WORLDLY WOMAN

Whoe'er invented Paris snobisme has much to answer for. To explain it is difficult, to transplant it almost impossible. Yet this is exactly what we do. Every trick of fashion that first saw the light on a Paris boulevard invariably ends its days in Bond Street, only with a difference, and it is this difference that makes the calamity. Was there ever a typically French play that struck the right note on English ears, or a French hat that looked convincing on an English head? Yet we translate the one, we wear the other, forgetting that the snobisme is not that made them admirable is not a thing to be acquired. Fashion rules the world, but snobisme governs fashion, and we all become the clumsy imitators of a brilliant little clique that will always remain invisible.

One is struck with the marvellous of it when one considers the Parisienne snob of the day. She is beautiful without beauty, clever without intellect, and yet who cares whose opinions she gabbles off as her own, whose knowledge she annexes, where she gets her complexion, or what revenge has made the smile perfection of her figure? The result is so good and so natural, and yet it is no easy thing to achieve. One's brain reels before the enormity of the task. To be snob, she must be literary nowadays, and to that end picks up what shreds and patches she can at a tea-saucer dinner, she must be original, and therefore glean ideas from some lion at a dinner party. Old pictures, old china and furniture must have no secrets from her, and above all she must be a miracle of elegance and taste. Any one of these things, surely, would have made a woman's reputation in those happier days before snobisme was invented.

It was with that example before us that all the world in London gathered at literary courtesies last winter, and a great certain little man lectured on Plato to audiences. Ah, le snobisme, le snobisme!