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THE ART OF BEAUTY

δοίητέ μοι καλῶ γένεσθαι
τἄνδοθεν· εξωθεν δὲ ὅσα
ἐχω τοῖς ἐντὸς εἶναι μοι
φίλια.

SOCRATES.—*Phædrus.*

"In spite of all, some shape of beauty moves away the pall from our dark spirits."
KEATS.

THE ART OF BEAUTY

BY

MRS H. R. HAWEIS

AUTHOR OF 'CHAUCER FOR CHILDREN'

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR

SECOND EDITION

London

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AUTHOR'S FOREWORDS

THE basis of the present book is a series of articles which appeared some years ago in 'St. Paul's Magazine,' and which I have often been asked to reprint. I have considerably re-arranged and amplified the subject matter; but whilst I have traversed a wide field, I can lay claim to neither a fixed scheme nor a scientific method. Still I cannot but hope that the following pages may be helpful to some who have never thought much about the influence or the art of Beauty; and I may perhaps add that among the portraits derived from nature there are no photographs from life.

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First Book

Beauty and Dress

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CHAPTER I.

Pleasure of Beauty.

THE culture of beauty is everywhere a legitimate art. But the beauty and adornment of the human form, the culture of personal beauty, and, in our age, especially of female beauty, is of the first interest and importance. It is impossible to separate people from their looks. A woman's natural quality is to attract, and having attracted, to enchain; and how influential she may be for good or for evil, the history of every age makes clear. We may add, therefore, that the culture of beauty is the natural right of every woman.

It is not 'wicked' to take pains with oneself. In the present day our altered system of education, and an improved conception of woman's capacities, may have a little blinded us. We have begun to think of the mind almost to the exclusion of the body. It is perhaps, time to notice that the new views, whilst pointing to one truth, are in danger of eclipsing another: not, as

some thoughtless people believe, that mental culture can ever harm a woman, or do aught but confer an added grace, but that the exclusive culture of one good thing involves a deplorable loss, whilst two good things do but enhance each other's lustre. However important the mind may be in fitting woman for her place in the world, either individually or as the companion of man, the body is hardly less important; and, after all, the old-fashioned notion that a woman's first duty is to be beautiful, is one that is justified by the utter impossibility of stamping it out.

I should be the last to imply that physical beauty is the only thing that can make a woman attractive. Many are attractive and magnetic without beauty as it is commonly understood, and some are too useful to provoke criticism; but physical beauty remains one of the sweetest and strongest qualities, and one which can scarcely be too highly valued or too falsely despised.

The immortal worth of beauty lies in the universal pleasure it gives. We all love it instinctively. We all feel, more or less, that beauty (or what we think beauty) is a sort of necessity to us, like the elements. One of the best proofs of this is the fact that we generally invest with ideal beauty any face or thing we are fond of. The beauty of the skies and seas soothes and uplifts our hearts; the beauty of faces passes into

our souls, and shapes our moods and acts. What we love is probably always worth cultivating; and when we love what after all has an enormous refining influence, its cultivation may even become a duty.

The power and sanctity of physical, as well as moral beauty, has been recognised in all ages. The early myth of Beauty worshipped and respected by beasts of prey is a suggestive and touching instance of this. The Greeks considered beauty so essentially a divine boon, that the mother prayed to Zeus that her child might be before all things beautiful. Beauty seemed to the Greek the visible sign of an inward grace, and an expression of divine good-will.

Thus it naturally came to be cultivated at Athens with an enthusiasm and devotion such as it is difficult for us to realise. It was a part of their religion, and the common phrase, *καλὸν καὶ ἀγαθόν*, the Good and the Beautiful, embodied the fact.

It may seem strange that the Greeks, whose civilisation had made them so sensitive to beauty of a certain order, should have remained to a great extent untouched by other orders of beauty which we value so deeply; but it is even more singular that we who know all that they knew, and have cultivated a susceptibility to sound, as in music, and colour, as in painting, far more keen and complex than theirs, should have become

so careless of what they held highest—human beauty, and surroundings in so far as they affect human beauty.

The wisest of men has called physical beauty a jewel of gold, the value of which is not destroyed, but only checked, by its being occasionally found in a swine's snout; and though decking it with gold will never make a swine other than a swine, it is possible to cultivate the inner and the outer grace together, and it is possible to actually open a way for the development of the mental and moral good by smoothing the physical veil which encumbers and distorts it.

In fact, outward ugliness is an impediment in more ways than one; influencing the character in an unmistakable degree (hereafter to be shown), and influencing surroundings and the chances of life, far more than is generally admitted.

The part which beauty played in the Middle Ages was a very real one. Woman, whose loveliness so swayed men, was at one time treated with something like divine honours, mistress as she was of the chief civilising influence of the time. Books being few, and secular education nearly confined to woman, her mere knowledge gave her almost unlimited power over her rude, warlike bread-winner.

Whilst he could only fight in battle, or wring treasure by force from the traveller crossing his domain,

she could often write or read a letter. While he could but teach the young hands to war, and the fingers to fight, to manage a fierce horse, or to bring down the quarry, the whole mental and moral training of the children and the household were in her hands. She could instruct them in the mysteries of their faith, the duties of their position, and teach them the hundred arts and occupations which engrossed the time of woman when shops were not. Knowledge is power; beauty and knowledge combined are well-nigh all-powerful; both belonged to woman, and she was, for good or evil, the incentive to action, the prize in the tourney, the leech who cured the sick and tended the wounded, the ruler of the servants, and the keeper of the castle keys. She it was who, pointing to courage and courtesy as the price of her grace, diffused courage and courtesy throughout the land. She it was who fixed the tone of morals and excellence in the court in which she reigned as queen. And she it is who (though books and education have come her master's way at last) still possesses a vast power for good or ill, a power of which her beauty in the abstract is the pivot and corner-stone.

Darwin has some very curious remarks in his book on the 'Descent of Man,' on the different standards of beauty.

'Beauty seems to some people to mean a very pro-

nounced form of whatever type of feature or hue we are most accustomed to ; in short, the exaggeration of characteristic peculiarities. Thus the African savage with his black hide, his large thick mouth, small eyes, flat nose, and heavy ears, considers that woman most lovely who has the blackest skin, the thickest mouth, the least apparent eyes, &c. We Western nations, whose characteristics are a small oval face, coloured pink and white, large eyes, prominent nose, and narrow jaw, think the excess of these characteristics to be *beauty*, and the deviation from them, *ugliness*.

'The African savage considers the Englishwoman hideous, with her front teeth unextracted and white 'like a dog's,' her lips untorn by either a copper ring or a piece of wood, and her cheeks coloured 'like a potato flower.' The Englishman recoils from a Nubian lady, whose smile brings her lips on a level with her eyebrows, and draws her nose back to her ears.'

There is no doubt a great deal in this theory—much more than we can at once realise—that beauty of form, like the colours of the prism, is non-existent except in our own eyes and minds. I do not, however, endorse it. I believe that there are abstract rules of beauty distinct from the charm of the habitual. But however this may be—for I am not concerned with definitions of what constitutes beauty—still on the lowest ground, the

pleasure excited in the mind by what *seems* to each to be beauty—even supposing it to be a flat nose—is so immense, that it has always been held worth living, and fighting, and dying for.

Is it not then a kind of duty to make life beautiful—to disguise deformity, to provide by care and forethought for others, a pleasure which costs so little and brings in so much even to the giver, that one is tempted at times to fancy vanity itself but the abuse or exaggeration of a natural and noble quality—since it seeks, in the pride of beauty, a possession which tends to refine and elevate the mind, and increase the sum of human happiness in a number of direct and indirect ways.

Pain of Ugliness.

Those whose taste has been cultivated by having beautiful things always about them, are incredibly sensitive to awkward forms, inappropriate colours, and inharmonious combinations. To such persons, certain rooms, certain draperies, certain faces, cause not only the mere feeling of disapprobation, but even a kind of physical pain. Sometimes they might be unable to explain what affected them so unpleasantly, or how they were affected, but they feel an uneasy sense of oppression and discomfort—they would fain flee away, and let the

simple skies or the moon with her sweet stare, soothe them into healthy feeling again. This sense of oppression would probably be neither understood nor believed in by the ordinary run of educated people, in England, at least. But it is very real to those whose passionate care for the beautiful makes it a kind of *necessity* to them—and they are the subtle and delicate souls that build up the art-crown of a nation. The uneasiness to which I allude, is very similar to what we all feel more or less, according to our constitutional susceptibility, in the presence of unsympathetic persons.

CHAPTER II.

Importance of Dress.

AS in our age and climate the human body is habitually and completely veiled, the veil assumes an artistic importance second only to the forms that are hidden. In nothing are character and perception so insensibly but inevitably displayed, as in dress, and taste in dress. Dress is the second self, a dumb self, yet a most eloquent expositor of the person.

There are garments, as there are faces and natures, which have no 'bar' in them—nothing which stops with a sudden shock your pleasure in them, nothing that dissatisfies or perplexes you. There are colours that are always beautiful because they recall nature, fashions which are beautiful because sensible and fulfilling the aim for which they were invented. In fact, no dress can be beautiful that is not appropriate, and appropriateness consists chiefly in graceful expression and useful purpose.

In modern days—so far removed from those when dress

was regarded as a mere covering, and aspired to be no more (although it always admitted of decoration, such as jewellery or needlework)—we no longer look upon a gown as a shield against wintry cold, or a modest veil drawn between ourselves and the outer world. We expect it to be a work of art. Much money, representing much labour, is lavished upon every garment. When the silk-weaver has spent his skill upon the production of even texture, delicate gloss, and rare tints, only half the work is done. We cannot fling and fold the rich piece upon us after the simple fashion of our forefathers. We want it more to express than to hide us. A clever craftswoman must cut it to the approved shape, and sew it into form; it must be clothed upon with other and richer fabrics, which we call 'trimming,' until its original price is doubled. Every form is eagerly borrowed for these trimmings. Patterns old and new are exhausted to form attractive combinations—the Greek frieze, the mediæval missal-border, the whole animal and vegetable kingdoms are laid under contribution—our very discontent with all there is, and our insatiable craving for novelty, is one of the diseases consequent on a certain repletion of variety. Raised work, indented work, tabs, fringes, frills—there is no possible form of ornament that we have not tried and cast aside. So that a dress now claims to be considered as a work of art.

Now if dress be worth all this elaboration, if it intends to reach, as it evidently aspires to do, the platform of a picture, or a poem, or a fine building, the art it adopts must be either good or bad art. I believe the melancholy truth to be that we can hardly find a modern dress which is not throughout in the worst taste and opposed to the principles of all good art.

Yet at the same time I think that to a certain extent the milliners mean well. I think that the women who spoil themselves with the milliner's devices mean well too. They do want to make the best of themselves, to be 'things of beauty,' and not eyesores. But how to do this they don't know, and they don't think, and they generally refuse to learn. There are some ladies who always look well: they are not necessarily the pretty ones; but they are women gifted with fine natural taste, who instinctively choose right forms, colours, and fabrics, generally without knowing why. These, however, are exceptions.

If everybody who could hold a pencil were suddenly called upon to paint a picture, there would be only a few out of every score at least who would betray any sense of grace, perspective, colour, or design. Would it not be wise for those unpossessed of the sacred fire to receive instruction of some wholesome kind before they wasted time and good material to so little purpose?

But what is true of painting is true also of dress. We need not all paint, but we have all got to dress, and the sooner dress is recognised by our women as an art-product, the better (and probably the more cheaply) they will be able to apparel themselves.

What usually takes place in this country in the matter of dress? Vain persons who are proud of their appearance, and wish to make the most of themselves, spend much time in covering themselves with things that make an artist lift up hands and eyes of regret, astonishment, and pity. Those who are not vain often exclaim, 'Don't ask *me*! I will wear anything that is brought to me!' and both act from ignorance. The vain person wastes time and defeats her own aim; the other is too ignorant to know that there is anything to know worth knowing, and does not sufficiently respect what God has given her, to care how she looks: so there is always a discord between her inner and outer self.

Yet dress and a proper care for it ought not to minister merely to vanity, nor impair in any degree the moral tone. A woman ought to care what she wears for her own sake and for the sake of those about her. It is a fault, not a virtue, to be reckless as to the impression one leaves on the eye, just as it is a fault to be indifferent to the feelings of others; in either case there is a sad

absence of those subtle and beautiful perceptions that constitute a delicate and gentle mind.

But how difficult it is for a woman to be really well dressed, under the existing prejudice that everybody must be dressed like everybody else! This notion of a requisite livery is paralysing to anything like development of individual taste, and simply springs from the incapacity of the many to originate, wherefore they are glad to copy others; but this majority have succeeded in suffocating the æsthetic minority, many of whom are now forced to suppress really good taste for fear of being called 'affected.' We shall never have any school of art in England, either in dress or decoration of any kind, until the fundamental principle of good art is recognised, that *people may do as they like* in the matter, and until women cease to be afraid of being laughed at for doing what they feel to be wise and right.

