 (1907), 1034.
Millard's wedding in 1900, The Graphic wrote of the public's fascination with members of the dramatic profession:

> The time is now far past since actresses were despised and considered unfit to enter into polite society. The pendulum, indeed, has swung back with a vengeance, and now every detail of an actress's life, her dress, her habits and tastes, her opinions and her pets acquire undue importance, and are greedily discussed by people who love to collect gossip and for whom the stage seems to possess some strange glamour.\(^\text{65}\)

One unusual case of copying a stage costume may have been an attempt to associate with the glamour of stage. The fashion columnist for The Sketch, who had gone to see a performance of The Sorcerer, recorded the unusual case of imitation:

> Just before us in the stalls sat an elderly lady in the duplicate of Miss Rosina Brandram's handsome purple velvet and mauve moiré. Evidently an ordered "exact copy," and evidently, too, the source of some just pride to the wearer, who, when the Lady Sangazure "came on" bridled excessively at her velvet vraisemblance, and apparently took the amused glances of her neighbors as a tribute to the originality of her ideas. It is a funny little world, of a surety, and many are our various ways of obtaining enjoyment therein. But that anyone should first copy a leading lady's gown and then go and sit in front to enjoy the double effect is only one added bit of foolishness to a very full list.\(^\text{66}\)

\(^{65}\) The Graphic, 62 (1900), 118.

\(^{66}\) The Sketch, 24 (1898), 86.
While that particular case of imitation was called a bit of foolishness, the general practice of copying features of stage costumes or even entire costumes was not characterized by fashion columnists as unusual or foolish. Actresses, each with their own individual style, were considered to be fashion leaders for the multitude. The stage costumes of actresses in modern plays offered women an ever-changing show of couture clothing to study, copy, or alter to suit their own styles. Judging from fashion columns and interviews with actresses, many women followed the guidance of actresses and copied stage fashions with a vengeance.
CHAPTER VI

PUBLIC IMITATION

Reviews of stage costumes provided information for women who were interested in learning about new modes or those who needed guidance in choosing fashions for themselves. The columns described the dresses in detail, provided illustrations of some costumes, pronounced which costumes were particularly chic or which showed elements of new modes, pointed out which costumes would be good models for ladies and girls, and offered suggestions on how the models could be copied. For example, The Illustrated London News recommended that a dress with a cardinal red skirt and an overhanding bodice and sleeves of Irish lace worn by Ellaline Terriss in The Circus Girl would be a good model for new summer dresses. After describing the dress, the columnist suggested:

I can imagine the style most successfully copied in white, with the Irish lace bodice, for the sake of economy, transformed into a bodice of embroidered muslin. And then, again, the same idea might be used with a bodice of fine lace of the imitation order; but, after all, why should I seek thus after thrifty substitutes?
The evening gown worn by Miss Terriss in the same play was recommended as "a model frock for the young girl at an evening party. . . ."¹ Fashion columnists also considered following their own advice about copying theatre costumes, as one column indicated:

I am rather worried at not being able to make up my mind how many new clothes I can contrive to purchase, and feel singularly anxious to copy several of those worn in "A Bachelor's Romance" at the Globe, where we went last night, especially May Harvey's grey cloth, which was made by Jay's, covered with a design of padded cloth, with revers showing white frills and little lines of black velvet. I should like her hat, too, with its grey Paradise plumes at one side and choux of black velvet on the hair. Miss Nellie Thorne's blue muslin I admire also frilled on the hem and with a chiffon collar all frills, which she wears with a large rustic hat of poppies and cornflowers. Her other muslin, with the apron and the green sun-bonnet is again a most pleasing sight. I have seen these gowns before, but I do not think I ever wanted them so much as I do this morning.²

There was no further word as to whether or not the lady had copied any of the costumes.

Judging from the fashion columns, models for almost every sort of modern garment could be found on the stage. Those ladies needing more models for summer dresses found them in A Judge's Memory (1906) or The Girl Behind the

¹ The Illustrated London News, 109 (1896), 900.
² "The Diary of a Daughter of Eve," The Sketch, 21 (1898), 309-10.
Counter (1906). Women needing gowns for trips to Egypt, the south of France, or Monte Carlo were urged to see Chance, the Idol (1902) or The Stronger Sex (1907). Models for tailormades and walking costumes were shown in As in a Looking Glass (1895) and My Wife (1907). Suggestions for Ascot gowns were available in The Explorer. Women needing new motoring dresses or coats saw Mr. Popple (1905) or Mrs. Skeffington (1910). Models for evening gowns were shown in many plays, including The Tree of Knowledge (1897) and The Gay Widow (1907). Ideas for new hats were found in Miss Francis of Yale (1897) or Bilberry of Trilbury (1898). Suggestions for equestrians who wanted new riding habits or hats were available in Robin Hood (1906) and The Whip (1909). The latest models of bathing costumes were found in A Gaiety Girl (1899). Brides needing inspiration saw The Great Conspiracy (1907) or The Stronger Sex (1907), while widows and others needing mourning garb studied Violet Vanbrugh's black dress in The Duel (1907). Matrons wanting models for new dresses were urged to see The Great Ruby (1898), His Excellency the Governor (1904), and Miquette (1907). Mothers wishing to clothe their young daughters found models for party frocks in Loving Legacy (1895) and The Canary (1899), gowns for school in The Dairymaids (1906), and a walking costume in A Little Ray of Sunshine (1899).
Fashion columns used stage costumes as models when answering inquiries from readers in question-and-answer columns. The Sketch, for instance, gave the following advice to one of its correspondents:

There is, of course, a big English contingent at Hong-King, and you will be expected to reflect accurately the latest fashions from "home" on arrival. For the grey velvet dress your soul desires, I cannot suggest a more charming model than the grey panne velours worn by Miss Lilian Braithwaite in the last scene of "The Garden of Lies," at the St. James's. It is a nocturne amongst twilight gowns. The same attractive lady figures forth very attractively in another Act dressed in billowing white chiffon and lace, over which a vivid note of colour is cast in her pelerine of crimson taffetas. Go and see the play, by all means. It will be a useful object-lesson in the Garden Beautiful as well as gowns.

When one of its readers asked about sacque back coats, The Queen replied:

Yes, these are being very much worn three-quarter length and short, ending at the waist. Muriel Eden (Miss Mabel Terry Lewis) has a very pretty one of this kind in the "Gay Lord Quex." The back is entirely cut without a seam, and it opens in front sufficiently wide to show a good deal of the vest.4

Magazine readers, presumably those who were unable to see certain London productions, wrote to inquire about particular costumes. In 1902, C. F. asked The Queen about "Dresses worn by Mme. Rejane in 'La Passerelle.'"—I should

3 The Sketch, 67 (1904), 418.

4 "Dress and Fashion--To Correspondents." The Queen, 106 (1899), 714.
be glad to hear particulars of any of these.” Someone else asked The Queen: “Can anybody describe the dinner dress worn by Miss Granville in 'The Sorrows of Satan.' . . .”

In answer to a question, The Sketch wrote:

I cannot say off-hand by whom Miss Violet Vanbrugh's frock was made in the second act, but can find out and let you know in the next number, if that will do. I should not think there would be any objection to its being copied.

