

# 1857 – ‘Fashion Plate, World of Fashion’

## What we see in this image

This hand-coloured fashion plate is designed to illustrate a series of garments worn for a specific occasion or activity, either at home, out visiting or taking a walking. Such illustrations were intended to show the clothing illustrated as it should be worn, with all the trimmings, hair styles and accessories essential to create a complete picture of the well-dressed woman, man or child. *Le Monde Elegant* (trans. The World of Fashion) contained five fashion plates in each of its monthly issues, unlike most other fashion magazines at this time which carried only a single illustration per issue.

In this image, the lady of the house (on the right) stands on an enclosed verandah leaning out of a set of French windows framed by an arched opening. She wears a lilac [silk] home dress lavishly trimmed with triple horizontal bands of black (ribbon/velvet) zigzag stripes applied concentrically to the hem of its ‘basque’ bodice, along the edges of split ‘pagoda’ sleeves and around the circumference of the skirt flounce, the scalloped edges of which are all trimmed with matching black silk fringe. A coordinating panel of black [ribbon/velvet] chevrons is arranged over the corsage, rising up from the waist and marking the shoulders, extending across capped ‘mancherons’, or ‘jockeys’, sitting out over the sleeve head. She wears full, white undersleeves – their volume constrained by bands at the forearm and wrist trimmed with small pink ribbon bows above soft scalloped cuffs which fall over the hands – with a matching scalloped white work collar and pink silk ribbon bow marking the high neckline.

Her dark hair is arranged in a gently waved version of the fashionable 'bandeau' style, with a large roll encircling the back of the head creating a 'halo' effect. Handing a fashionably dressed doll to a young girl, she also demonstrates the influence of maternal example in the process of inculcating 19th century ideals of femininity on the impressionable minds and pursuits of the young.

The girl, probably aged about 10, wears a scaled down version of the complex clothing of her female role models, comprising a low-necked, knee length day dress of grey [silk] with a short-sleeved 'basque' bodice and full skirt, trimmed with silk fringing and black braid applied in latticed panels, above white-work embroidered pantalets and slim-fitting, square-toed black patent ankle boots worn with white stockings. Her V-shaped bodice is outlined with striped green silk gauze ribbon bows and streamers. She wears a double string of [coral] beads and a pale straw hat trimmed with ribbon bows, pink silk roses, a white feather and gauze streamers hanging down at the back.

The female figure on the left is described as wearing a 'Promenade Costume' comprising a 'walking out' dress and fitted short coat, known either as a 'pardessus' or 'paletot', and varying from hip to knee or  $\frac{3}{4}$  length. This black silk, lace trimmed version follows the fashionable silhouette of the day with its double-flounced skirt, inserted sleeve head and  $\frac{3}{4}$  length pagoda sleeves accommodating those of the full-skirted gown of horizontally striped [silk] worn beneath. Her ensemble is further accessorised by a low-crowned blue silk hat with a flounce of black lace applied to the wide curving brim, trimmed in front with black velvet, and on the right side with a blue and black feather; small blue flowers are arranged on each side under the brim, and a pair of pale blue satin ribbons are tied in a bow under her chin.

During the early Victorian period hats were quite out of fashion, with the bonnet considered the only proper outdoor

headwear for any lady. From about 1857 hats became fashionable again for younger women but only for informal wear in the garden or on the most informal occasions in the country and at the seaside. Straw was the most usual material, though plush and silk were also used for carriage or promenade wear. As seen in this image, hats were commonly low-crowned with wide brims sweeping into upward curves, the edges often bound with ribbon, trimmed around the crown or under the brim with ribbon puffs, flowers and lace, with broad ribbons hanging from the back or from each side which might be tied in a bow under the chin or allowed to float freely. Very often a long feather curved around the crown and a curtain of lace, often several inches deep, was attached to the edge of the brim.