There can be no originality of scheme until individual taste is admitted to be free; and how can there be individuality while all are completely subservient to law, that law usually determined by folk who have neither natural feeling for beauty nor education?

With regard to the milliner, ladies should remember that by trusting to the milliner's 'taste' (?) they are merely playing into the hands of various tradesmen whose interest it is to sell their goods, be they good or

bad. The manufacturer's mill must be kept going, *therefore* the fashions must change; the milliner loves her perquisites, *therefore* she encourages every fashion which is of a kind to deceive the eye as to quantity of material. It is to her interest that you should not be able to measure the exact number of yards she has used; it would be to her customer's very considerable interest did the customer calculate and understand more than she usually does, how much stuff is required for flounce, skirt, or sleeve!

It is as absurd to suppose that every variety of short and tall, grave and gay, young and old, must be dressed in one style, as that the same coat must fit every man. How should it be so, whilst nature revels in endless dissimilarity? Why is the woman with taste for colour and form to sacrifice her gift to the others who have it not, and *copy*, when she is capable of originating? Why this deadly fear of being conspicuous? Why is one's individuality, so clear within, to be so confused without?

Alas! perhaps it is a misfortune to be an individual at all. We know the pity, the deep, deep commiseration which satirists say ill-natured women feel for those who are congenitally conspicuous—for *good looks*. Is it a similar commiseration for those who possess the next best thing, *good taste*, which has destroyed the

interpretation of a beautiful mind, as it would like to stamp out a beautiful body?

If so, in the name of art and nature both, let us shake off the lethargy which immolates us to a Juggernauth of ignorant opinion, and let us assert our individuality, if we have any, in dress as in other things.

Woman is most beautiful when she is most herself and least conscious of it—in dress as well as in other things: and as I am at present treating chiefly of her looks, which depend in great measure on her dress, I may lay down as a general principle that dress is most beautiful and most becoming when it follows the outlines of the human form.

Dress bears the same relation to the body as speech does to the brain; and therefore dress may be called the speech of the body.

Speech was supposed to be meant for the expression of thought, till a modern cynic told us it was on the contrary for its concealment. Dress once expressed the person, now it disguises it; well, disguise may sometimes be necessary—but when dress carries its anatomical fictions as far as evasion may be carried, as far as falsehood, it ceases not only to be respectable, but beautiful as well.

This will be considered later, among the dresses which contradict the natural lines of the body.

Observe further, that plenty of time—too much—is given to the dressmaker. Very little is given to dress itself; no thought is expended on the requirements which the dress is to supply. No Englishwoman considers the meaning of each trimming, or form, or colour. She does not even consider whether it expresses in any degree her character, tastes, or wants.

Meaning of Dress.

Frenchwomen, on the contrary, have carried too far the idea of dress as an index of the inner self. They have got a right notion by its wrong end. Without ever, or seldom, producing a costume which is really beautiful, meeting all needs, they have originated a kind of language of dress more vulgar and less excusable than the Italian language of flowers, which, apparently, is intelligible to a certain class of people, but, in my opinion, robs social intercourse of its spontaneity and self-unconsciousness, and, in the case of dress, degrades woman to the level of a walking advertisement—of something baser than trade prices.

We may learn the kind of way in which the French have spoilt and vulgarised the notion of dress as an expression of character, from a book by M. Charles Blanc: 'L'Art dans la Parure et dans le Vêtement,'

which, with all its cleverness, is probably written with an ironic *arrière pensée*, and meant to be swallowed with reservations. M. Blanc is 'Membre de l'Institut, Ancien Directeur des Beaux-Arts.' He has thought out his subject with the enthusiasm of a Frenchman, and the servility of a man-milliner, and we can only hope that M. Blanc is not in earnest, but poking fun at us, in much that he says. A few quotations will make his point of view quite clear.

Page 222. The author has been telling us that this wondrous work, the human body, 'surtout le corps de la femme, doit être vêtu et orné de façon à rappeler ces trois forces, la croissance, la pesanteur, et le mouvement. . . . La ceinture marque la transition entre les formes montrées et les formes cachées . . .

'Il va sans dire . . . qu'une femme y sait mettre, quand elle veut, un cachet de modestie ou de richesse, de régularité ou de négligence. Est-il quelque chose, par exemple, de plus expressif dans une toilette de courses ou de château, que la ceinture odalisque traînant à mi-jupe, sur le côté, avec une nonchalance voluptueuse et rappelant si bien, par son nom et par sa forme, cette houri qui n'a pas eu le temps' &c.—we refer the curious to the original.—'*La jupe.* Cette partie du vêtement n'étant que pour couvrir et pour cacher, ne doit présenter aucune analogie avec les formes du corps.'

'Les jeunes filles,' proceeds M. Blanc, p. 229, 'qui sont le plus souvent minces, supportent sans immodestie les relevés hauts sur les hanches, lorsqu'elles ne se contentent pas d'une seule jupe qui siérait à leur jeunesse; mais le camargo, le pouff, c'est à dire le bouffant de derrière, quand il est prononcé, devint un accent de galanterie qui nous frapperait s'il n'était aujourd'hui generalisé par l'usage. Que la seconde jupe soit drapée sur le devant, qu'elle soit aplatie et forme tablier plus ou moins court, c'est pour le mieux, parce que l'ampleur ici ressemblerait à ce que les Anglais appellent un état intéressant, ou paraîtrait le dissimuler. Sur le côté, cependant, la tunique peut se retrousser avec timidité ou hardiesse,' &c.

It is almost appalling to think of all we may have implied in our dress without knowing it, for so many years. The mind almost quails before a new fashion, lest it should bear some construction contrary to our feeling. And if M. Blanc can find so much significance in a sash and an apron, what cannot he twist from a bodice, with the many ornaments to which we have hitherto attached no importance?

All the different portions of the dress--sleeves, *basques*, *rûches*, bands, mantles—he tells us 'en determinent la physiognomie selon la manière dont elles sont faconnées, maniées et portées. *Le corsage.* Cacher

et montrer, ou plutôt laisser deviner et laisser voir, ce sont les deux objets du corsage : mais il ne faut pas oublier que souvent ce que l'on cache est justement ce que l'on veut montrer . . . Mais que d'impressions vives auxquelles l'attention des hommes ne s'arrête point et qui concourent à l'impression que leur fait la toilette d'une femme ! . . . Quelle différence entre un corsage fermé et montant, agrémenté tout au plus d'un jabot de dentelle, et le corsage à revers qui s'ouvre de lui-même au regard et à la pensée en laissant voir l'étoffe intérieure qui, pour être mieux remarquée, sera le plus souvent d'une couleur tranchante et d'un autre tissu ! Et plus le ton extérieur est discret plus est généreuse la couleur de dessous. Sur un corsage de cachemire gris-mauve, par exemple, ou de foulard écru, se détacheront des revers en taffetas rose-de-Chine, en velours grenat, en satin-marron, car il est de bon goût que la partie du vêtement la plus riche soit celle que l'on montre le moins.'

Many pages are spent by this fanatic on descriptions of the various forms of bodice which crowd modern fashion books, winding up with the corslet, 'Charmante allusion à la petite cuirasse des anciens preux, ironique imitation d'armure qui me rappelle ce mot incisif de Jean-Paul : " Les femmes sont comme les guerriers : elles jettent leurs armes quand elles s'avouent vaincues." '

What Dress Should Be.

These quotations will serve as white stones along a precipice to defend our feet from falling—to show what ought *not* to be indicated by dress. It is true that the colours and forms we employ should reflect our tastes and harmonise with our character. A puritan or quaker in bright colours would be inconsistent—a gay young face in a nun's veil is equally revolting. There are many persons who would be always out of place in the stately Watteau sacque, and some who would be lost and spoilt in the crossing bodice with its village grace. It is lawful and necessary to consider, when ordering a dress, what will make it suitable and appropriate, and also what will give the trimmings some artistic significance. A flounce that begins and ends without *raison d'être*, a meaningless scroll seemingly fallen haphazard on the lap but attached by no apparent means, buttons without button-holes, imitation lacing, &c., are bad in art, and to be eschewed by all who aim at being really well dressed; but M. Blanc pays no regard whatever to the artistic meaning of an adoption which, before all else, is artistic, whilst he wrings only the moral significance from what in itself has really no meaning at all.

An aim so forced can result in nothing but a painful and revolting self-consciousness in any woman seeking

to carry French notions into our purer English society; the illustrations of M. Blanc's book perhaps admit it, for nothing more inane, more vulgar, and more artificial can be imagined than his notion of *le beau sexe.*

There are two general rules to be observed in dress.

1. *That it shall not contradict or falsify the natural lines of the body*—be that body slightly or fully expressed—and perhaps complete concealment is no gain to the moral as it is a marked loss from the artistic point of view. Our author, taking the very basest view of the body, enjoins concealment *pour laisser deviner.* The Greek, from a view correspondingly high, saw nothing evil in nature but what coarse minds brought there. The body is so beautiful that it is a pity it can be so little seen; but the morality or immorality, the decency or indecency, consists in the motive of display.

2. *That the attire shall express to a reasonable extent the character of the wearer.* I really do not think that Englishwomen ever mean anything at all by adopting one trimming in preference to another, nor that the idea of certain interpretations is one that often occurs to them. They put themselves in the hands of their milliners, believing blindly that these professional advisers have given that thought to their costume which properly can and ought to be given by the wearer only. They think so little about the matter that they do not even

guess how much they lose by this indifference. A woman may wear a dress many times without really knowing how the materials and folds mingle on her train. Far better so than that Englishwomen should come to attach the kind of importance to details attributed above to Frenchwomen ; but best, were women to bring pure minds to bear with common sense on what they wear, and why they wear it, considering utility as well as ornament.

CHAPTER III.

Moralities of Dress.

IN proceeding to lay down a few simple laws about the right and wrong—call it morality if you will—of dress, I notice, firstly, the morality of what we wear, which includes the questions of decency and indecency in dress; secondly, the morality of how we wear it, which is quite another matter, simply affecting ourselves and not the garment; and then there is, thirdly, the independent morality of the fashion in itself.

Firstly. *The morality of what we wear.* Decency in dress is a difficult question, and one too lengthy and involved to discuss fully here. We need only give a few examples which may suggest more to thinking minds. The human body uncovered is not necessarily a shocking thing. There is nothing wrong or improper in that which is made in God's own image, and which is justly held

to be the highest type of beauty in creation. And at a time when beauty for its own sake was intensely appreciated, when it was cultivated with something of a religious enthusiasm, when the mother longed for her child to be beautiful because beauty was felt to be divine, at such a time, in the fair warm climate of Greece and Italy, it was hardly thought needful to veil the body. The Greeks were proud of their beautiful bodies, as we are of a beautiful face, and a bare leg was no more to them than a bare arm is to us; and the sexes mingled in free and honest companionship, clad only in a thin stola, children being devoid even of that.

But what was harmless in the early Greeks would be impossible in nations who have lost to a great extent the simple instinct of natural beauty, whilst they have grown abnormally self-conscious and reflective. There are tribes in the East still, of no mean virtue (acting up to their lights) who consider the exposure of the face, or their identity, indelicate, but the rest of the body, wherein everybody is more or less alike, may 'go bare, go bare.' The Turkish woman in her loose trouser, perhaps the most modest and sensible of all feminine costumes, is often held up as a type of indelicate dress; but in many respects our own fashions are open to juster criticism, when they seem to admit an impropriety by displaying a part only, just enough to hint at the rest,

as though conscious of something wrong. This is far worse than the entire expression of the form, where use and artistic appreciation, or simplicity of mind, have divested it of all exclusively evil associations.

Secondly. *The morality of how we wear a thing*: depending on the wearer's mind. Some women though covered up to the eyes always contrive to look indelicate; some others, *décolletée* as the dressmaker and a corrupt custom have made them, are in their natural innocence without reproach. We may see this in statues and pictures. It is the mind that makes or mars. Many nude figures in sculpture and painting are inoffensive, because the face which is the index of the mind is free from shame or blame, and the whole attitude is sweet and unconscious.

Thirdly. But of the first and second moralities it is not so much our wish to speak here; they must be left to the healthy instincts of pure women, and each will surely enough, by her mode of dress, betray her mind's bent; we can thereby, as it were, compute her orbit. But as to our third point, *the morality of the garment itself* now engages our attention. This may be seen when it is hung on a peg with no human form inside it. For moral qualities may be applied to the fashioning and adorning of a robe from a purely artistic point of view, as they may be applied to a building. The noble

principles of art, which are all founded upon healthy nature, are all 'moral'—that is, they tend to exercise a right influence on the mind; they satisfy, soften, and do not enervate or harass it—all these principles may be as apparent in a gown as in a cathedral.

In the following remarks I shall confine myself as much as possible to the independent morality of dress, which had better be considered under several distinct headings.

Imbecile Ornament.