Since The Sketch did not run the original question with its answer, there is no indication of how the copy was going to be used. If signatures are any indication, some of the inquiries were for the purpose of copying London costumes for amateur theatricals. In one case An Amateur Actor asked "Can anybody give me the description of the modern day dresses in the 'Three Little Maids?'" In another instance, Dramatist inquired:

Can anyone describe the dinner dress worn by Miss Granville in "The Sorrows of Satan;" a good costume of Sarah Bernhardt in "L'Etrangère;" one of Miss Mary Moore in "David Garrick;" and Miss Phyllis Broughton in "All Alive Oh?"

All questions were promptly answered.

5 "Dress Notes and Queries," The Queen, 112 (1902), 1009; 102 (1897), 548.
6 49 (1905), 410.
7 "Dress Notes and Queries," The Queen, 112 (1902), 580.
8 "Dress Notes and Queries," The Queen, 102 (1897), 548.
Following the advice of fashion columns, women did copy stage costumes that struck their fancy. Nancy Price told an interviewer that she knew "that the green 'Hilda Gunning' gown of which we have been speaking is being copied—in a more sober tint—for a lady very well known in Society." Actresses recalled examples of their garments that had been copied in The Strand Magazine article about "Fashion and the Footlights." Zena Dare recounted that:

When I was playing in "The Beauty of Bath" I had a most charming cloak, and when I went to supper after the play I saw two exactly like it hanging up in the ladies' cloak-room. They were exactly like mine—it was most marked.

The Beauty of Bath must have been a particularly inspiring production because Ellaline Terriss said that she read in The Westminster Gazette that her blue coat in the play "was the first notable instance of the kind which has since become so fashionable." Billie Burke mentioned that the little hat that she wore in The Belle of Mayfair was copied extensively and that her dress in the first act, designed by a leading modiste, "had quite a record in replicas." Marie Tempest explained that the coat she wore in The Freedom of Suzanne and the French sailor hat in The Marriage of Kitty were both copied. As mentioned previously, Lucile said that she had

10 The Strand Magazine, pp. 506-12.
so many orders for copies of the gowns for The Catch of the Season that the firm could scarcely cope with them.

Some fashions took the name of the person or production that originated them. Ellaline Terriss wore a large gold heart-shaped locket on a long chain that was christened "The Ellaline Terriss" and became immensely popular. A shoe designed originally for Lillie Langtry became the "Langtry shoe," while one designed by Billie Burke for her costume in The School Girl was sold as the "Billie Burke shoe." A hat designed by Ellen Terry was sold in 1893 as the "Terry toque." Another popular hat was "The Merry Widow" model. The Woman's World showed a tea gown in 1890 that had "Bernhardt sleeves," which were long hanging sleeves with gathered puffs on the shoulders.

Costumes for historical plays also offered ideas for the woman in search of the latest fashions and dress columns pointed out suitable models just as they did with modern stage costumes. Reviewing the dresses in A Royal Necklace, which was set in the eighteenth century, The Graphic advised its readers that Mrs. Langtry's "walking dress of brown velvet, with the big black hat and big chinchilla muff

12 "Our Ladies' Pages," The Sketch, 1 (1893), 184-84.
might be copied with advantage at the present day. . . ."

The column also advised that:

> Several features of the dresses will be adopted by fashion this year, notably the large hats, the Marie Antoinette fichu (always most charming), and the quaint mantelet which some of the Paris élegantes wore recently at the Concours Hippique.  

For those who might need a theatre wrap, *The World of Dress* suggested a model from *Tom Jones*:

> Even from the "Costume Plays" there are a few crumbs for Fashion's followers to gather. For instance, in "Tom Jones" there is a delightful little cloak which Miss Carrie Moore wears in the last act, which would serve as a capital model for a summer theatre wrap.  

Women needing ideas for tea-gowns were directed to study Olga Nethersole's fifteenth-century dresses in *The Termagant* (1898), Mary Moore's fifteenth-century costume in the first act of *The Jest* (1898), or dresses in *The Christian King; or Alfred of Engle-land* (1903). Picturesque models for hats could be found in *Mr. Sheridan or When Knighthood was in Flower* (1907). At least one person was inspired by the costumes in historical plays because Winifred Emery told an interviewer in 1907 that the bridesmaids at one fashionable wedding wore large hats with tiny frilled caps underneath that were almost exact reproductions of the one worn by her in a recent production of *Olivia*.  

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14 *The Graphic*, 63 (1901), 630.  
15 *The World of Dress*, June 1907, p. 44.  
16 *The Strand Magazine*, pp. 509-10.
Historical costumes inspired a few popular fashions of their own, one of the most enduring being the Olivia cap, named after the play. When Ellen Terry played the role of Olivia in 1878, the cap became popular and was sold everywhere. Five years later, it was still being described in fashion columns such as those in The Graphic. When Julia Neilson played in Sweet Nell of Old Drury in 1900, milliners quickly started selling "Nell Gwynne picture hats." Hats were not the only item of dress carrying the name of Nell Gwynne. A little over a month after the opening of English Nell and Sweet Nell of Old Drury at the end of August 1900, Mr. Charles Lee brought out new "Nell Gwynne" veils.  
Named for the play performed in 1905, "Little Michu" caps made of jewels and pearls were worn by ladies as evening caps and the same style made of lace or silk was worn by children.  

Historical plays contained many models for fancy-dress costumes for the numerous balls held at that time, and fashion columns were quick to point out the nicest models. Sometimes the dress reviews of the stage costumes contained suggestions for models, as when The Queen advised its readers that:

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18 The Strand Magazine, p. 511.
Shakespeare's "Merry Wives of Windsor" has been put on the stage at the Haymarket with a perfection of detail which commends itself to the artistic mind, and the costumes are so perfectly carried out that they offer many suggestions to those who desire something less hackneyed than the usual costumes for fancy balls.  

The Sketch recommended the gowns for Dick Sheridan as inspiration for both modern and fancy-dress costumes, concluding with:

Taking them altogether, these gowns, in addition to being delightful to look upon, are brimful of good ideas, which you can utilise and copy in many different ways, so that I have got some sketches for you to make your task still easier. I am sure that their fair wearers will not object, for, after all, they will remember the well-worn proverb that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.

For fancy-dress costumes that might entail less effort to reproduce, women could take ideas from productions such as The Hon'ble Phil (1908), which showed some peasant dresses. Along with its reviews of stage costumes, The Queen periodically ran separate articles with suggestions for fancy costumes that could be found in recent theatrical productions, as they did with "Suggestions for Fancy Costumes from Popular Plays" in February 1889 and "Practical Suggestions for Fancy Dress" in December 1897.

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19 The Queen, 86 (1889), 94.
20 The Sketch, 5 (1894), 157.
Fashion columns also suggested stage models for fancy dress in their question-and-answer columns. To a reader who wanted a good costume for Cleopatra, The Queen suggested that she obtain a photograph of Mrs. Langtry in the part and then described one of Langtry's Cleopatra costumes for good measure. When another reader asked for "some new suggestions for fancy dress, from French sources if possible." The Queen offered Mme. Bernhardt's costumes in *Fedora* and Mrs. Langtry's Empire gowns in *Pauline*. 21

Readers looking for descriptions of costumes from particular plays turned to the question-and-answer columns for help. One reader asked The Queen for descriptions of the dresses worn by May Yohe in *The Lady Slavey* to use as models for fancy dress, while another asked for descriptions of the costumes worn in *The Circus Girl* at the Gaiety because she was going to a fancy ball as a Circus Girl. One reader simply asked for descriptions of pretty costumes from popular plays for her fancy dress ideas. The Queen obliged with descriptions of costumes from *Becket*, *Liberty Hall*, and *Ma Mie Rosette*. 22 A reader of *The Sketch* asked for an opinion of a proposed fancy-dress costume based on one in *A Greek Slave* and got the following answer:

21 "Dress Notes and Queries," *The Queen*, 92 (1892), 856, 946; 88 (1890), 801, 837.