## **What we know about this image**

Fashion notes 'of interest to female readers' were printed in Australian papers extracted from popular periodicals like the 'World of Fashion'. Colonial newspapers also routinely carried advertisements by local booksellers noting the arrival of the latest issues of leading European fashion magazines: 'Periodicals for May incl. the World of Fashion – received on monthly basis', Sydney Morning Herald, 11 Jul 1857, p.9.

The Mitchell Library holds a copy of the World of Fashion (vol. 23, Nov. 1846) which bears the signature 'D.S. Mitchell' for Mitchell Library benefactor David Scott Mitchell, and is provenanced to the library of his mother, Augusta Mitchell.

See: [RB/Q050/W927](#): The World of fashion, monthly magazine, of the courts of London and Paris: Fashions, literature, music, fine arts, the opera, and the theatres. Description based on: January 1, 1845. Held: Jan. 1, 1845-Dec. 1, 1845; Jan. 1, 1847-no. 285 (Dec. 1, 1847); no. 287 (Feb. 1, 1848)-no. 288 (Mar. 1, 1848); no. 327 (Mar. 1, 1851); no. 334 (Oct...).

### **ARTIST:**

Isabelle Desgrange was one of the more notable and prolific fashion plate artists of the mid-nineteenth century; a

daughter of Adèle Anaïs Toudouze, herself a popular artist of the period, Desgrange produced plates for *Le Follet*, *The Queen* and *Le Monde Élégant* (trans. *The World of Fashion*). *The World of Fashion* (1824-1891) continued as the *Ladies' Monthly Magazine* in 1851, then as *The World of Fashion* from 1852 -79, and *Le Monde Elegant* (trans. *World of Fashion*) from 1880-91.

Rather than in a definite or publicly recognized locale, the scene recorded in this fashion plate could take place at any domestic garden in Paris, or any other fashionable place. The flatness of space, two-dimensional nature of the dresses, and stiffness of the figures, as well as their psychologically detached appearance, are all highly characteristic of fashion plate art. The position of figures in these plates has been carefully considered in terms of fashion display and the composition arranged to emphasise the individual details of the clothes and the characteristics that make each garment fashionable. Rendered with meticulous attention so that each dress stands out assertively from the background, the texture of the clothing is subtly detailed through the artist's play on light and shadow.

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## 1857 – ‘Fashion Plate, World of Fashion’

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**Download Image**



Creator
Isabelle Desgrange, née Toudouze (French, fl.1850–1907) attrib.
Inscription
Imprint at base of image: ‘April 1857’
Medium
Hand-coloured engraving
Background
Subjects are placed in a typically anonymous domestic garden setting.
Reference
Le Monde Elegant, or The World of Fashion: A Journal of the Courts of London and Paris.

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# 1855 – George Coppin

## What we see in this image

This left facing  $\frac{1}{2}$  length hand-coloured daguerreotype portrait shows George Coppin, aged 36, in a seated pose against a plain backdrop in the Pitt Street studio of Thomas Skelton Glaister's American and Australian Portrait Gallery. Recently arrived from New York, Glaister brought the technical sophistication, size and style of American photography to his Australian daguerreotypes and collodion processes. In July 1855, Glaister's photographic studio was located next door to the Royal Victoria Theatre where Coppin, a colonial celebrity, was once again performing to packed houses (SMH, 12/7/1855); the impresario was also due to be married later that year.

Coppin wears an unmatched ensemble of garments comprising a double-breasted, loose-fitting 'sac'-type jacket of dark woollen cloth with wide notched lapels and long, fitted sleeves worn with grey trousers, a crisp white wing-collared shirt with a dark [silk] ribbon bow tie, and an unusual long-line waistcoat, or undershirt, of two-tone [grey] woollen cloth with a turn back collar and an eight button closure fastened at the waist with a gold fob chain threaded through the buttonhole and draped across his torso to the pocket on the left in which his [watch] is stored. He is clean shaven and wears his dark wavy hair curled over his ears and brushed back from a receding hairline.