Probably nothing that is not useful is in any high sense beautiful. At least it will be almost universally seen in the matter of dress that where an effect is bad it is an artificial or false effect, and *vice versâ*. A trimming, as before remarked, that has no *raison d'être* is generally ungraceful. A pendent jewel simply sewn to a foundation where it neither holds up nor clasps together any part of the dress, usually looks superfluous, as it is. Above all, bows (which are literally nothing but strings tied together) stuck about when there is no possibility of their fastening two parts, almost always appear ridiculous; when needed for a mere ornament, a *rosette* should be used, which pretends to be nothing else.

In the making of dresses, lines ending nowhere, and

nohow, are often apparent, and never fail to annoy the eye. The outlines of bonnets are conspicuous instances of this mistake. There is no art instinct, and but little of the picturesque element, in a people who are indifferent to these things, and whose eye does not instinctively demand a meaning and a token in everything. In architecture do we not immediately detect and condemn a pillar that, resting on nothing, appears to support a heavy mass of masonry; an arch that is gummed against and not built into a wall, unsupported, and therefore in an impossible position; or a balcony that has neither base nor motive, unsupported and supporting nothing? And these things are not seldom seen on the fronts of our more decorative buildings, where the ignorant architect, knowing the whole thing to be a sham, the balconies of plaster, the carvings cement, the lintels fictitious, the pillars hollow, forgets that the forms he borrows were meant for use, and not merely for show. Mr. Ruskin has preached to us the motive of all good art; Sir Charles Eastlake and others have taught us the practical dangers of debased art, and we may at once see how principles that are bad in one place are also bad in another. The uncultured dress-maker, only longing for novelty, invents forms of attire that would be impossible were dress less utterly artificial than it is, and this is half the cause of our universal ill-dressing. No fashion or

form can leave the mind without a jar, that is not where it is because indispensable there. Whether it occur in a house or in a gown, the principle must be the same.

One of the reasons why peasants, fish-wives, and such folk, look picturesque and beautiful even in their rags, whatever be the mixture of colour or arrangement of form—so much more beautiful than fashionable people look even when they try to imitate the fish-wives—is, I think, the motive apparent in everything they wear. The bright kerchief that covers the peasant's shoulders is so much better than a bodice trimmed in the form of a kerchief. The outer dress that really covers an under dress fully and fairly is so much more satisfactory than one which only pretends to do so, and betrays its own deceit at the elbows, or the wrists, or behind, or in some other unexpected place. Anything that looks useful and is useless is bad, and the more obviously artificial a thing is, the worse it must always be. A hood that is at once seen to be incapable of going over the head; something that looks like a tunic in one place, yet in another is seen to have no lawful habitation nor a name; a false apron; a festoon that looks as though it had fallen accidentally upon the skirt, when by no possible means except glue or irrelevant pins could it stay there; a veil that you at once perceive is never meant to descend over the face, but is tacked to the top

of the head in an exasperating manner; heavy lappets, that instead of being the natural termination of something else, hang meaningless and mutilated; slashes that are sewn *upon* the sleeve instead of breaking *through* it; and other things of the same kind—they leave the eye unsatisfied, discontented, often disgusted, and these are artistically immoral.

Simplicity.

Indeed, the truth is, we have far too many subdivisions of attire about us to manage them properly. If we had but half the flounces and furbelows, and upper and under and middle skirts, and aprons and sashes, and 'coat-tails' and festoons, we should just have half the difficulty in combining and arranging effects. It is easier to drive two horses than six, as poor Phaeton could have told us when he upset the chariot of the sun. He was an ignorant driver, and so too often is a woman in the matter of dress. We ought never to admit an addition to our unmanageable team, without due reason. We might dispense with half our complicated folds, our whalebones, our scrunched toes, our immoveable arms, and many other miseries, and look less like mere blocks for showing off clothes, and more like human beings; but we can't bear to let the housemaid

or the crossing-sweeper think we have got a sixpence in our pockets when it can be hung or piled on our backs, and we go about loaded like the celebrated camel who finally collapsed under a straw.

Nevertheless, when I hint at simplicity of attire, I am *not* looking back longingly to '93, and wishing to see Englishmen and Englishwomen render themselves the guys—I had almost said the revolting guys—that the victims of Jacques Louis David's classic mania did, when they tried to be imitation Greeks. This painter, in many respects great, in others mistaken, felt deeply the inner and outer corruption of his time. He viewed with disgust the melancholy *décadence* of the once beauteous 'Watteau' costume, and the prevalent uncleanliness, artificiality, ugliness, and waste of precious time, entered into his soul. He believed that a return to the simplicity of the earlier world was the only reformation possible, and, like the other enthusiasts for reform at that terrible time, he went too far. Old Greece could not be resuscitated by a change of apparel; but he shared the universal mania for antique standards, and his influence on the fashion was very remarkable, for he succeeded in completely reversing the style of dress worn, and introduced that simplicity which in our colourless clime and unæsthetic minds so soon developed into the worst ugliness. The waist was hoisted to the arm-

pits and the bodice became a mere legend. There were not too many petticoats, and no folds; and as the entire form and action of the body were distinguishable, a lady had to be very careful how she crossed her legs, lolled on sofas, or ran across a room. To do such things gracefully was the study of every girl; hence, walking, and entering a room, taking a seat, &c., were practised under artistes, as we have since practised the rapid steps of modern round dances. There was plenty of satire at our expense then, naturally, and not without ground, for simplicity too often gave place to mere indelicacy, and there was no means of disguising thinness or fatness or anything else then. Moreover, there were fanatics who outran David in their desire to be conspicuous, such as the Parisian *Merveilleuses* who performed many follies under the great artist's wing.

Pink tights emulating bare legs, and muslin gowns flung as loosely over the tights as the most paradisiac taste could wish, are only indecent, not picturesque or beautiful, for no generations of care have made the British body perfect like the Greek's; and when men take to wearing their hair plaited and combed after Apollo, and indiarubber continuations (about as much like the Greeks as shell flowers are like real ones), the result must be called ridiculous and nothing else; whilst the more decorous votaries, who make a compromise between

goddess and mortal, such as the dress our grandmothers wore, can at best look only like resuscitated victims of the *auto da fé*—luckless women who, having been tied up in sacks and flung into the river, have saved themselves by kicking out the sack-bottom (an appearance rather favoured by the 'classic' *chevelure*, which was eminently damp-looking), and are on their way home to be dried.

Let us have no burlesque parodies of classic simplicity, yet let us curb our insatiable passion for sticking everything we can procure, feathers and flounces, beads, birds'-nests, tabs, tinsel, and tails all over us, anywhere, like wild Indians or the Terebella. Alas! how like we are to the Terebella! Perhaps you ask what *is* the Terebella?

The Terebella is a little creature that lives in the sea, to whose tender body nature has allotted no protective covering, and which cleverly sets itself to supply the want with a taste about as fastidious as that shown by our own fair countrywomen. It collects materials for its little coat with the same rapacity, and often with as little judgment—for some of its most ambitious ornaments being more costly than it can afford, have actually led to its own destruction! Nothing comes amiss to it. Sand, shells, pieces of straw, sticks or stones, atoms of sea-weed, every kind of *débris* within its reach, good, bad, or indifferent, it will collect and stick upon itself,

agglutinated together by a secretion that among marine animals takes the place of needle and thread. It has even been known to add a heavy chignon pebble to its load, more inconvenient than serviceable, after quite a human fashion! When its laborious coat is finished, it thrusts out its triumphant head and rejoices. This little creature is one of the annelids, and the pretty name of Terebella, though belonging to the sea, would not always be out of place on shore.

Form.

As for shapes of dresses, a good way of testing the beauty of form is by drawing the outline of a dress, and looking at it from all points of view, and with half-closed eyes. This test, applied to that form of gown which was so long in vogue—the long, pinched waist, and the unnatural width of the hips, low neck, and no sleeves—proves the extreme ugliness of it. Observe the sketch. This gown, in outline, simply looks like a very ill-shaped wineglass upside down. The wide crinoline entirely conceals any natural grace of attitude; the horizontal line across the neck invariably

FIG. 1.

decreases height, and the absence of sleeves is a painful blot to an artistic eye. Few women's arms are beautiful above the elbow; fatness is not correctness of outline, as some seem to think, and if we judge English arms from Mr. Whistler's unflattered portraits, we may see they are as a rule of the skinniest. We are not like the Greeks, who made the improvement of the body their dearest study; and, not having reduced our superfluous fat, and cultivated our muscles into perfection, we ought to be careful how we expose them. A dress, high behind or on the shoulders, gives the whole height of the figure, and full sleeves are an improvement to every figure but a very stout one, just as the fashion of wearing the hair full and loose is more becoming to the face than that which scrapes it all back out of sight. The best way to decide on a really beautiful dress is by studying the pictures of the great masters of light and shade, and copying them—Vandyck, Lely, Watteau, Gainsborough, Reynolds, or Lawrence. I will now proceed to notice a few special rules.

CHAPTER IV.

Suitable Dresses.

AS for dresses suitable to certain persons, I need say but little. There are many books on the etiquette of dress, showing what is proper to be worn in the morning and in the evening and at noonday. A few simple hints will suffice here. Those who are very stout should wear nothing but black; those who are very thin should put a little padding in their gowns; and neither should be in the least *décolletée.* Perpendicular stripes in dresses give height, and increase fulness, and are therefore particularly suited to very slight, small people, and particularly unfitted for stout figures. To fair persons blue is becoming—but not every blue. Dark blue, or too brilliant a blue, is extremely unbecoming to that kind of complexion, and makes the skin yellow and the hair sandy. It is the old, pale, dull blue that really changes sand to gold.

Pink, especially the old-fashioned yellow-pink, is, when not too brilliant, becoming to all complexions, except that which goes with red hair. Light green may be safely worn by the very dark, the very rosy, and by the very pale when the skin is extremely clear; but to ordinary English faces it is a trying colour, though there are people who look well in nothing else. Green, mixed properly with pale blue, is very becoming indeed. Grey is the most beautiful colour for old and young—I mean the soft silver grey which is formed by equal parts of black and white, with no touch of mauve in it. It admits of any colour in trimming, and throws up the bloom of the skin. Rose-colour, for some people, is pretty, and not unbecoming. White, so disastrous to rooms, is generally becoming in dress—only very coarse complexions are spoilt by it.

Short women should never wear double skirts or tunics—they decrease the height so much; unless, indeed, the tunic is very short, and the skirt very long. So also do large, sprawling patterns used for trimmings; let these be left to women tall enough to carry them off. Neither let a very little woman wear her hair half down her back; let her lift it clean up as high as possible.

Large feet should never be cased in kid—least of all, white kid slippers—for kid reveals so clearly the form

and movements of the feet, and stretches so easily, that few feet have a chance in them. Black stockings and shoes, even for evening wear, are the most appropriate choice.

Extravagance.

Although I have been dealing with the moralities of dress, I have not said a word about extravagance. That is a most important subject, no doubt, and one which everybody is bound to settle for herself. But the whole *morality* of luxury is quite a separate branch, and must be separately discussed.

Ladies are accused of spending too much on their dress: my point is, that whether they spend little or much, they may lay their money out on right—or wrong—artistic principles. A woman who understands and knows how to apply a few general principles, such as I have tried to point out, may often spend half as much as her friend who gives herself over to her dressmaker and empties her purse by exhausting the last fashion-book.

We are told again that ladies think too much about dress: I should say they think too little, or rather they don't think at all. If they *thought* a little more about dress, they would waste less time, and probably spend less money; but the result would be grace, harmony, and

expressiveness, instead of those astonishing combinations which rob the fairest women of half their charms, and expose ruthlessly the weak points of their less favoured sisters.

We are most anxious that women should devote, not less time, less money, less study, to the art of self-adornment, but even more, *if the results are proportionately better.* We are anxious that a pretty girl should make the very utmost of herself, and not lose one day of looking beautiful by dressing badly while her fresh youth lasts. We are desirous that when the first freshness is past, advancing age should not grow slovenly as it is apt to do, but that then the art which once enhanced beauty should conceal its fading away: we want every woman to be at all times a picture, an ensample, with no 'bar' between herself and her surroundings, as there should be none between her character and its outward reflection—dress. For this reason, Nature must not be destroyed, but supported; her beauties revealed, not stifled; her weaknesses veiled, not exposed; her defects tenderly remedied; and no fashion should be tolerated which simply tends to burlesque her. As, in spite of Quakers and philosophers, women are likely to spend money and time over their dress to the end of the chapter, the sternest censor may well join in the hope that not the girl of the period, but

the woman of the future, will produce greater results, waste less time, whilst bestowing more thought upon the beauty and the propriety of her dress.

I long for the time when some acknowledged censor will force the laws of propriety and beauty upon the fashionable world, who will absolutely forbid the ill-favoured to exhibit their misfortunes with ill-judged candour and false pride; who will forbid the heated dreams of overworked dressmakers to disclose themselves in gigantic patterns on human drapery; who will then perhaps even commence a raid against the obstinacy which clothes our men in swallow-tails, elephant-legs, shirt collars, and 'anguish pipes.'