22 "Dress Notes and Queries," *The Queen*, 106 (1899), 936; 103 (1898), 435, 1175; 94 (1893), 960, 987.
I do not think the dress you mean would do by any means for your fancy ball. Why not copy one of Letty Lind's, if you want something out of "A Greek Slave?" They are all charming, and not suggestive.23

For those who needed more than just descriptions, The Queen sometimes obliged with such information as the kind of fabric and amount needed, as they did for an inquiry after Miss Jeffrey's dress in The Sign of the Cross.24 One of the more popular models for fancy dress was a costume worn by Winifred Emery as Lady Babbie in The Little Minister (1897). Not only was it the subject of two inquiries published in The Queen within a month, but it was copied hundreds of times, as the Sunday Times chronicled:

people are always longing to know what is easy and inexpensive. The many hundred Lady Babbies that over-ran the ball-rooms of that time bear evidence as to the advantage of a frock that can be made at home.25

Fashion columnists seriously believed in the ability of stage costumes to influence opinions on fashion. When couturiers attempted to introduce a new version of the crinoline with accompanying skirts made of eleven to fifteen yards of fabric, those who opposed the crinoline used the classical

23 "Answers to Correspondents," The Sketch, 24 (1898), 130.
24 "Dress Notes and Queries," The Queen, 102 (1897), 1175, 1221.
costumes of Hypatia (see Plate XV) as an argument against the artifice of the crinoline. Lady Violet Greville wrote:

The costumes worn by Miss Julia Neilson as Hypatia show the charm of perfect simplicity. A tight, clinging garment wound round the figure in classic folds, and an almost unbecoming head-dress, yet stand out amongst the gorgeous garments of Jew and Gentile, priest and pagan, in startling and beautiful contrast. The white is so pure, the folds are so simple, the falling drapery so graceful, that one asks oneself why all this paraphernalia of fashion, the change, the unrest, the caprices to which we yield ourselves unwitting martyrs. Simplicity, after all, is the highest beauty, and a beautiful woman never looks so beautiful as in white. 26

The Queen wrote that the costumes and succession of pageants in the play "remind us that the fifth century could teach the nineteenth lessons on the enrichment of human existence by the study of colour and form." 27 The strongest opinion came from Mrs. Fenwick-Miller:

For a study of the effect of costume of the most artistic kind in design and colour, there has never been anything more interesting that "Hypatia," at the Haymarket. In Alexandria, nearly fifteen centuries ago, the Greek type of dress prevailed—the close-clinging, long under-garment, with loose drapery flung with apparent carelessness over the bosom and shoulder. The effect of this is to show the figure as nature makes it, and to reveal how far more beautiful that is than are any of the vagaries of the false art that too often rules costumes.

... ... ... ... ...

26 "Place aux Dames," The Graphic, 47 (1893), 45.
27 The Illustrated London News, 93 (1893), 2.
Plate XV—Some of the costumes for Hypatia designed by Lawrence Alma-Tadema. Illustration from The Queen, 93 (1893), 27.
If anything were needed to save us from the threatened terror of the revival of crinoline, the practical illustration on the Haymarket stage of the antipodes of that folly in dress ought to suffice to buttress the female against the chance of falling into such a blunder. Here we can see for ourselves what is the effect of the clinging costume that outlines the true form, and can judge by analogy how much the reverse the opposite mode of attire must be.27

Both proponents and opponents of the crinoline continued to use stage costumes to augment their arguments during a protracted fashion battle that lasted over eight years. In 1897, The Illustrated London News wrote that the "lovely gowns" worn in Madame Sans-Gene:

ought to be sufficient inducement to us to reconsider the doubtful charms of the early Victorian period of dress and enthusiastically adopt the graceful outlines of the Empire. There can be no comparison in the mind of the artist between the styles of the two centuries. There is elegance in every line of the gown worn by Miss Gertrude Kingston, while that it makes for comfort more surely than our correct corsage is as clear to the eye of the beholder as to the waist of the wearer.28

The reviewer hoped in vain because the next year the Victorian costumes of Trelawny of the 'Wells' caught the fancy of fashion columnists and the public (see Plate XVI).

28 The Illustrated London News, 110 (1898), 198.
Plate XVI—Some of the costumes from Trelawny of the 'Wells'.
The figure on the left is Eva Williams, the one on the right is Irene Vanbrugh. Illustration from The Queen, 103 (1898), 198.
The writer for *The Queen*, an admirer of the crinoline, wrote in her review:

Frankly I approach in a prejudiced spirit the question of the gowns worn in Mr. Pinero's new play at the Court Theatre, for I confess to an intense admiration of the crinoline, realising that if properly managed it makes for grace, and that it expresses at least one essential to the costume of woman--it is mysterious. Beneath its protective embraces it is impossible to detect the deficiencies of the perfections of the female form it enfolds. What an advantage this is--we ought never to have relinquished it. It is a sign of our weakness or a sign of our strength, or merely a convincing proof of our vanity, that we are so well contented with the draperies of to-day indicating the lines of Nature? I have a great respect for Nature, but I prefer it as applied to a woman's costume when it is assisted by art. There was much art in dressing in 1860, some of it quite hideous I admit. Take, for example, the jewellery--ponderous gold ornaments with gold fringes. Ye gods! how frightful it was; earrings which toyed playfully with the collarbones, massive chains which hung heavily below the waist, or were caught up at the collar with a cameo brooch. There is no doubt about that fact, the art of jewellery is one which we have improved vastly. But in costume I am not quite certain we have achieved such a very superior success, looking with a prejudiced eye--and I told you I had one--on those dresses worn in "Trelawny of the 'Wells.' "

The reviewer for the *Sunday Times* did not like the costumes but admitted that they offered suggestions for modern gowns:

It would be quite easy to sum up the dresses in this play in a very few words, for it seems almost as if the very ugliest fashion plates of an admittedly ugly period had been

30 *The Queen*, 103 (1898), 198.
called into requisition. That, however, some people did find and choose a really pretty "model" is proved by "Rose Trelawny's" charming dinner dress worn in Act II. Minus the crinoline anyone might copy it now with advantage.... No middle-aged maiden aunt could err in choosing a similar gown to that worn by "Miss Trafalgar." 31

By June, the public had indeed copied features of the costumes, as The Illustrated London News recorded:

According to all accepted tradition, we are drawing on the stage for our fashions, and already the drooping hat and feather which Miss Irene Vanbrugh wears so prettily at the Court is surnamed the "Trelawny," and ruffling it in shop window and show-room with the best of them. Even the turban and Paradise tail of the charming leading lady in this connection has been pressed into modish service, and I met two of these revived antiquites in Bond Street yesterday, though am nathless bound to add that they look more eccentric than exquisite. 32

Roman costumes designed by Alma-Tadema for Julius Caesar, which opened at Her Majesty's Theatre two days after Trelawny of the 'Wells', did not receive the same kind of attention or praise, even though they were designed by the same artist who had done the costumes for the much-praised Hypatia. The reviewer for The Queen, probably the one with the "prejudiced spirit," wrote that "we are offered a fair working notion of what those wonderful people, the ancient