A comic actor by profession, Coppin was described as 'a common man [who] possesses a certain rudeness of manner which is very unpleasant when things do not run smoothly...he dives both hands deep into his side pockets and looks both blank and black and gives short and curt answers ... a well-bred man of the world has the art to hide such feelings'.

## What we know about this image

Actor, theatre manager, politician, George Selth Coppin (1819-1906) was an enterprising speculator who grew up in the uncertain world of the itinerant theatre – solemn-faced and tubby, he was found to have a flair for comic acting. Credited as a father the Australian theatre, Coppin was key to the second phase of its development through the introduction of his ‘pernicious “starring tours” of visiting celebrities’ (ADB).

In 1842 Coppin had decided to leave England for lands of greater promise – a toss of the coin decreed Australia over America, and he arrived in Sydney on 10 March 1843 with his de facto actress partner. Coppin subsequently acquired ownership of New Queen’s Theatre, Adelaide in 1846, Theatre Royal, Melbourne in 1856 and the Haymarket, Melbourne in 1862. When the gold rushes struck, Coppin quickly realised a means of making a fortune by entertaining miners heading to town on the spree. In 1853 he went back to England where he ordered a prefabricated iron theatre to be built in Manchester, equipped with special scenery and a lavish wardrobe, for an Australian tour headed by tragedian, Gustavus Brooke.

Coppin married Harriet Hillsden, née Bray, sister-in-law of Gustavus Brooke, in August 1855; three children were born in quick succession before the death of Mrs Coppin (post-childbirth) at Richmond, Vic., in 1859. Her 18-year-old daughter Lucy Hillsden took charge of the household. Coppin married Lucy on 4 June 1861, and their first child was born on 5 January 1862.

After touring Australia, New Zealand and America, Coppin entered politics and became a Member of the Legislative Council (1858-1863, 1889-1895), and a Member of the Legislative Assembly (1874-1877, 1883-1888) in Victoria. He



died at his home in March 1906.

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**1855 – George Coppin**

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## Download Image



Creator
Glaister, Thomas, fl. 1855-1870, attrib.
Inscription
none
Medium
Photograph
Background
Subject is posed in front of a plain studio backdrop.
Reference
<a href="#">Open</a>

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# 1854 – Eleanor Elizabeth Stephen

## What we see in this image

This right facing  $\frac{3}{4}$  seated portrait shows Eleanor Elizabeth

Stephen, aged about 15, dressed to receive guests making social calls for an 'At Home' visit. The subject has been posed on a soft-buttoned drawing room chair set against a plain backdrop with a section of turned wooden balustrading, studio furnishings which confirm that this portrait was taken on the premises of society photographer Edwin Dalton, located at 243 George Street (opp. Bridge St). It may be that Eleanor's trip to the photographer coincided with an important rite of passage in her life; until the mid-20th century teenage girls wore their hair loose until formally entering society on reaching marriageable age, at which time they assumed fashions of greater sophistication including elaborate adult hairstyles. Eleanor's mother, Lady Stephen recorded this visit to the Dalton studio in her diary on 11 July 1854: 'We, that is, Jessy, Nelly [Eleanor] and I went to have likenesses taken by the Daguerreotype process.' Unhappy with the original result, however, Nelly returned for another sitting two days later. Ten days after that, Lady Stephen noted that the family's photographs were 'always done by Dalton who is the best and most expensive photographer'. (MLMSS 777/3) Nelly wears an afternoon dress of checked silk printed à disposition (ie. produced with co-ordinating border designs of differing widths intended for decorative use as flounces on skirts, sleeves, bodices). Her dress has a bell-shaped double skirt with a flounce at the knee – the edges are just visible at the base of the image on the left. The bodice is made separately in the 'basque' style, with a small peplum extending over the hips below the waist, and stomacher or 'plastron' (v-shaped) corsage trimmed with a pair of flat panels, tabbed and forming epaulettes at the shoulder, diminishing to a point at the waist either side of five horizontal rows of applied fringe arranged 'en eschelle' (in the form of a ladder) worn with a white-work collar, edged with [needle-lace] Vandyke points, over a brocade ribbon crossed at the throat and fastened with a [cameo] brooch above loose streamers. Her  $\frac{3}{4}$  length 'pagoda' sleeves are trimmed with two tiers of stepped flounces, finished in the same manner as the bodice, and worn with open