Good and Bad Costumes.

As an instance of costumes which entirely deny and falsify the natural form of the body, I will quote the farthingale of the end of Elizabeth's reign. A waist so long that it seemed to belong to the knees more than to the hips; shoulders padded so high that the undulating grace of the neck was wholly lost; a head made to look ridiculously small amid the mass of material under which it was buried—material in positions that it was impossible that it could retain, or did retain, without a wire support—or else the head recalled that of John

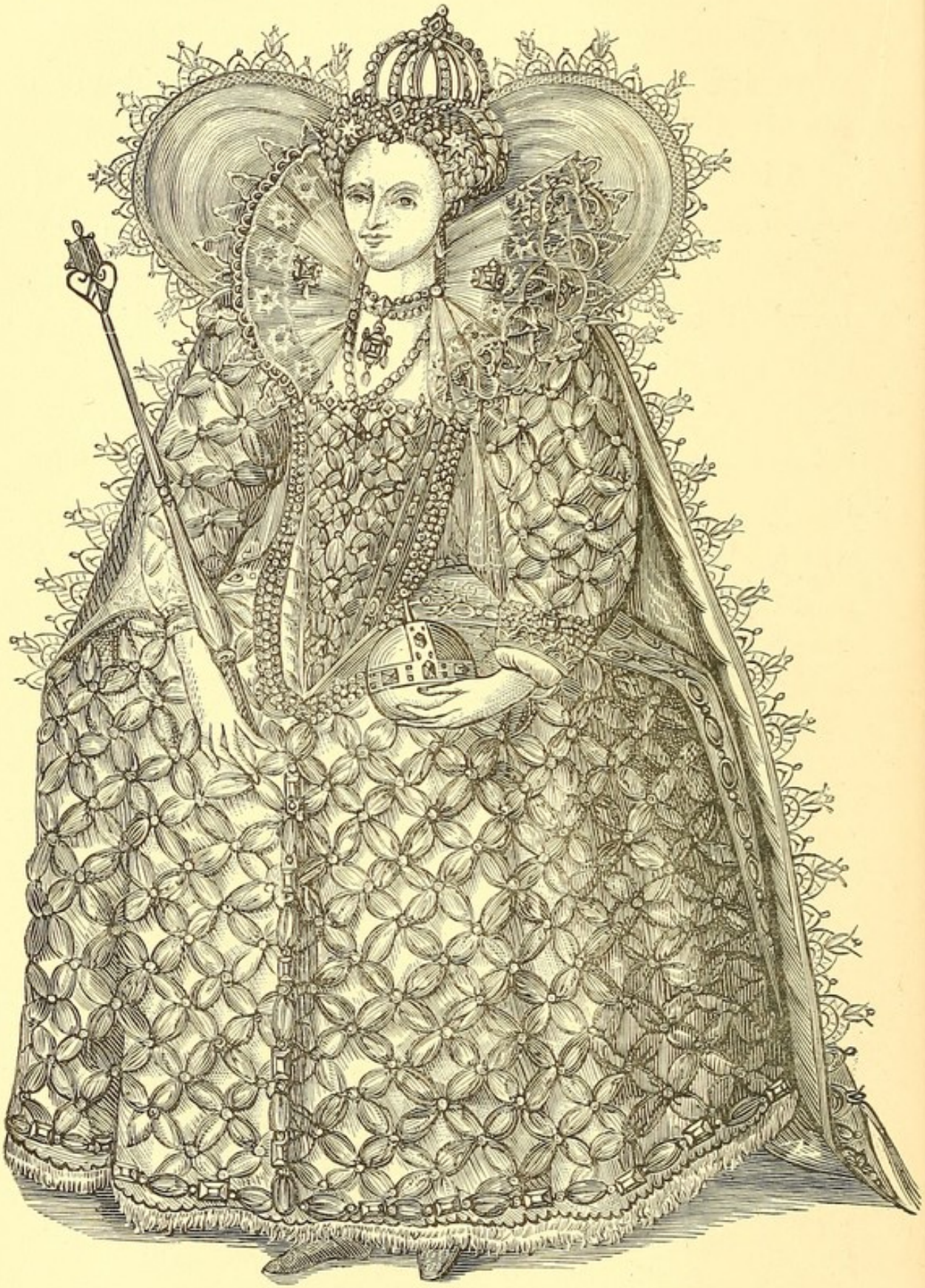


FIG. 2.—Queen Elizabeth. No. 95, Library, British Museum.

the Baptist, lying in a platter-shaped ruff. A corset disgracefully low and disgracefully tight, cut square and stiffened with buckram, until every memory of the human form was obliterated; shoes so broad and short that nothing but the misery of bunions could excuse them; the wide farthingale square where the hips are round, and perpendicular where the body curves. This costume (at its worst) would appear to have been designed with but one object, that of making the person grotesque, and were it not that a pretty woman looks pretty anyhow and anywhen, one marvels why women did not 'strike.'

The woodcut which we give is from the British Museum, one of the most grotesque examples I ever saw. The weight of the whole edifice, a mass of millinery and *pierrerie*, is visible in the starting veins on the poor queen's heated brow.

Yet, the faults of the dress moderated, a beautiful costume remains. A stand-up frill of lace is pretty and very becoming if it will keep in its place. High sleeves are *piquantes*, and recall a pretty shrug, when they do not obliterate anatomy. There is nothing radically wrong in a stomacher, nor in a wide shoe, within limits. This shoe, in a moderate form, would prevent the malady which the same shoe, exaggerated, seems to accommodate, and a somewhat short dress has its advantages, if allowed

to fall in its own folds, and not in stiff artificial pleats like a vallance.

Fig. 3.—1750.

Fig. 4.—1860.

The crinoline of fifteen years ago had some disadvantages less than the farthingale. The upper outline was

not angular, and the skirts were made sufficiently full to form their own folds. The waist, pinched and ugly enough, was nearer to its original place over the hips, and the shoulders were not deformed by padding. One only looked as though one stood in an inverted basin with its bottom out, instead of in a drum. At the same time, the Elizabethan dress was so rich in detail, that the whole figure presented an appearance of extreme magnificence —a woman was scarcely a woman, but a prop to support a heap of exquisite needlework and jewellery and lace, and looked like a sort of prickly pear. But in crinoline time, nought of all this atoned for the badness of form. The colours and materials were of the poorest and showiest. The trimmings were unmeaning and debased —a woman succeeded in spoiling her appearance without producing any adequate corresponding effect.

Hogarth shows us the not over decent hoop worn in his day (fig. 3).

The finest costume ever worn was the Greek and Roman, for it combined the three great requirements of dress—

1. To protect.
2. To conceal.
3. To display.

It consisted of three chief portions, the *tunica interior*, the *stola*, and the *palla*. The first named was a simple

shift, which, in earlier times at least, was sleeveless, over it was drawn the *stola*, a tunic with sleeves, which, as a rule, covered the upper part of the arm only, and which were clasped, not sewn, together. This upper tunic was extremely long, and was caught up by a hip-girdle, forming broad folds and gathers about the waist; and bands were worn beneath to support, but never to distort, the figure. Sometimes a second girdle encompassed the waist. The *palla*, or mantle, was worn out of doors only, and endless were the graceful and becoming ways of arranging it, partly over the head and draped about the figure.

The numberless folds at once revealed and concealed the figure, protected from heat and cold, and admitted of almost every variety of form; the shapely limbs of Hellenic or Italian dames were thus displayed, yet shrouded; their necklaces, earrings, and other ornaments, were often magnificent; and their feet, not buried like ours in stiff cases, were visible through the elegant sandal.

How gracefully the dress followed the movements of the body, may be perceived better from the small coloured clay figures in the British Museum [Greek Room], than even from marble statues, for they represent the ordinary domestic manners and are not carefully-posed and idealised goddesses. I have roughly sketched a few, which we may suppose to be the simple people

as they went about Greek streets, hiding their hands from the sun in the folds of their mantles, defending their heads against sharp winds and showers.

No. 5—might be a handmaiden with a kerchief around her curls, chatting by the wayside on a spring morning; 6—may be a lady strolling in the June sunshine, her throat and hands well defended; 7—perhaps a serving lass, busy and unconscious amid her market avocations,

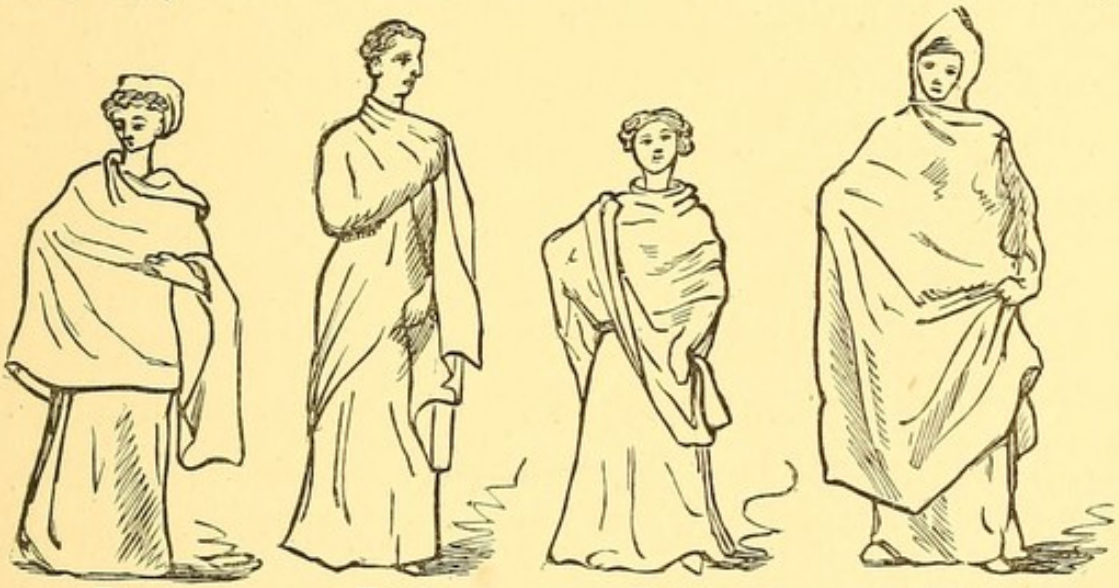


FIG. 5. FIG. 6. FIG. 7. FIG. 8.

with uncovered hair, as in Germany and Italy they go barehead still, in summer; 8—looks like some wise and comely matron intent on some good errand, as she hastens through the bleak winds and miry grounds of wintry weather.

The absurd parody of the dress, adopted by the last century enthusiasts, whom I have elsewhere christened the 'Imitation Greeks,' was bad, because it missed the

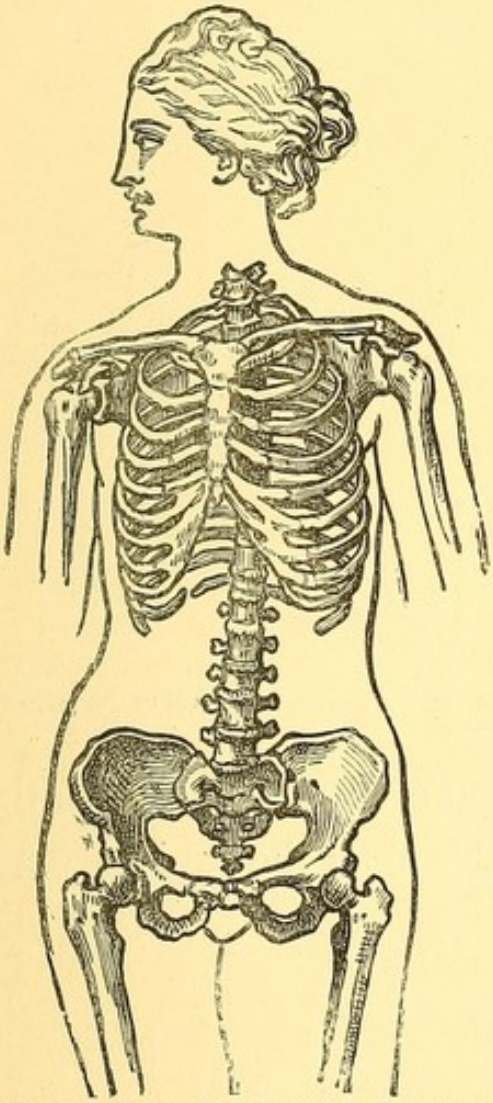
spirit of the old costume. It concealed and shrouded nothing, it was indelicate without being picturesque, the absence of folds rendered it poor and weak in effect, and the practice of forcing the high waist into a small compass impossible, through the anatomy of the ribs, rendered it as dangerous as it was ugly, owing to various diseases brought on by exposure and pressure. As for the feet, the thin pumps with ribbons were a mere caricature of the pretty and sensible sandal; and those unblest with perfect feet and figures must have had a very sad time of it.

What Stays Cost Us.