32 The Illustrated London News, 112 (1898), 870.
Romans, looked like. Caprice and the Romans had no connection with each other, consequently there seem to have been no fashions." Further on she added "On the whole shopping must have been a dull affair, but there can have been no over-worked tailors and dressmakers, for there was no such evil as a 'season' trade." The reviewer did admit that the costumes would appeal to one segment of the public, the dress reformers:

The draperies of the Roman ladies are so well carried at Her Majesty's that we may expect to find dress reformers less well equipped in figure advocating classic robes once more for themselves and others.33

By 1901, a style based on Empire gowns of the early nineteenth century was gaining favor among women and fashion columns used the costumes for Becky Sharp as an argument for the incoming mode (see Plate XVII). The Illustrated London News felt that:

The costumes of the Waterloo period (which is practically what we call the Empire) to be seen in "Becky Sharp" are positively enchanting. When Miss Marie Tempest appears as a Watteau shepherdess, ready for her performance in the tableaux at Gaunt House, one grants and admires her fascinating looks, but does not feel impelled to imitate. The late Georgian or Empire costumes that she wears are, on the contrary, so becoming, and with all look so comfortable and practical, that they might be copied forthwith. The Empire style

33 The Queen, 103 (1898), 198.
Plate XVII—Marie Tempest as Becky Sharp. Illustration from *The World of Dress*, 4 (1901), 351.
will, no doubt, receive an impetus from this very delightful play.34

Not quite as ready to adopt the Empire style, Lady Violet Greville of The Graphic found the costumes charming enough to help her change her mind:

One has always regarded the period of the battle of Waterloo as remarkable for a perfect garishness of bad taste in dress. Yet Miss Marie Tempest has succeeded, in the character of Becky Sharp, in providing herself with, and wearing such charming costumes as must reconcile one to the short waists, the dresses off the ground, the white stockings, and the sandalled shoes. All her gowns are exquisite, from the pink balldress, a dream of network and musline, to the white crêpe-de-Chine, with its gorgeous gold trimming and delicate touches of pink, in which she receives Lord Steyne, and enduréd her most poignant moments of agony. The little blue velvet spencer, in which she goes out shopping, quite reconciled one to that queer little garment so beloved of our grandmothers, while the coal-scuttle bonnet merely added to the charm of her expressive coutenance and the twinkle in her merry ayes. Still the style of dress is scarcely one to be recommended to the elderly ladies, or to those whose feet, like Dobbin's, are large.35

About the same time that she was becoming reconciled to the Empire styles, Lady Greville was worried that the stage might spur an early Victorian revival:

I sincerely hope that the brilliant spectacle of The Last of the Dandies will not lead to the return of the dresses of that period. The poke bonnets, the ringlets, the full skirts,

34 The Illustrated London News, 119 (1901), 356.
35 The Graphic, 64 (1901), 774.
and the curious droop of the shoulders peculiar to the women of that day, are not things one could ever wish to see again, except on the stage. There is already so much ugliness in everything that surrounds us—the grimy streets, the dull houses, the trams, the motors, the omnibuses, the railway stations—that dress is really one artistic possibility, and has become, in the interests of beauty, a very serious fact.36

The fact that columnists worried about whether or not a production might steer fashion in a particular direction indicates the amount of influence that the stage was thought to have. Considering the number of Lady Babbie costumes that appeared in ball rooms of 1897 and 1898 or the number of Nell Gwynne hats that were rushed into shop windows, the opinions of the fashion writers appear well-founded, especially since the stage launched a few fashions of its own that went against the prevailing modistic wisdom. Camille Clifford wanted a Princess gown and was told that it was not in style; she wore one anyway and it became the fashion. When Percy Anderson used fabric with accordion pleats in Faust-up-to-Date (1892) and Ruy Blas, the pleating had already been shown to dressmakers who had refused to have anything to do with it. Because of its exposure on the stage, the accordion pleat became so popular that it "soon became as vulgar and objectionable as the barbaric instrument of music from which it

36 The Graphic, 64 (1901), 618.
derived its name."37 Most likely, the public copied those costumes that appealed to them and ignored the ones that didn't catch their fancy. The columnist for The Illustrated London News exhibited such an attitude when she wrote that she was inclined to admire Becky Sharp's Watteau shepherdess costume but did not feel impelled to copy it, preferring instead the Empire costumes. Whatever their fancy, women throughout England found much to copy in the modern and historical costumes on the stage.

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37 The Magazine of Art, 17 (1894), 10.
CONCLUSION

During the thirty years before World War I, the English stage was an important extension of haute couture, presenting coming fashions and instigating some of its own, as it did with the Gibson Girl style. Couturiers in London and Paris designed costumes for actresses to wear onstage or actresses designed their own costumes in collaboration with couturiers. As with their creations for other clients, couturiers used expensive fabrics and trim for stage costumes, which resulted in gowns that could cost fifty pounds or more. Costumes designed by couturiers appeared in society plays, sporting melodrams, and musical plays where women in the audience could see what fashions were in store, choose the gowns they wanted, and learn from the program where the gowns could be ordered. For women who could not attend the London theatre, fashion columns provided the particulars of new stage fashions. Because there were so many different actresses wearing fashionable stage costumes, women could see which styles looked best on different types of figures. Women who were tall and stately could study the costumes of actresses like Julia Neilson or Lily Hanbury while those ladies who were shorter than average could study the
costumes of Eva Moore or Marie Tempest. Since actresses also varied in age, women could also study which fashions suited different age groups. Matrons, for example, found models for new dresses in plays such as The Great Ruby or His Excellency the Governor. Models for almost every type of garment, including evening gowns, wedding gowns, motoring coats, and bathing suits, could be found on the stage. Ladies needing models for fancy-dress costumes could even find them among the historical stage costumes designed by leading artists and costume designers.

Catering to the wishes of their audience, producers such as George Alexander and George Edwardes dressed their leading ladies, supporting players, and supernumeraries in expensive and up-to-date clothing. Once the costumes in a long-running play had become well-worn they were replaced, usually with costumes different from the originals. Since the new costumes were described as being of the latest fashion, producers undoubtedly redressed plays in order to entice an audience to see a play more than once. For the original dressing and every redressing of a play, producers arranged for fashion columnists to view the costumes at a dress rehearsal or preview. The fashion columnists, in turn, described the costumes for their readers, pointing out which costumes were indicative of new styles and suggesting which costumes would be best to copy.
With its ties to haute couture, fashionable society, and the peerage, the stage possessed a kind of glamor that may have helped to sell many fashions. Actresses were seen as leading the same sort of life as the society women that they portrayed onstage, living in smart neighborhoods, wearing couture clothing offstage, attending notable social functions, and vacationing abroad. Magazines and newspapers regularly provided their readers with details of actresses' private lives, personal wardrobes, and opinions on fashion. Many actresses, such as Lillie Langtry and Marie Tempest, were considered to be fashion leaders capable of popularizing a new style just by wearing it. Following the lead of such actresses, the female population wore Langtry shoes, Terry toques, tea-gowns with Bernhardt sleeves, Tempest hats, and Ellaline Terriss jewelry. In spite of advice from actresses that women should wear what was becoming to them and not necessarily what was in fashion, women routinely copied fashions from the stage often, as The Queen reported, with no thought as to how the copied fashions looked on their particular figures.