undersleeves, or 'engageants', of white-work (broderie anglaise) embroidered cotton. Her mid-brown hair is centre-parted with smooth front sections drawn over her ears and pinned behind, a plaited section wrapped around the crown of her head, and the remainder arranged behind in a large, deep roll. She also wears a string of beads around her neck.

## **What we know about this image**

Alfred Stephen, barrister, married Virginia Consett in 1824 and migrated to Van Diemen's Land from England the following year. Initially appointed as Solicitor-General and soon after Crown Solicitor by Governor Arthur, Stephen's career included his appointment as Attorney-General (1832), Chief Justice (1845), and member of the Legislative Assembly whilst still maintaining a private legal practice. After his first wife's death in 1837 (leaving two daughters and five sons), Stephen married Eleanor Martha Bedford, the only daughter of Reverend William Bedford in 1838. Eleanor and Alfred Stephen had five daughters and four sons of whom Eleanor Elizabeth (1839-1861) was the eldest. Five years after the making of this portrait, Eleanor died suddenly of suspected typhoid fever, aged 20, on 7 February 1861. (See: Riley, M, *Pictures Wanting Life*, forthcoming) PHOTOGRAPHER: Painter, photographer and lithographer, Edwin Dalton had spent some time in America before coming to Australia in the 1853, possibly in search of gold. Initially setting up as portraitist in Melbourne, by early 1854 he was living in Upper Hawthorn (Vic.). In July 1854, Dalton was in Sydney where he soon attracted commissions from the city's most prominent families. In March 1855 the *Illustrated Sydney News* favourably reviewed Dalton's life-size portraits of Sydney identities including J.S. Dowling ('so life-like that it is almost laughable'), Walter Lamb, Henry Parkes and numerous others. In August 1856 the *Empire* noted his recently completed portrait of the prima donna Anna Bishop, claiming that 'for fidelity of portraiture, depth of tone and beauty of colouring, the picture ranks with any work,

in its particular line of art, we have yet seen in the colony'. He advertised 'Dalton's Collodion Portraits' at 243 George Street (1855-57) and his studio, known as the Royal Photographic Portrait Establishment Gallery with William Bradley as proprietor, at 400 George Street (1858-59), followed by the Royal Photographic Gallery at 320 George (1863-65) and at 330 George Street (1866-67) which was later taken over by H. Hunt, as proprietor. ETIQUETTE: The making of social calls was an important ritual during the Victorian era. Specific times were allocated for different types of calls with Sundays always reserved for friends and family only. Visits were always quite short, lasting from ten to thirty minutes. A 'morning call' was paradoxically made in the early afternoon, with 'ceremonial calls' made between three and four o'clock, and 'semi-ceremonial calls' between four and five o'clock. Calls made between five and six o'clock were deemed 'intimate calls'. If another caller arrived during a visit, the first caller was expected to leave within a few minutes of the appearance of the second. Dress for calling: Ladies who were 'At Home' to callers were supposed to wear tasteful clothing 'with a certain amount of lace and jewellery' but no artificial flowers or glittering gems; callers should wear the sort of clothing they would wear to church or an afternoon reception; a gentleman wears a 'morning' suit until six o'clock (ie. grey, striped trousers, black vest and coat, bowler or top hat) and evening attire after six (ie. a black dress suit).

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**1854 – Eleanor Elizabeth Stephen**

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## Download Image



Creator
Dalton, Edwin (fl. 1853-1865) attrib.
Inscription
none
Medium
photograph
Background
To follow
Reference
<a href="#">Open 1</a>
<a href="#">Open 2</a>