The mischievous person who first brought in stays (some suppose her to have been Mademoiselle Pantine, a mistress of Marshal Saxe, others say, an early Norman lady—and, no doubt, from very early times stiff stays have been worn) is to blame for the first and greatest defect of modern appearance—the grotesque outline of the body—and many a dire disease.

We are not denying the necessity for some close fitting garment as a support to the body, and an improvement to the figure; people who refuse to wear any corset at all look very slovenly; but we must protest against a machine that, pretending to be a servant

is, in fact, a tyrant—that, aspiring to embrace, hugs like a bear—crushing in the ribs, injuring the lungs and heart, the stomach, and many other internal organs. The Eastern lady who, pitied for her dull harem life, said she



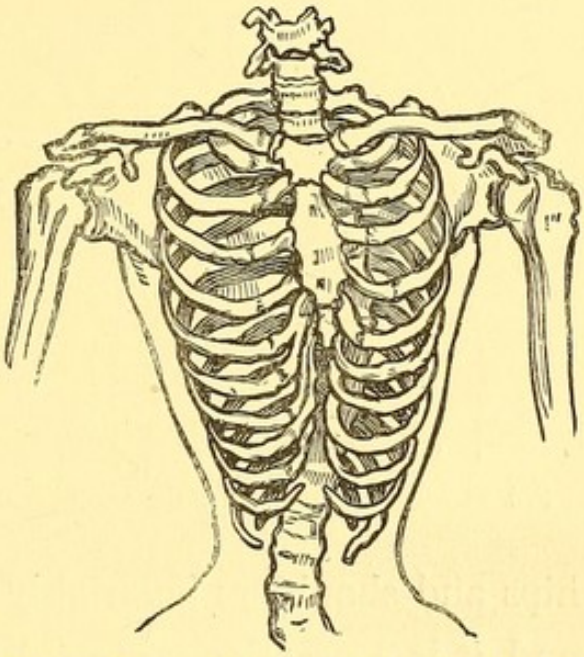


FIG. 10.—Fashionable form of the ribs and spine.

FIG. 9.—Natural form of the ribs and spine.

more pitied English wives, whose husbands (as she innocently thought) 'locked them up in a box,' was not far wrong. And all to what end? The end of looking like a wasp, and losing the whole charm of graceful

human movement and easy carriage—the end of communicating an over-all-ish sense of deformity!

Nothing is so ugly as a pinched waist; it puts the

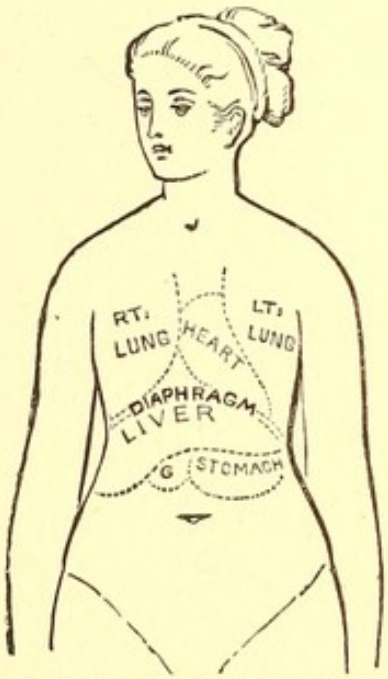


FIG. 11.—Natural position of the organs.

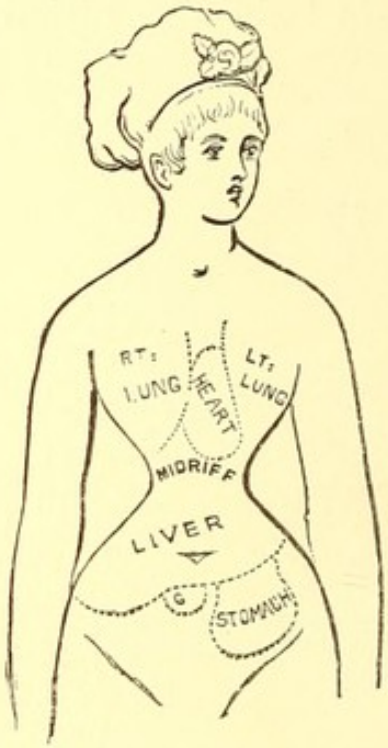


FIG. 12.—Deformed position of the organs.

hips and shoulders invariably out of proportion in width, and it is a practice more culpable than the Chinese one

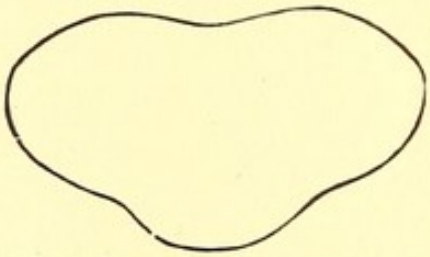


FIG. 13.—Natural form of the waist.

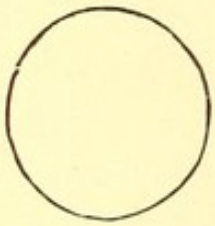


FIG. 14.—Artificial form of the waist.

of deforming the foot—in this case, no vital organ is interfered with, whilst in deforming the waist, almost all

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the vital organs are affected by the pressure, and the ribs pushed out of their proper place.

I have here sketched the natural positions of the organs, and the unnatural.

To those who know anything of anatomy, the impossibility of the organs retaining their natural place, and performing effectually their natural function, when the ribs are pressed in upon them, will at once be clear. All space in the body is utilised, and required by health; and though whilst the pressure affects the flesh and fat only, no harm results, directly the bones are touched the vital organs suffer. One can easily discover whether one's compression moves the bones, by measuring the width across the ribs with and without the stays.

And the face betrays the condition of the inside. Who can forgive the unhealthy cheek and red nose induced by such a practice? Who can forget the disease which has come or is coming? What sensible man or woman can pity the fool who faints, perhaps in the midst of a dance or conversation, from the unbearable pressure on the heart, caused by stays and girdle—or, if they pity, do not also blush for her?

The Roman dame was wiser in her generation; the bands she employed prevented a slovenly appearance, and afforded support without impairing health or the supple beauty of the body.

CHAPTER V.

Some Old Dresses.

THERE have been many exquisite costumes in England that we might imitate, if we cannot invent better ones. It is curious in studying the progression of fashion from the earliest times, to notice how, again and again, common sense combined with poetic feeling has brought in something good, how that good thing has had a little run, and begotten other things good or bad by the way, and, finally, has grown corrupt and bad in its old age, and then been destroyed by a new *régime*.

The Druids in their 'proud white garments,' as the ancient Welsh bard, Taliesin, calls them, represent the earliest form of graceful attire. After Eve's attire, invariably follows, in all nations, the long flowing robes, which attained perfection in what we call the Roman or Greek dress, by which we mean not this or that fashion of arranging certain portions of clothing, but the general

principle of gown and mantle, comfortable, graceful in itself, and suitable to any figure.

The Anglo-Saxons wore loose and graceful dresses, but the toga or pallium was discarded for a sleeved gown or mantle—whose sleeves were so very long that they completely hid the hands in many cases—very useful in sun-burning weather—very pretty when pushed up during indoor vocations. Women's desire to display the waist and arms, and men's need of close-fitting dresses in war, have, in almost all ages, given us tight robes contemporary with flowing ones, for certain occasions; but the flowing robes lingered long in England among the upper classes, and especially among those whose costume denoted official rank. Royal persons, lawyers, the clergy, doctors, and hosts of others, continued to wear long and loose attire, while the middle classes whose dress denoted no position, were always undergoing Protean changes—a curious instance of official conservatism. The mantle and head-rail lingered among women even when the loose tunic had long been exchanged for a garb full of seams to fit the form. The veil of modest wifehood, and the mantle which wrapped the 'bread-giver'[1] as she moved about her farm—that actually, perhaps, held the bread she gave—grew in

[1] Lady is derived from *hlafdig*—breadgiver; lord, from *hlaford*—bread-winner.

time to be the badge of nobility, and the sign of wealth.

The dress of women in the eleventh century was very graceful and appropriate. Our cut, fig. 15, representing a countess of Anjou, who died at the beginning of

FIG. 15.—Eleventh century (early).

FIG. 16.—Eleventh century (late).

that century, shows the head-rail in the form of hood and wimple, rather than veil, and with its pads or knots at the side, very similar to what the middle classes wore three centuries later. Around the face, a border of that embroidery for which the Anglo-Saxons were renowned,

is suggested—a form of decoration which had become universal. The traditional garb of the saints and angels shining in our stained windows, is the fashionable daily dress of the eleventh century.

In the following reign, the people, set free from the stern rule of the first William, became most extravagant and fantastic in clothing. The loose sleeve of the outer gown had gradually been elongating itself into a pendant (figs. 16 and 18). Now this pendant outran all bounds, and the 'foul waste of cloth and excessive' had to be knotted up in bags big enough to hold a considerable amount of portable property, the headrail had much diminished, and the hair, which we see prettily cut across the forehead in fig. 15, was worn loose, sometimes bare, and carried into a long silken case, like a pump handle. In this reign were introduced the grotesque ram's-horn shoes, which had a second run in Richard II's. time.

Up to this time, women's attire consisted of three chief portions: a close inner robe, an outer and wider robe, and the mantle. What they did for those portions which require frequent washing, it is difficult to understand. Linen was held almost as luxurious as silk—cotton was introduced into France only in the twelfth century. Satin and velvet existed under the names of samite and downy cloth (*pannus villosus*). There were numerous woollen materials—some woollen web, probably,

was the substitute for our use of linen and cotton in undergarments; of course, like the linen, woven at home.

The useful and pretty (for it admitted of pleasant contrasts of colour) fashion of a semi-loose outdoor or winter garment over a close-fitting under-dress, lasted

FIG. 17.—Tenth century. FIG. 18.—Twelfth century. FIG. 19.—Fourteenth century.

Origin, decline, and final form of the elongated outer sleeve.

long, with many variations in detail, too numerous to describe. The equally useful and not ungainly sideless gown, also for winter or sharp spring weather, did not survive so many centuries—indeed, only about one—it protected the chest and back from wind, the skirts from

mud. I have sketched the origin and end of each—the wise beginning as the peasant's tabard, the corrupt and ornate end, a mere vaunt of wealth and rank (p. 58).

Yet there has never been a more elegant dress of its kind, than that worn in Edward III.'s reign (fig. 19), a plain gown, fitting the figure, cut in one almost from the low throat to the end of the skirt. Unmeaning as it was, the long narrow 'tippet' from the shoulder was pretty. It gave an undulating unity to bodice and skirt, otherwise too bare and hard in outline. It was more stately than the intermediate variety, and not more useless.

FIG. 20.—Sideless gown in its prime.

The sideless gown, too, has its merits. It admitted of the richest decoration; and though in its last stage I do not imagine it could have been very warm, though faced with ermine—and, *perhaps*, did not admit of the hands being pushed inside—it is stately, and often picturesque. It certainly displayed the figure, and was in no wise inconvenient. The head-dress gave the outline

of the nape of the neck, too long hidden under the coverchief, and the pendent veil of gauze united the upper and lower portions of the figure, as the tippet did in the other sketch.

FIG. 21.—Sideless gown in its decadence.

For my own part, however, I prefer the plainer dress for general use; it is taken from a statuette on Edward III.'s tomb in Westminster Abbey, and represents one of the princesses. At the period of which I speak

(fourteenth century) rich belts were worn; but so desirous were the ladies of preserving the unbroken outline of the whole figure, that the belt was never placed around the waist, but always somewhat below, about the hips. This was far more pretty and picturesque than a pinched waist, with the sudden and unnatural breadth at the hips of innumerable plaits and gathers.

This graceful dress saw the birth and death of many enormities in the way of head-gear and foot-gear, and survived the great period of horns, borrowed from the East and exaggerated, and of long pointed shoes, which at last dragged their slow length up to the garter. It survived the fashions of embroidering huge devices, armorial bearings, flowers, scenes, mottoes, &c., all over the dress. A slender shape was too dear to sacrifice henceforth; at length corruption came in the form of an unnaturally tight girdle around the *waist*, with a skirt absurdly long all round, as seen in Van Eyck's pictures: and then it gave way to the hideous but convenient farthingale, which while courts are immoral always *will* come in again and again for the same reasons.

The first form of farthingale was that of an extinguisher, in which we see the daughters and wives of Henry VIII. arrayed. It was stiff, formal, uncomfortable, no doubt, and the compressed ribs and long waist are as ugly as they were unhealthy. It is interesting to

note how when this fashion had come in at court, the country ladies whom it had not yet reached, were still

FIG. 22.—Court lady, early sixteenth century.

FIG. 23.—Country lady, early sixteenth century.

wearing the clinging robe of the preceding reign, and a form of the heavy head-dress, still lingering in Holbein's portraits (fig. 23).