The power of the stage was actually as limited as that of the couturiers who had to guess what women wanted to wear and design accordingly. Women copied from the stage the fashions that they liked and ignored the ones that didn't appeal to them. When feeling for the crinoline was strong,
women copied the Victorian costumes in *Trelawny of the Wells*. Once the interest in the crinoline faded, women ignored the early Victorian costumes of *The Last of the Dandies*. A fair assessment of the influence of the stage over fashions can be found in a comment about Lillie Langtry. Writing about the recruitment of Langtry into the Anti-Crinoline League in 1893, *The Illustrated London News* wrote that Langtry:

has considerable influence on dress. I fear that she cannot stem the tide of fashion (for even the Princess cannot—as the reign of high bonnets while H. R. H. held faithful to close ones showed) if it sets strongly in one direction; but on the other hand, if Mrs. Langtry should adopt any new mode it is greatly helped on to popularity thereby.1

Despite the fact that actresses could not stop a fashion if women wanted to wear it—not even Queen Victoria or Princess Alexandra could do that—the stage was a major instrument in popularizing new styles. Fashion columnists believed that the stage guided public taste in the matter of dress and devoted many columns to the review of stage costumes. Actresses, aware of the importance of stage costumes, dressed in the latest styles for their roles in modern plays regardless of their personal preference in clothing. Producers, expecting to recoup their expenses

through increased ticket sales, spent hundreds, or sometimes thousands, of pounds on the ladies' costumes in order to please the female portion of the audience. Couturiers used the stage as a form of free advertisement for their latest designs, which resulted in an increase in business as women ordered garments that were the same or similar to what they had seen onstage. With the worlds of haute couture and theatre so closely connected, English women of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century did much of their shopping via the stage.
APPENDIX

The following are some of the theatrical costume designers and painters responsible for the planning of stage costumes and some of the couture houses, stores, and designer/costumers who supplied costumes for theatrical productions mentioned in the fashion columns of the time. When possible, the particular costumes that each made have been included after the title of the production. Unless stated to the contrary, costume suppliers did not provide all of the costumes in any given production.
1897


1898

Madame Sans-Gene

1902

The Marriage of Kitty. Some of Marie Tempest's gowns.

1905


1893

Gudegons. Made Janet Steer's walking dress.

1894

The Case of Rebellious Susan. One dress and one cloak for Mary Moore.

Slaves of the Ring. All of the women's outfits.

A Society Butterfly. Rose Leclercq's evening gowns.

1895

Delia Harding. Rose Leclercq's gowns.

The Girl I Left Behind Me. The Sketch credits them with all of the women's outfits.

The Home Secretary.

The Importance of Being Earnest. Two gowns for Rose Leclercq, possibly others.

The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith. Gowns for Ellis Jeffreys and Eleanor Calhoun.

The Squire of Dames. Two gowns for Mary Moore, one for Charlotte Granville, and one for Fay Davis.

1896


The Circus Girl. Ellaline Terriss' gowns.

The Geisha. Yachting dress for Letty Lind.

Gossip. One dress for Langtry in Act II, 1 dress for Miss Calhoun, 2 gowns for Miss Skirving.

The Matchmaker. Gertrude Kingston's outfits.

The Mother of Three. Rose Leclercq's gowns.

My Girl. One of Ethel Sydney's gowns, and 2 other gowns worn during the trial provincial tour.

A Night Out. Fanny Ward's gowns.

One of the Best. Jessie Millward's dresses when she joined the production.

1897

Belle Belair

My Friend the Prince. Miriam Clement's gowns and cloaks, Sybil Carlisle's gowns, Blanche Massey's gowns.

The Princess and the Butterfly
The Prodigal Father. One gown for Mrs. Abbey, two for May Palfrey.

The Sorrows of Satan. Charlotte Granville's gowns.

The Vagabond King. One gown for Ellis Jeffreys, some of the other gowns.

The White Heather. One gown for Lillian Menelly, one for Beatrice Lamb, one for Mary Brough.

1898

A Bachelor's Romance. Two gowns and one coat for May Harvey, one gown for Miss Oram.

Brother Officers. Dora Barton's last act dress.

The Dove-Cot. Ellis Jeffreys' and Sybil Carlisle's gowns, some gowns for the other ladies.

His Excellency the Governor

Lord and Lady Algy

The Manoeuvres of Jane. Rose Leclercq's gowns.

When a Man's in Love

1899


Florodora

The Gay Lord Quex. One gown for Miss Vanbrugh.

Miss Hobbs. Wearing lists them as the only costumer.

1900

The Liars

Miss Hobbs. Wearing lists them as the only costumer.

The Second in Command

The Wedding Guest
1901
The Case of Rebellious Susan. Violet Vanbrugh's evening gown.
Kitty Grey. Edna May's gowns.
The Silver Slipper. Nancy Girling's gowns.
Sweet and Twenty
A Tight Corner. Wearing lists them as the only costumer.
The Whirl of the Town. One gown for Miss Lessing.

1902
A Country Mouse. Annie Hughes' gowns.
Frocks and Frills. The Act III gowns.
The Girl from Kay's. Mr. Hiley designed Kate Cutler's gowns.

Mixed Relations
Three Little Maids

1903
The Climbers
Gordian Knot. The gowns.
The Orchid. Gertie Millar's new dress.

1904
Captain Dieppe
Forget-Me-Not
The Flute of Pan

1905
The Catch of the Season. Ellaline Terriss's wedding gown when she joined the production.
Dr. Wake's Patient

The Spring Chicken

The Talk of the Town. Over 70 costumes including the fancy dresses of fashion, spring, summer, autumn, and winter, the Romney dresses, and the ladies' modern dresses.

1906

An American Citizen

The Belle of Mayfair

A Gilded Fool

The Lonely Millionaires

1907

Lady Tatters

Mrs. Ellsion's Answer

Nelly Neil

The Stronger Sex. Wearing lists them as the only costumer while The Sketch credits them with the gowns for the wedding reception.

1908

Mrs. Dot

LUCILE

1897

The Liars. All the gowns, the redressing in 1898.

The Physician. Wearing lists her as the only costumer.

1898

Brother Officers
The Gipsy Earl. Most of the ladies' gowns.

When a Man's in Love

1899

The Christian

Hearts are Trumps


A Royal Family

The Tyranny of Tears. Marry Moore's gowns.

Wheels Within Wheels. Wearing lists her as the only costumer.

1900

English Nell

Kitty Grey

The Liars

1901

Becky Sharp

A Man of His Word

Peg Woofington


The Woman in the Case

1902

The Admirable Crichton

The Girl from Maxim's

The Heel of Achilles
Magda. Two gowns for Nance O'Neil.

My Lady Virtue

The Princess's Nose. Two gowns for Irene Vanbrugh, probably other costumes.

The Unforseen. Wearing lists her as the only costumer.

1903

The Climbers

1904

The Golden Light. At least one gown for Mrs. Brown-Potter.

Joseph Entangled

1905

Alice Sit-by-the-Fire

The Catch of the Season. All the dresses.

1907

The Merry Widow. Lily Elsie's gowns.

1908

Fanny and the Servant Problem. Some of Fanny Ward's costumes.

Lady Barbarity

The Mariage of William Ashe

1909

Our Miss Gibbs
1895

The Squire of Dames

1898

The Great Ruby. One gown for Miss Hoffman.

1900

Mrs. Dane's Defence

1901

The Silver Slipper. Two gowns for Miss Winifred Hare.