The final and corrupt form of the farthingale, is sketched, p. 42, 'Good and Bad Costumes,' and was unnatural and hideous enough, growing more and more monstrous, like a mighty bubble, till it disappeared.

FIG. 24.—Duchess of Richmond (Lely).

About 1615, it went out for a time, and was gradually replaced by the picturesque and graceful negligence which characterised the court of Charles II. and which Lely has immortalised.

The Puritan rigidity of taste and hatred of frivolity, whose stiff and formal costume we see preserved in the liveries of many charity schools in our own day, had, doubtless, a powerful influence upon the dress of the period, though throughout the troubles of the Protec-

FIG. 25.—Puritan lady.

FIG. 26.—Royalist lady.

torate there were many who adhered, in spite of everything, to the old fashions of long hair and laced collars, and were ever ready to exclaim with Sir Toby Belch, 'What, dost thou think because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?' Exclusive of the Puritan costume pure and simple, Puritan feeling

was probably instrumental in exterminating the great wheel farthingale and stiff coloured ruff still worn during Charles I.'s reign, and traces of Puritanism may be seen even in the loose and voluminous dresses of 1660 (fig. 26).

In William III.'s reign the costumes were declining, and they had run to the opposite extreme of starch and buckram; more than once, as women will be women, they from time to time burst into abnormal and uncomfortable extravagances—such as parodies of male attire, shooting crests, and unearthly wigs; and though hoops had time to appear again (1746) in a huger and more ridiculous shape than ever the old farthingale had assumed (being, in addition to their enormous width, often of eight yards, caught up on each side, and drawn in behind and before, so as richly to merit the witty nickname of the time, *l'âne avec deux paniers*, see fig. 9, p. 80, from the similar appearance of a lady to that oppressed animal!), yet the buckram was the parent of the most beautiful (in its perfect state) costume that ever set off a beautiful woman—the dress immortalised by Watteau—sacks, trains, and powder.

I have elsewhere alluded to the many admirable qualities of this costume. In its corrupt stage it became ugly, indecent, and uncleanly; and people wasted so much time over the toilette that a complete reaction

was inevitable. This came amid the horrors of that memorable period of revolt against the corrupt luxury of France, when the fevered mind had begun to turn back with an almost delirious longing to far-off days of simplicity and truth: days whose spirit could not be then resuscitated, but which fashion parodied whilst it strove to blind its eyes to the present.

A national movement so violent could not in any age have past without some reflection of its tendency in the national dress and style of living. David, the artist-politician, headed the mad chase after simplicity amidst the turmoil of massacre. He was the devoted friend and panegyrist of Marat and Robespierre, yet he was an honest and disinterested man, and a man of considerable ability in more ways than one. He painted his great cold statuesque groups as the images of an ideal period. To be ancient Greeks once more—that was the ambition of his followers. 'I wish,' said he, 'that my works may have so completely an antique character that if it were possible for an Athenian to return to life, they might appear to him to be the productions of a Greek painter.' David was able to make his personality felt. The redundant forms of furniture and cushioned couches were changed into the straightbacked, comfortless, almost seatless chairs, still approved by our grandmothers. Men and women vainly emulated the Greek, and tore

him to tatters in the effort. Down came the mountains of false hair, away went hoop and sack, colour and fold, light and shade. The eccentricities were carried to such lengths, that at balls the *merveilleuses* of Paris appeared in flesh-coloured drawers, with imitations of the Greek stola above, and sandals, attached by ribbons to the naked feet, while their tresses were confined by fillets *à l'antique.* The men also began the tight elastic drawers to the ankle (many are the funny stories of accidents at parties, when dancing burst the strap beneath the foot, and the garments flew up to the thigh), square-tailed coats with high collars, 'their hair plaited on the forehead and flowing down behind, or turned up and fixed with a comb.'

The full buffont, whose chief aim seems to have been to make a woman look like a pouter pigeon, appeared in 1788, and the rest of the dress was as bare of trimming and of beauty as could be wished by the strictest.

All the new fashions that were introduced at that time seemed to result in ugliness, in spite of the idealisation of such painters as Gainsborough, Reynolds, and Lawrence. To the influence of the Revolution we owe the prevalence of the chimney-pot hat, whose discomfort and ugliness have earned for it among the witty Germans the slang name of 'anguish pipe' (*Angst-röhre*) as well as the bird-like dress-coat, both of which are confessed by all

members of the 'strong' sex who have ever tried any other costume, to be the most disagreeable and uncomfortable of all known inventions in clothing, but which they have been weak enough to endure for just a hundred years.

FIG. 28.—1830. FIG. 29.—1790.

When the classic follies subsided, the waists grew longer again, and the result arrived at is sketched above. The habitual bare shoulders and arms, with 'gigot' sleeves, long tight waist, short scanty skirts, flat shoes, with ribbons, still retaining the name of 'sandals,' and mighty bonnets, may be seen in the woodcuts of any old magazine or other work of the beginning of our century.

Dresses of Our Day.

Bodices.—In speaking of dress it is impossible to go too much into details. I will begin with the gown, viewed in its several parts.

As to the *cut* of the bodice, there are many forms, good and bad. The worst is, perhaps, the ordinary tight bodice, which we may christen the Pincushion style, from its hardness and stuffiness, and which follows the form of the stays, and never that of the body. But you may say, 'Why is this "neat" bodice ugly? It is a pity to conceal a pretty figure for ever in loose folds. Why may we never see a clear outline?'

Certainly, if we did but see the outline of the body, and not the French milliner's idea of what the body should be! Nothing can be more beautiful than a close-fitting garment, such as that worn in the time of the Plantagenets, before the modern stays had come into being. But a box that stiffens the whole figure unnaturally, draws the waist into the shape of a V, when the female figure is much more like an H, is a detestable invention, and, indeed, only a kind of coffin; while, as for the bodice fitting it, any garment containing so many unnecessary seams and wrong lines must always be an unpicturesque one. The sketches, given on p. 68, of the ordinary tight bodice, I submit to my readers, that they

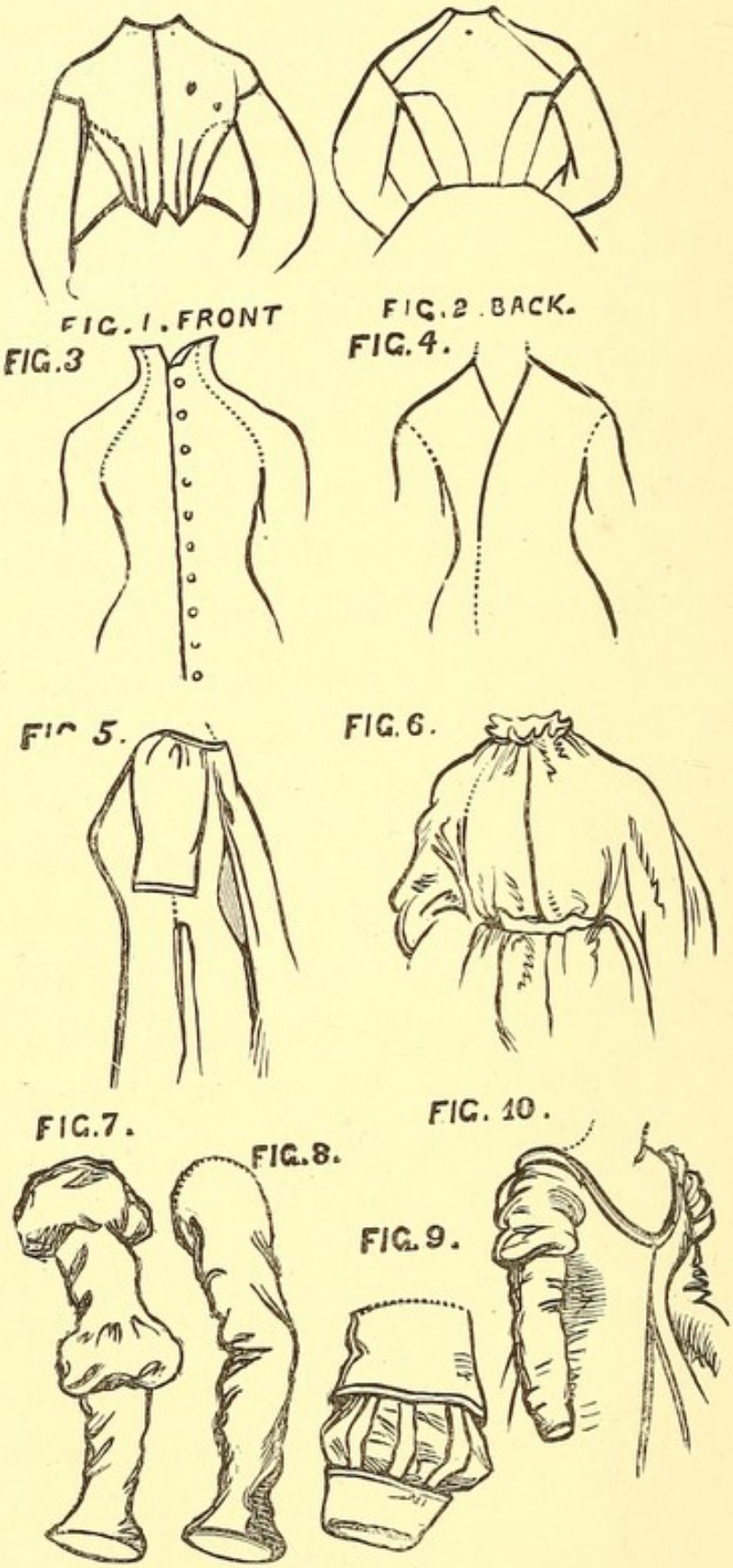


FIG. 1. FRONT
FIG. 2. BACK.
FIG. 3
FIG. 4.
FIG. 5.
FIG. 6.
FIG. 7.
FIG. 8.
FIG. 9.
FIG. 10.

FIG. 29.

may decide this question for themselves. (See figs. 1 and 2.)

As for the skirt (which ought to be, if it is not, a portion and a continuation of the bodice), it must partake of the character of the bodice—that is to say, if the bodice be cut tightly and formally to the figure, the skirt should be so. For instance, none but the plain gored skirt, without a single plait, can properly go with a tight bodice. But if the bodice be full at the waist the skirt must contain plaits—for this form must signify a full and folded garment closed to the waist by a girdle. Nothing can be in worse (artistic) taste than to wear a loose bodice, such as a Garibaldi, with a tight gored skirt, which we have seen done, or a gathered skirt with a close bodice—no dress could be naturally cut in either way. It at once betrays that the skirt and bodice do not belong to each other, and are not cut together; or as the artists say, 'not all painted with the same palette.'

As a glove that ends exactly at the wrist-bone, or a boot at the ankle, with a straight line, is always ugly, so are the necks of dresses when cut in a circle close up to the throat. They have an incomplete look invariably, and seem to require some sort of ornament like the collar we have sketched in fig. 3 (fourteenth century); this is not a natural form, and, besides, it gives the head a decapitated look. The corners (see fig. 1) taken

off (fig. 4) at once give us a natural form. The V may fairly be carried down to the waist—but in this case let me beg my fair countrywomen to wear a chemise. The fashion in vogue a few seasons ago of wearing the chest bare to the waist while the dress was high behind and on the shoulders, was inexpressibly odious. We have seen these V-shaped bodices at evening parties, where the V was only stopped by the girdle! As to the picturesqueness of the dress, it was lost by the hard edge of the V upon the chest. A dress ought never to end upon the skin—there should always be a tucker, firstly for cleanliness, and, secondly, for softening the line of contrast.

Seams ought never to have been introduced into the backs of close bodices. Surely the human back would be easy enough to fit without these lines, sometimes contradicting so flatly the natural ones of the figure. What can be more ugly than the forms of the spaces sketched in figs. 1 and 2? What can be a more needless break in the line of the arm and shoulder than the seam that chops off the arm just beneath the joint, or the square seam that crosses the bladebone? There is another seam which is just as ugly and just as needless, which goes straight from the arm-pit to the waist. If a tight bodice demands a seam down the back it cannot need the side seams nor the seam under the arm. If the

seam under the arm is conceded no other is required at the back. In the case of fig. 4, which is a form of the crossing bodice, however, the arm-hole is properly placed

FIG. 30.—From a drawing by Holbein.

just at the joint. But in figs. 3 and 6, there should be no such seam; the sleeve ought to be cut from the throat. The old sacque, of the seventeenth century (fig. 5), was a very perfect pattern, as far as patterns go. The sleeve,

whether tight or full, was put into the neck. The seam under the arm united with the pocket-hole, at the lower end of which an extra breadth was gathered in, necessary to admit of the sweep of the train; the seam of the back was concealed by the long folds of the sacque, while giving the graceful line of the natural waist and hip; and the line of the side of the neck, which was usually square, swept straight down to the ground, revealing the under vest, or jacket and petticoat (both perfectly legitimate forms and distinct from each other). When a change of fashion brought the dress together on the bosom, with no under-jacket, the neck was cut as in fig. 10, a very natural and honest form. There is a portrait of Madame de Pompadour, by Ch. Coypel, in a dress of this pattern. Another sensible and honest form of bodice we give on the previous page from one of Hans Holbein's drawings.

In all cases the seams of garments should follow and recognise the natural lines of the body. A sleeve-seam reaching the throat, or one surmounting the shoulder-joint, is a more natural and proper form than one cutting across the arm, and should be used in all close bodices, where the eye is meant to take in a smooth outline without a break. In bodices less simple in construction, and where the sleeve rises into puffs or other capricious forms, the seam may be at the joint, or, in fact, anywhere where it is least obtrusive.

Sleeves.—Let me instance a few natural forms and honest effects in sleeves.

In sleeves there have been so many forms that are good, it sometimes seems impossible to believe that they have all died out. In the dressmakers' book of 'Modes,' it is wearisome to see the very small number of forms—and those chiefly bad—on which the milliners ring the changes year after year.

The plain coat-sleeve, so fashionable some years ago, was inoffensive, but a straight sleeve tight to the arm is a better form, for the bulge at the elbow was unnatural. And in the tight sleeve there is generally the fault that seems inseparable from the necks of high dresses—the sudden stoppage—just at the wrist-joint. This is sometimes remedied by a frill spreading downwards (which recalls the fig. 8 sleeve), or spreading upwards (which suggests a sleeve turned up with a cuff), both proper and beautiful forms—only the reality is better than a suggestion.

Now a sleeve such as fig. 8 is a much more graceful and artistic form than fig. 10, and this is what I alluded to in speaking of gloves and boots, a page or so back. The one suggests a termination, a sudden cutting off, a separation ; the other is a higher conception—the artist's mind has gone a little beyond the need—the line swerves out as a flower spreads, with a little thought to spare,

and holds the hand like a flower's cup. It gives the impression of greater handicraft and swifter thought, and it is by far the most natural, as the curve that sweeps out from the wrist recalls Nature's own curve in the hand beneath. It has also other merits. It is useful; shading the delicate whiteness of the hand from the sun in summer, and in winter giving a comfortable warmth to the wrist. These may have been considerations which gave the sleeve its popularity at a time when in summer women lived much more in the open air than now they do, and in winter were less protected from the cold, owing to the absence of doors. The flap that covers the hand is not nearly as inconvenient as might be supposed, from the facility with which it can be turned up.

Some such close sleeve, surmounted by another, broader, and reaching only to the elbow, is often very picturesque, and is an honest form, recalling a short-sleeved tunic over a close under-garment.

The ordinary white sleeve of a bishop is a very fine and eminently natural pattern. A straight piece of muslin of the required width, simply tied in at the wrist with a ribbon, at once makes the bishop's sleeve. It is the frill at the wrist which constitutes its chief beauty, and which is a primitive form.

A very beautiful sleeve, perfectly good in construction, was worn in the time of the Stuarts, with different

modifications. It is sketched in fig. 8. The upper part was probably derived from that identical broad short sleeve so long in vogue, which we have spoken of above. The sleeve worn beneath it constantly varied, and probably often bore a cuff as deep as that which constitutes the lower half in fig. 8. This cuff it would be perfectly legitimate to tie up with ribbons to the upper sleeve, in order to display a pretty wrist, thus forming, not, indeed, the primitive sleeve, but a most beautiful form that had grown out of the primitive sleeve, admitting of almost any amount of decoration.

The antique sleeve sketched in fig. 9, is another instance of natural form. The puffs, whether sewn on, or breaking through slits in the form of slashes, are in the natural place—at the joints where roominess is so essential to comfort. Some persons may be reminded by it of gouty joints it is true; but, nevertheless, there is scarcely any sleeve that has been so frequently immortalised by painters as a beautiful one. A full sleeve bound close to the arm between the joints gives the same form.

Slashes are at all times, when neatly arranged, a most beautiful kind of decoration, and in the olden time, when they were most fashionable, they were always placed with a careful regard to the action of the muscles. Thus slashes were placed upon the shoulder

and elbow joints, the breast, the edges of a flattened cap, the knees, the front of shoes, &c.; in almost all cases the slits were cut just as any abandoned devoted of comfort would naturally cut them who was inconvenienced by tight clothes. Moreover, the slit afforded a good opportunity for the most brilliant or delicate combination of colour, dull green breaking through crimson, white through black, deep blue parting to reveal a glimpse of amber; again, a natural form, an under garment (whether sock or shirt), visible beneath an outer one.

There is a period of decadence, nevertheless, to every fashion, however good, and the decadence of slashes was when the entire dress was covered with tiny slits in lines or diamond patterns, when they only lent a ragged appearance to the dress. But it is our part here to remember only the noble forms, and to forget their decay and corruption. Yet what an idealisation of rags! what splendid tatterdemalions were those slashed chevaliers and goodly dames! Even at that extravagant pitch, one can imagine that there was a certain shimmering beauty of effect in a close doublet, peppered with slashes of some good contrasting colour, the movements of the body alternately revealing and concealing the minute slits. We have no effects as ingenious now-a-days. The careful, conscientious skill of workmanship

put into a garment then, quite apart from the thoughtful designs, would bring a modern tailor to great honour, or beggary, in a very short time.

Many of the variations of hanging sleeves, at times carried to such fantastic extremes in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, were, nevertheless, very beautiful. The strange fashion of wearing one sleeve small whilst the other trailed on the ground was not more ridiculous than fifty things we have admired within the last half century. The difference between the two sleeves was originally a picturesque idea, and one which artists such as Sir Joshua Reynolds and Sir Thomas Lawrence, have hinted at from time to time. In many of these pictures one may find a noticeable difference in one sleeve from the other (only, however, in women's portraits). And when the long sleeve outgrew due proportion to so great a degree that it had to be held up by an attendant, and was so costly as to draw on it satirical complaints such as the pun—

> Because pride hath sleeves, the land is without alms (arms),

it, in reality, ceased to be any longer a mere sleeve, and became such an ornament as a scarf or mantle, being thrown over the shoulder in the same way (and very gracefully), while the popular practice of utilising space did not fail to pack it with pockets.

Perhaps the two most objectionable (though for different reasons) forms of sleeve ever seen were the huge flaps worn in the time of Henry VII.—sleeves that did not belong to the dress, but were put on and taken off at pleasure like the Columbine's wings,—and the tight case to the elbow worn by the Imitation Greeks, which recalled nothing but the tucked-up gown of the kitchen maid. Yet in point of dishonesty neither was worse than the 'Dolly Varden' sleeve recently (1872) worn—a *coat-sleeve* (!) with a meaningless frill sewn at the elbow; or a muslin sleeve with lumps of satin tacked on outside half-way down, a vague degradation of slashes; or a sleeve that looks as though it opened in front and were laced up, when the 'opening' is only suggested by a strip of trimming, and the 'lacing' is sewn on. Not worse, nor as bad—for the false sleeves hooked on outside deceived no one, and were indeed only a kind of mantle in halves; while the close case was rather an absence of sleeve, and pretended to be, as it was, nothing. Both were bad, but not dishonest.

Skirts.—It must be apparent to everyone that a long skirt has advantages over a short one in point of grace, dignity, and improvement to the figure, while the short skirt has the advantage in point of convenience. A skirt may, however, be too long for grace, like the voluminous petticoat that Van Eyck painted; and it may be

also so brief as to be no longer convenient, like the ungainly dress of the ballet-dancer. And here by force of contrast we may perceive how the long folds of a train increase height, and soften the movements of the figure, by noticing the generally short, tubby appearance of even the most delicate figure in the shameful ballet-dress, and the 'chopping' run of even the most finished dancer the moment she comes down on both feet. Certain peculiarities of the form which cannot be in the least exaggerated without corresponding loss in grace, are in this curious costume exaggerated to the extent of deformity, and everyone knows how the dress decreases stature. This is the more to be deplored as the ballet *might* be made one of the most graceful and poetic exhibitions of female beauty and artistic fancy. The harlequin, on the other hand, in spite of his colours, is seldom in his wildest antics ungraceful, because there is nothing in his dress that tends to vulgarise or debase the perfect proportions of a well-trained body.

FIG. 31.—Grace and Disgrace.

The ornaments of a skirt must always be considered with reference to the position they are to occupy; these are, however, too numerous to permit of more than a slight mention here. Fringes and all such edgings,

should be placed only upon edges, and never introduced in the centre of a breadth, or used as braids, bands, and insertions. Frills, therefore, should never be used to in-

1. The Wine-glass or Pincushion style.
2. The Open-hearted style.
3. The Sans façon style.
4. The Cross-over style.
5. The Dresden Shepherdess style.
6. The Mediæval.
7. The Watteau.
8. The Rag-bag.
9. The Donkey with Panniers.
10. The Imitation Greek.
11. The Real Greek.

FIG. 32.

dicate a pretended second skirt when they do not really

belong to one. Bows are inappropriate except where the dress is really caught up and tied.

The most villainous trimming we ever saw upon a skirt was one which is indicated in fig. 1. Velvet bands running around in four slight curves, exactly to give the appearance of a cubic rather than a circular form to the person. Now unless a dress be worn over a crinoline of a square form, no folds could possibly hang squarely; but the last excess of weary fancy was probably reached in this trimming.

I must leave it to the intelligent student of the proprieties and consistencies of dress to observe and decide between the merits and demerits of the thousand and one other forms of sleeve and bodice that space forbids us to enlarge upon here. When one has once begun to apply to costume the principles whose presence or absence is instantly detected in any other department of art, it is easy to see where there is a falling short or a contradiction, or a manifest impossibility.

We must now go on to some other parts of apparel not less important, though perhaps less conspicuous. Meanwhile, here are a few distinguishing marks of dresses worn now or very recently, exhibiting some of the best and worst qualities that can belong to a costume.

Low Dresses.

It is a mystery how any fashion so hideous or so unmeaning as the modern low dress ever came in. It infallibly diminishes the height. There was nothing approaching it in bareness of design, in poverty of invention, or opportunities for indecency, in the days of the finest costumes—I had almost said in *any* previous age. There have been many corrupt fashions, but they have been almost always picturesque ones.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the women were sufficiently *décolletée* for such a book to be published as 'A Just and Seasonable Reprehension of Naked Breasts and Shoulders,' with a preface by Richard Baxter: and they were as bad in the eighteenth century; but then if the dress was not high behind, the arms were covered to the elbow—the whole effect was not so scanty and fleshy as the modern low neck and back, and shoulder-straps.

This last fashion must have been introduced gradually. Some leader of fashion who had beautiful shoulders thought it a pity they should bloom unseen, and may have pushed down the high dress accordingly. Well, if you are not shy about exposing your neck, a dress pushed open loosely is not ugly, far from it. There would be folds naturally falling in a pretty form, nearly

horizontally. Probably at first the actual shoulder-joint was hidden, then, as the rage for self-display increased, and as the ladies emulated each other in it, the dress got to be entirely off the shoulder—and possibly the false horizontal plaits round the shoulders of our mothers in their girlish days were the remnants, or an imitation, of the natural folds. Then the enterprising dressmaker soon yearned for a change of ornament, and the loose '*Berthe*' gradually hardened into the plain, tight, low bodice, with a still harder and more unmeaning tucker sewn in (once the close chemise), run through with a black string, from which we so long have suffered. The sleeves shrunk shorter and shorter, from the elbow rich with ruffles, to the round 'bell-sleeve,' then to degenerate variations of it, till it narrowed into a finger-wide foundation for bows and laces, and became, finally, the detestable 'strap.'

Again, observe the unmeaningness of the low neck fashion. Our mothers wore low dresses and bare arms all day long; they knew if their shoulders and arms were beautiful they would look as well by daylight as by candlelight; if, in their daily occupations, the English climate would not temper its winds to the shorn lambs or limbs of fashion, they tucked in a kerchief, or fastened on long sleeves in the morning. Why, the servant-maids wore low dresses too, at that time. There was

some sense *then* in throwing off the kerchief in the evening, when there was nothing harder to be done than chatting in a warm drawing-room, and exposing so much of the body as it was fashionable to display. It was not unmeaning then. In those days people were only just recovering from the classic mania, and were worshipping mock simplicity.

But now, when the low neck is used for nothing but display, it were well to ask what one has to display, and whether the effect is pleasing, before blindly accepting a bad fashion.

Consideration for others is really necessary in those who wish to be 'a joy for ever.'

You *must* choose suitable shapes and suitable colours for your dresses, you *must* study the room that you are to appear in, if you ever mean to look right; and if you know not what kind of room you are about to be seen in, or if you know that it is one of the modern white and glaring drawing-rooms, a plain black dress (but *never* with low neck and short sleeves) will always be safe.