The Undercurrent. Violet Vanbrugh's and Anna Robinson's gowns, Violet Vanbrugh's coat.

1902

The Crossways. Mrs. Langtry's gowns made by Mme. Paquin.

Frocks and Frills. The gowns for Act IV.

The Girl From Kay's. Kate Cutler's and Ethel Irving's gowns.

The Squire of Dames

Three Little Maids. Gowns for Betty Belknap and Miss Walley.

The Tyranny of Tears. One dress for Mary Moore from her design.

1904

The Duke of Killicrankie. All of the gowns.

Joseph Entangled. At least one dress for Beatrice Ferrar.

Lady Flirt. All of the gowns.
1905
The Lady of Leeds. The principal ladies' gowns.
On the Quiet. Pauline French's gowns.
The Spring Chicken

1907
Angela. Two gowns for Lilah McCarthy.
The Earl of Pawtucket. Gowns for Alexandra Carlisle.
Hamilton's Second Marriage. Alexandra Carlisle's gowns.

1908
A Fearful Joy. Mrs. Langtry's gowns.
The Passing of the Third Floor Back. Alice Crawford's gowns.

1909
The Devil. Alexandra Carlisle's gowns.
The Dollar Princess. Miss Wehlen's outfits.
Little Mrs. Cummin. Marie Löhr's outfits.

1910
Alias Jimmy Valentine. Alexandra Carlisle's gowns.
The Quaker Girl

1911
The Degenerates. Mrs. Langtry's gowns by Mme. Paquin.
One of the Dukes. Two gowns for Nancy Price.
Preserving Mr. Panmure. Marie Löhr's gowns.
The Sins of Society. Mrs. Langtry's gowns by Mme. Paquin.
1912

Doormats. Marie Löhhr's gowns.

Everywoman. Two evening gowns and one coat.

1913

Ask Quesbury. Miss Cressall's and Miss Thimm's gowns.

Bought and Paid For. One evening gown and cape for Alexandra Carlisle.

1914

Driven. Alexandra Carlisle's wardrobe.

Nuts and Wine. All the toilettes, hats, and headress.

REDFERN

1893

The Amazons. Designed and made all of the women's outfits.

1894

A Society Butterfly. One suit, one coat for Rose Leclercy.

1895

An Artist's Model

1896

My Girl. Ethel Haydon's third dress, gowns for Marie Montrose, Katie Seymour, and Grace Palotta, yachting costumes for the chorus.

The Sunbury Scandal

1897

The Tree of Knowledge
1901
The Undercurrent

1902
Chance the Idol. Lena Ashwell's gowns.
The Eternal City. Constance Collier's gowns and cloaks.
The Marriage of Kitty. Some of Marie Tempest's gowns.

1904
Miss Elizabeth's Prisoner

1905
The Perfect Lover

1906
All-of-a-Sudden Peggy
The Lonely Millionaires

1907
Barry Doyle's Rest Cure. Wearing lists him as the only costumer.
Butterflies
My Wife. The gowns, coats, and hats.
The Sins of Society. The gowns for Constance Collier, Fanny Brough, and Adrienne Augarde.

1908
Dolly Reforming Herself. Gowns and hats.
The Early Worm. Fanny Brough's gowns.
The Explorer. Three gowns for Eva Moore, two gowns for Mary Rorke.
Her Father. All of the gowns.

Idols. Some of the gowns.

Mrs. Dot

The Woman of Kronstadt. Gowns for Edyth Latimer, Ethel Matthews, Mrs. Russ Whytal, Miss La Motte designed by Poynter Redfern.

1909

The Best People

The Devil. Gowns, coats, and hats for Mrs. Raleigh, Miss Leyton, Miss Mason, and Miss Hyem.

The Whip. Fanny Brough's clothes.

1910

Nobody's Daughter


REVILLE & ROSSITER

1906

The Alabaster Staircase

Mrs. Temple's Telegram

1907

Mr. Ellsion's Answer

Simple Simon

1908

Mrs. Dot

1909

The Dancing Girl. Wearing lists them as the only customer.
Olive Latimer's Husband

1910
The Naked Truth. Gowns for Maud Cressall, Phyllis Embury, and Vera Maitland.

1911
The Hope. Gowns and hats for Evelyn D'Alroy.

RUSSELL & ALLEN

1890
The Cabinet Minister. Thirty gowns.

1891
The Crusaders. Lady Monckton's gowns.
The Dancing Girl. Redressed part of the show.
The Honorable Herbert
The Volcano. Two of Rose Leclercq's, one of Marianne Caldwell's gowns, and possibly some others.

1892
Agatha Tylden. Some or all of Lillie Langtry's gowns.
The Awakening. Estelle Burney's gowns.
The Fringe of Society
The Guardsman
The Old Lady. Rosina Fillippi's gown.

1893
The Bauble Shop
Gudgeons. Janet Steer's Act II dress.
Robin Goodfellow. Costumes for Mrs. Edmund Phelps and Katherine Compton.

Utopia Limited; or, The Flowers of Progress. The court dresses.

1894

The Derby Winner

A Gay Widow

The Transgressor. Three gowns for Olga Nethersole, other gowns.

1895

As in a Looking-Glass. One gown for Mrs. Bernard Beere.

Cheer, Boys, Cheer

Vanity Fair. Three dresses for Mrs. John Wood, 2 for Nancy Noel, two for Helena Dacre, and one for Charlotte Granville.

1896

True Blue. One gown for Mrs. Cecil Raleigh.

1897

Belle Belair

The Seats of the Mighty. One gown for Janet Steer.

1898

The Great Ruby. Mrs. Raleigh's gowns.

When a Man's in Love
1900

Kenyon's Widow. Wearing lists them as the only customer.

The Noble Lord

1901

The Great Millionaire. Madge Girdleston's gowns.

The Queen's Double

1903

The Flood Tide

1904

My Lady of Rosedale

WORTH

1881

She Stoops to Conquer. Mrs. Langtry's gowns.

1886

A Run of Luck. Dresses on the lawn at Goodwood.

1889


1891

Only a Word

1894

A Society Butterfly. Mrs. Langtry's gowns.

Odette. Probably the only costumer.
1895
Cheer, Boys, Cheer

1897
Francillon. Mrs. Brown-Potter's and Miss Vane's gowns.
The Princess and the Butterfly. At least one dress for Rose Leclercq, the millinery.
The Sorrows of Satan
The White Heather

1898
The Lady of Lyons. Mrs. Brown-Potter's gowns.

1899
The Ambassador
Carnac Sahib. Mrs. Brown-Potter's gowns.
David Garrick. Some of the gowns for Mary Moore.
The Degenerates. Mrs. Langtry's gowns.

1900
Cyrano. One gown for Mary Moore.

1901
A Royal Necklace. Mrs. Langtry's gowns.

1903
David Garrick. Command performance. At least one dress for Mary Moore.
1904
The Bride and Bridegroom

1905
Captain Drew on Leave

1906
The Candidate

1907
A Woman of No Importance. Wearing lists Worth as the only costumer.
Department Stores

DEBENHAM & FREEBODY

1891
The American

1893
A Gaiety Girl
A Life of Pleasure

1894
The Derby Winner. Supplied dress for Beatrice Lamb, Pattie Brown's costumes, fifty dresses for the crowd.

1895
Cheer, Boys, Cheer

1899
The Christian

1902
What Would a Gentleman Do?

1891
The Dancing Girl. Supplied some of the dresses for the redressing of the play.

LEWIS & ALLENBY
1892

The Guardsman

The Queen of Manoa. Made Marie Linden's gowns.

1895

The Home Secretary

1896

The Prisoner of Zenda. Made Julia Neilson's gowns.

1898

The Master. Supplied Kate Terry's dresses.

1902

Sporting Simpson

1903

Mrs. Gopping's Necklace. Made Mabel Terry-Lewis' gowns.

LIBERTY'S

1881

The Colonel. Used Liberty silks.

The Cup. Used Liberty silks.

Patience. Used Liberty silks.

1894

An Aristocratic Alliance. Supplied Enid Erle's last dress.

1896

The Belle of Cairo. Probably supplied one or more dresses.
1897
The Dovecot. Used satin for Dorothea Desmond's gown.

1898
When a Man's in Love. Supplied satin for Marion Terry's tea-gown.

1899
Cupboard Love. Supplied brocade for one of Sybil Carlisle's gowns.
The Degenerates. Supplied fabric for one of Mrs. Langtry's gowns.
The Jest. Supplied fabric for some of the dresses.

1900
The Price of Peace. Supplied fabric for some of the costumes.

1902
The Crossways. Supplied fabric for a belt and cloak designed by Paquin for Mrs. Langtry.
Magda. Supplied satin for Nance O'Neil's evening gown.

1903
The Gordion Knot. Supplied satin for one dress.
The Orchid. Probably supplied some of the dresses.

1904
Lady Flirt. Supplied silk for one of Miss Beckley's gowns, fabric for one other dress.
Sergeant Brue. Supplied satin for one of Zena Dare's gowns.
The Two Gentlemen of Verona. Supplied velvet for one of Thirza Norman's costumes and gold satin for another.

The Wheat King. Probably supplied one or more dresses.

1905

The Man of the Moment. Supplied fabric for one of Lillian Braithwaite's gowns.

1906

All-of-a-Sudden Peggy. Supplied satin for one of Kate Sergeantson's dresses.

1907

Hamilton's Second Marriage. Supplied some of the gowns.

SWAN & EDGAR

1893

Poor Jonathan. Made one gown each for Miss Rogers, Annie Schubert, Miss Peppiette, and Miss Hart.

1894

Go-Bang

1895

An Artist's Model

Gentlemen Joe

1897

The White Heather. Made a gown and cloak for Beatrice Lamb.

1905

The Blue Moon. Made the ladies' dresses.
What the Butler Saw

1906

The Dairymaids

1908

Fanny and the Servant Problem
Costume Designers

PERCY ANDERSON

1888
The Yeomen of the Guard

1889
Ruy Blas

1891
Ivanhoe

1892
Comedy and Tragedy. Four gowns for Miss Fortescue.
Faust Up-to-Date

1894
His Excellency

1895
Guy Domville

1896
The Belle of Cairo
The Geisha: A Story of a Teahouse

1898
The Beauty Stone
The Gondoliers
A Greek Slave
The Termagant
The Three Musketeers
Trelawny of the 'Wells'

1899
A Court Scandal
King John
San Toy

1900
Henry V
Herod
A Midsummer Night's Dream
Rip Van Winkle

1901
Count Tezma
The Emerald Isle; or, The Caves of Carric-Cleena
The Last of the Dandies
Twelfth Night

1902
The Eternal City
Merrie England
Merry Wives of Windsor
Ulysses

1903
The Duchess of Dantzig
Flodden Field

For Sword or Song

The Princess of Kensington

Resurrection

Richard II

1904

The Edge of the Storm

The Prayer of the Sword

The Tempest

Veronique

1905

The Merchant of Venice

Romeo and Juliet. With Karl.

The Talk of the Town. Designed the fancy dress costumes.

The Tempest

1907

The Merry Widow. With Lucile and Pascaud.

1911

Kismet

EDWARD BURNE-JONES

1895

King Arthur
1890
Ravenswood. With Seymour Lucas.

1891
The Dancing Girl. Most of the gowns designed by Mrs. Comyns Carr and Mrs. Tree.

1892
Henry VIII. With Seymour Lucas.
King Lear. With Charles Cattermole.

1893
Becket. With Charles Cattermole.
Sowing the Wind. With Karl. She designed principal ladies' dresses.

1894
Dick Sheridan. With Karl.

1896
The Sin of St. Hulda. Designed the women's costumes.

1905
Becket. With Charles Cattermole.
The Merchant of Venice. With Charles Cattermole.
Louis XI. With Charles Cattermole.
A Story of Waterloo. With Charles Cattermole.
KARL

1893

Hypathia. Designed costumes with Sir Alma-Tadema.

Sowing the Wind. With Mrs. J. Comyns Carr. Karl designed the men's costumes.

1894


Once Upon a Time. Costume design.

1896

Cymbeline. With Mrs. Nettleship.

Prisoner of Zenda. Designed some of the costumes.

The Sin of St. Hulda. Designed the men's costumes.

Under the Red Robe. Costume design with Mrs. Nettleship.

1897

The Adventure of Lady Ursula. Costume design.

In the Days of the Duke. Costume design.

Macbeth. With Robert Crafton and Mrs. Nettleship.

The Little Minister. Costume design.

The Seats of the Mighty. Costume design.

1898

Carnac Sahib. With Jean Worth.

The Jest. Costume design.

Julius Caesar. Costume design with Alma-Tadema.

Much Ado About Nothing. Costume design.
The Musketeers. Costume design.
Peter the Great. Costume design.

1899
The Black Tulip. Costume design.
The Man in the Iron Mask. Costume design.

1900
The Rivals. Wearing lists him as Designer.
The School for Scandal. Design.

1901
Coriolanus. Costume design.

1902
The President. Costume design with H. Ogden.
There's Many a Slip. Design.

1903
The Clandestine Marriage. Design
Dante. Costume design.

1905
Romeo and Juliet. Design with Percy Anderson.
The White Chrysanthemum. Design.

1907
Miss Hook of Holland. Design.
Mister Sheridan. Design.
1908
King of Cadonia

1909
Dear Little Denmark

1888
The Armada. Costume design and historical advice.

1889
Richard III

1890
Ravenswood. Costume design with Mrs. Comyns Carr.

1891
Charles I

1892
Henry VIII. Costume design with Mrs. Comyns Carr.

PERCY MACQUOID

1899
In Days of Old. Costume design.

1902
If I Were King. Costume design.
Paolo and Francesca. Costume design.
1906

Anthony and Cleopatra. Design.
Nero. Design.
The Winter's Tale. Design.

1910

King Henry VIII. Costume, furniture, and property designs.

BYAM SHAW

1902

The Twin Sister

The Princess's Nose. Tableau gown for Irene Vanbrugh.

1905

Much Ado About Nothing

1906

Tristram and Iseult. Wearing lists him as costumer with Karl as costume designer.

LAURENCE ALMA-TADEMA

1893

Hypatia. Costume design with Karl

1898

Julius Caesar. Costume design with Karl.

1900

Julius Caesar
1901
Coriolanus

1904
Julius Caesar

1892
In Town
The Wedding Eve

1896
My Girl. Designed some of the dresses.

1900
The Messenger Boy

1901
The Toreador

1904
The Cherry Girl

1905
The Blue Moon
The Spring Chicken

1906
The Beauty of Bath
The Dairymaids
La Merveilleuses

The New Aladdin

1907

The Gay Gordons

Tom Jones
Designer/Costumers

ALIAS

1892
Ma Mie Rosette
The Wedding Eve

1893
A Gaiety Girl
Little Christopher Columbus
Poor Jonathan

1895
A Loving Legacy

1896
The Circus Girl. Made the Pierrots, Pierrettes, and some other fancy dress costumes.
The Gay Parisienne. Made all the original dresses plus new costumes for the four dancers in October.
The Geisha
The Little Genius. Made approximately thirty evening gowns.
Mam'zelle Nitouche. Wearing lists them as the only costumer.
The New Barmaid
The White Silk Dress. Made the allegorical costumes plus some others.

1897
La Perichole
The Scarlet Feather
The Sorrows of Satan

The White Heather

1898

Lord and Lady Algy. Responsible for the fancy-dress ball scene.

Milord Sir Smith

The Royal Star. Made all of the dresses.

The Topsy Turvy Hotel. Made some of the gown.

1899

Florodora

In Days of Old. Possibly just made the men's costumes.

1901

The Fortune Teller

The Silver Slipper

1902

Ben Hur

If I Were King

Paolo and Francesca

1903

The Exile

The Medal and the Maid

My Lady Molly
1904
The Love Birds
La Poupee

1905
The Prodigal Son

1906
Castles in Spain

1907
Lady Tatters

WILLIAM CLARKSON

1892
The Duchess of Malfi

1894
Odette

Once Upon a Time. Possibly designed some of the costumes.

1907
When Knights Were Bold

EDITH CRAIG

1899
Robespierre. Supervised the making of two hundred of the dresses.
1900

Bonnie Dundee. Made costumes.

Olivia. Designed some of the dresses.

Sweet Nell of Old Drury

1901

The Whirl of the Town. Made some costumes.

1902

After All

Faust. Made Cecilia Loftus' costumes.

Mademoiselle Mars. Designed some of the ladies' dresses excluding Langtry's.

The Merry Wives of Windsor. Made some of the costumes.

Mice and Men. Made some of the dresses.

1903

The Exile. Designed the ladies' dresses.

A Princess of Kensington

The Prophecy

The Vikings. Made the costumes from Edward Gordon Craig's designs.

1905

The Conqueror. Made some of the costumes.

L & H NATHAN

1890

The Cabinet Minister
1891

The Dancing Girl. Possibly made just the men's costumes.

1892

The Guardsman

1893

Hypatia

1894

Dick Sheridan

A Society Butterfly. Possibly made just the men's costumes.

1895

Romeo and Juliet

Trilby. Made Dorothea Baird's dress and probably all the other costumes.

1896

As You Like It

For the Crown. Wearing lists them as the only costumer.

The Prisoner of Zenda

The School for Scandal

The Sin of St. Hulda. Wearing lists them as the only costumer.

Under the Red Robe

1897

Hamlet

In the Days of the Duke

The Little Minister
Madame Sans Gene
The Seats of the Mighty. Possibly made just the men's costumes.
The Vagabond King
The White Heather

1898
The Adventure of Lady Ursula
The Beauty Stone
Hamlet
The Jest
Julius Caesar
Madame Sans Gene
Much Ado About Nothing
The Medicine Man
The Musketeers
Peter the Great
Ragged Robin
Teresa

1899
The Black Tulip
Carnac Sahib
The Cuckoo
King John
The Man in the Iron Mask
A Message from Mars
Robespierre
What Will the World Say

1900
Colonel Cromwell
English Nell
Henry V. Wearing lists them as the only costumer.
Olivia
The Rivals
The School for Scandal
The Second in Command
She Stoops to Conquer
The Swashbuckler

1901
Becky Sharp
Coriolanus
Peg Woffington
The Queen's Double
A Royal Rival
The Sentimentalist

1902
After All
Caste
Chance the Idol
Faust
Mademoiselle Mars. Probably made just the men's costumes.

The President

1903

The Clandestine Marriage

Dante. Made most of the costumes.

The Exile

1904

The Finishing School. Wearing lists them as the only costumer.

The Flute of Pan

Forget-Me-Not

The Golden Light

His Majesty's Servant

A Marriage of Convenience

The Master of Kingsgift

Miss Elizabeth's Prisoner

A Queen's Romance

Sunday

The Sword of the King

Two Gentlemen of Verona. Wearing lists them as the only costumer.

1905

The Cabinet Minister

The Conquerer

Hawthorne, U.S.A.
The Indecision of Mr. Kingsbury
Public Opinion
Romeo and Juliet
The Scarlet Pimpernel
The Taming of the Shrew
The White Chrysanthemum

1906
Dorothy o' the Hall
The Girl Behind the Counter
The Harlequin King
Robin Hood
The Vicar of Wakefield

1907
The Eighteenth Century
The Great Conspiracy
Miss Hook of Holland
Mr. Sheridan
The Palace of Puck

1908
The Flag Lieutenant
Pro Tem

1909
The Prisoner of Zenda
MRS. NETTLESHIP

1892

Henry VIII
King Lear

1893

Becket

Sowing the Wind. Made Winifred Emery's and Rose Leclercq's dresses.

1894

Dick Sheridan. Made two gowns for Winifred Emery, Pattie Brown's maid outfit, one dress and one hat for Miss Lena Ashwell, one dress for Miss Vane.

The Transgressor. Made one dress for Olga Nethersole.

1895

Delia Harding. Made Dorothy Dorr's gowns, one dress for Marion Terry.

Frou-Frou. Designed and made Olga Nethersole's gowns.

King Arthur. Made two dresses and one mantle for Ellen Terry.

A Leader of Men. The Sketch credits her with all of the gowns.

The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith. Made one dress for Olga Nethersole.

1896

Boys Together

Cymbeline. Designed some of the costumes with Karl, also made some of the dresses.

The Sin of St. Hulda. Made the women's costumes.
Under the Red Robe. Designed the ladies' costumes with Karl.

1897
Hamlet
The Little Minister
The White Heather

1898
Macbeth. Designed and made Mrs. Patrick Campbell's costumes.
Peter the Great. Made Ellen Terry's and Miss Barrymore's costumes.
The Termagant.
The Three Musketeers.

1899
The Black Tulip. Made the Dutch gowns.
A Court Scandal
Ours
Robespierre. Made some of the gowns.
A Royal Family
San Toy

1900
English Nell
Nurse
Olivia
The Rivals. Made Winifred Emery's and Lily Hanbury's costumes.

The School for Scandal

She Stoops to Conquer. Made the ladies' costumes.

1901

Coriolanus

Peg Woofington. Made costumes for Marie Tempest, Maud Danks, and Suzanne Sheldon.

1902

The Admirable Crichton

Frocks and Frills. Made at least one dress for Act I.

My Lady Virtue

The Princess's Nose. Made at least one dress for a tableau.

There's Many a Slip

The Twin Sister. Made the women's costumes from Byam Shaw's designs.

1903

The Clandestine Marriage

Dante. Made one costume for Lena Ashwell.

The Orchid

The Princess of Kensington

The Schoolgirl

1904

The Cingalee

The Flute of Pan

His Majesty's Servant
Lady Madcap
The Prayer of the Sword
A Queen's Romance
Véronique

1905
The Little Michus
The Merchant of Venice
Mr. Popple
Much Ado About Nothing
Romeo and Juliet
The Scarlet Pimpernel

1906
The Bondman
Dorothy o' the Halls
The School for Husbands
Whirlwind

1908
The Marriage of William Ashe
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