The reason that an ordinary low neck with short sleeves looks worse in black than in any other colour is because the hard line round the bust and arms is too great a contrast to the skin. A low neck always lessens the height, and a dark dress made thus, lessens it still

more, and it strikes the artistic eye as cutting the body in pieces, in this way :—If you see a fair person dressed in a low dark dress, standing against a light background some way off, the effect will be that of an empty dress hung up, the face, neck, and arms being scarcely discernible (fig. 33). On the other hand, against a dark background, the head and bust will be thrown up sharply, and the whole dress and body will disappear

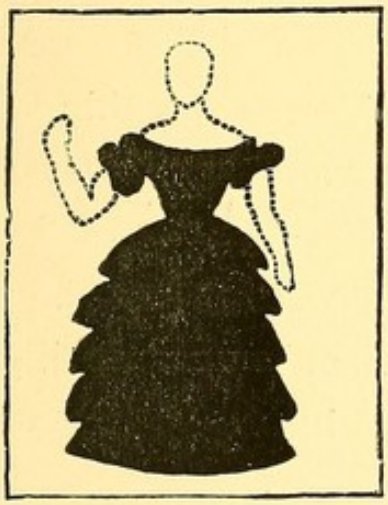


FIG. 33.

FIG. 34.

(fig. 34). This effect, common enough, is execrably bad. If you must wear a low black bodice, let it be cut square, giving the height of the shoulders (or better, with the angles *rounded*, for corners are very trying), and have plenty of white or pale gauze, or thin black net, to soften the harsh line between the skin and the dress. White gauze or lace softens down the blackness of the dress at the edge of the bodice, and thin black stuff has

an equally good effect, as it shades the whiteness of the skin into the dark colour of the gown. *Only under these conditions* does the sudden contrast enhance, as some persons suppose, the fairness of the complexion.

Nature abhors sharp edges. We see contrasts in flowers and in marbles; but they are always softened, each colour stealing a little of the other at the junction of the two. Even the sharp edges of a crag or house against the sky are seen by a practised eye to gather some softening greyness, either from the surrounding colours, or by mere perspective. Trees grow thin at the edges and melt into the sky; in a prism, of course, we see the tender amalgamations of hues more distinctly, the secondaries lying clearly between the primaries. Ruskin had noticed this surely when he said, 'All good colour is gradated,' each mixed into the next where there are contrasts.

We are at the present day adhering to a form whose motive and spirit departed seventy years ago; we have lost its few merits, and retained its doubtful delicacy, and added an ugliness of our own, which our grandmothers were quite innocent of. The crinolines superseded all our attention to posture; whilst our long trains, which can hardly look inelegant even on clumsy persons, make small ankles or thick ones a matter of little moment. We have become inexpressibly slovenly. We

no longer study how to walk, perhaps the most difficult of all actions to do gracefully. Our fashionable women stride and loll in open defiance of elegance; if they patronise crinoline, they jump coquettishly in their 'balloons,' causing these to leap up as though on springs; push by chairs, forgetful that crinolines bend up behind and reveal their uncared-for boots, not to say stockings. If they adopt a clinging garb, the same want of caution produces equally awkward results. Our women are most blind and thoughtless followers of fashions still imposed upon them, Heaven only knows wherefore and by whom

CHAPTER VI.

Our Poor Feet.

OUR feet play no insignificant part in our personal appearance and in our quarter's allowance; and everybody who leads an active life knows how all-important is perfect comfort in this particular. Yet there is no portion of our bodies so

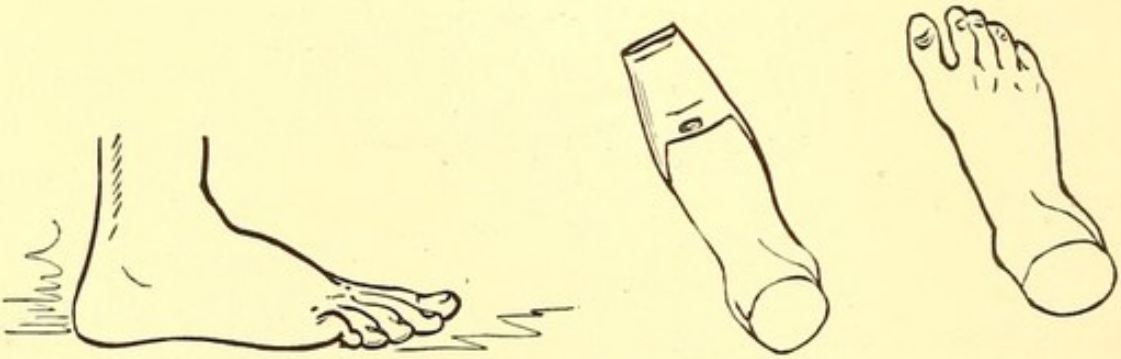


FIG. 35.—Outlines of natural and fashionable feet.

branded for our sins as our poor feet. To what extent may be seen in fig. 35. So renowned are these members for vicarious suffering, that in this one matter the populace and the better classes are at one—there is

common feeling for common suffering, and whatever the suffering be, whether the chilblains and frost-nips of cold, or the sickening discomfort of tight boots, every-

FIG. 36.—Fourteenth-century shoe.

FIG. 37.—Foot deformed by shoe.

one has had his turn, and been more or less at the mercy of the street Arab with his insolent inquiry.

What are we to do with our feet?

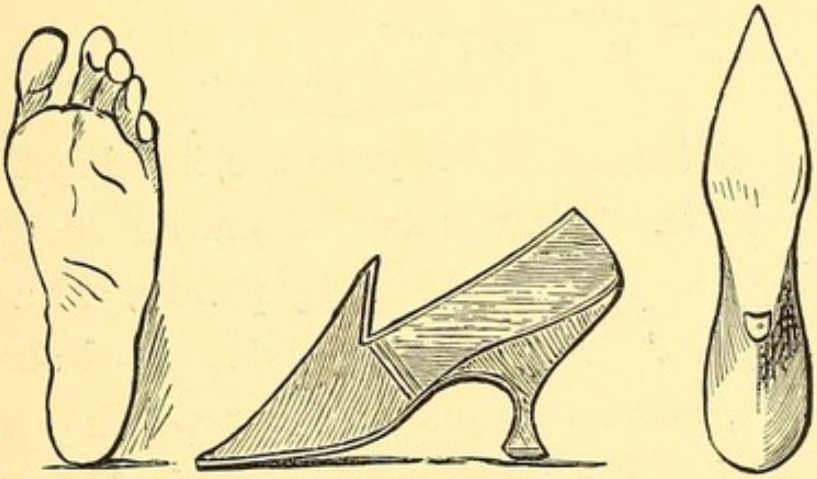


FIG. 38.—Eighteenth-century shoe *versus* normal foot.

Well, if we *must* deform and bury them, the pointed Watteau shoe, with its slender heel, is very pretty; it raises the instep and makes the foot look small. I have

sketched one (fig. 38) in my own possession, worn by my own great-grandmother. The long taper shoe worn at the end of the fifteenth century was not without merits; not the least of these was that it followed the form of the foot almost exactly; the extreme and narrow length made the foot appear slender, apparently the greatest modern desideratum, as seen—as *felt*—in our pinched toes; and the longer the toes could be made, the more aristocratic must appear the foot, so they stuffed

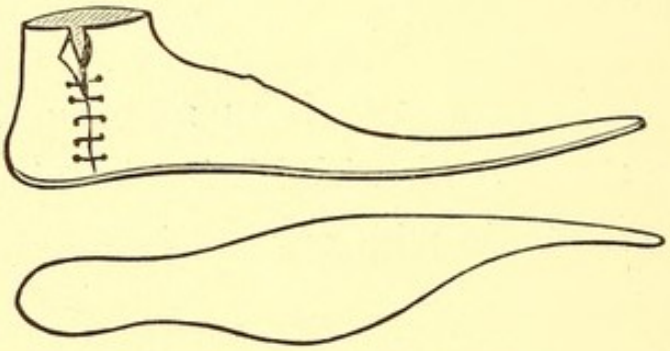


FIG. 39.—Fifteenth-century shoe.

their serpent length with hay, to the imminent peril of everybody's life. There is a well-known French proverb still vulgarly applied to a wealthy person, 'Il a du foin dans ses bottes.' The exquisitely decorated shoe of an earlier date, such as Chaucer's smart parish clerk wore, —'Paules windows corven on his shoes,'—cannot be too much admired and regretted by us who never see gold or jeweller's work on our '*bottines*.' The shoes were made 'rights and lefts,' and were worn high on the leg or low as desired. But the Watteau shoe brings corns,

and the peaked-toed shoe was horribly inconvenient; and there is something better than all these. Would that women who care for their own beauty, if not for their own comfort—would that girls before their pretty feet are irremediably spoilt, would make a new stand in the face of fashion, that bugbear of the sex, and institute a new era!

Sandals.

When we saw 'Pygmalion and Galatea' performed a few years ago, we were struck with a peculiar movement in the players' feet, which for a time, sitting afar off, we did not understand. With every step, with every turn of the ancle, a kind of delicate ripple passed over the instep, as a thrill runs through a corn-field sometimes, under a tender wind; we were surprised to see how beautiful the movements were, how graceful were the lines from the ancle in every position. Presently we discovered that the beauty and grace were due to the absence of shoes. On examination, the feet of the ladies were not particularly small: yet they were prettier than the smallest concealed in boots; there was scarcely a position in which they did not appear lovely.

The actresses were in fact thinly stockinged, with sandals beneath the feet, an embroidered strap coming between the two first toes across the instep after the old

Roman fashion. We have often thought, considering how much we lose by shoes and how very little we gain, that it is a thousand pities women do not bring in sandals—*not* the foolish ribanded pumps of the last century, but the real Greek sandal. Without the hard and deforming shoe, every muscle of the foot is in motion, and visible at every step; it is quite wonderful how pretty the feet appear even when not very small. In reality, we lose nearly as much by the shoe as the face loses by a mask; how much, we could easily see by covering the hands with patent leather or lined French kid, and then expecting them to entrance the spectator. We *never* see a woman's foot, we only see its leathern case, which is about as much a part or expressive of her foot as a violin-case is of a fine violin; and if women only knew the fascinations of a neat and delicate foot, where the outlines have not been impaired by corns, nor the bones by generations of deformity, no shoe would be worn again for ever.

But the truth is, just as the pace of an army must be regulated by the slowest man in it, so the beauties of the community must be disguised according to the plainness of the plainest member. A deformed foot is hidden by a shoe, so all the pretty feet must be hidden in shoes. An imperfect figure is disguised by a hoop or a bustle, so all the sylphs must be huddled into hoops and

bustles. And, probably, if any graceful little sylph refused to be disguised, she would be called 'vain,' 'shameless,' and other pretty names.

Every artist knows that any foot that has ever worn a shoe is deformed. The great toe is bent in towards the rest of the toes, instead of being boldly parted. The other toes are crushed and shortened. How seldom in real life does one find the second toe longer than the great one, its *natural* length! If an artist wishes to make studies of a beautiful foot, does he choose out the smallest-footed lady of his acquaintance, and copy those 'little mice' of hers? No, he ignores the whole race of French and English women. He goes off to the East, or to the fish-women on the shores of Italy, who have never worn a shoe; there he studies the free, practised muscles, the firm steps, the ineffably graceful movements. One may see in the pictures of Mr. Leighton, who has made a special study of feet, what feet ought to be.

What do we lose by the shoe? Form, firmness of tread, charm of appearance. And what have we gained by the shoe? Perhaps cleanliness, and a certain amount of protection for the foot against cold, wet, and friction: this in the case of men at least. Before shoes, people existed well enough without them, though there were still fragile ankles and tender toes. Stockings indoors, at any rate, would be as useful as shoes, if the great toe

were separated from the rest, and the foot protected by a sole of leather, wood, or any other material, which while being in itself twice as serviceable as our 'paper soles,' could be padded with silk, inlaid with ivory, or coloured in any way, at once more beautiful and more useful. The straps might also be ornamented. Where warmth was needed, the stocking, of kid, indiarubber, worsted, or even velvet, would be quite as warm and serviceable as ordinary ladies' boots. The only difference would lie in their shape, and the absence of corns; and what a dangerous arrow might be added to our quiver of charms!

As it is, our want of appreciation of the real beauty of the body, or our ignorance of how to make the best use of our materials, reconciles us to all kinds of foot diseases, and dis-ease, little behind the proverbial Chinese victim to fashion; and if our sufferings have caused the medical profession to advance with rapid strides from the leech of old, we may just hint that prevention is as good as, if not better than, cure.

There is one kind of shoe—which I may just name, *en passant*—that is of a proper and sensible form from the medical point of view. It is that wide-ending shoe worn in the time of Henry VIII., in whose capacious front the toes might spread and be at ease. But its ugliness will probably hinder its re-institution, and nothing really equals the sandal.

Clogs and Pattens.

While we are on the subject of foot-gear, and in anticipation of an English winter, a few words on *clogs* or *pattens* will not be inappropriate. When a day's rain has filled our roads with mud, and a hundred feet have covered the pavement with a monotint that beats all the browns of the old masters, what becomes of all our æsthetics? One would have thought that so many generations of damp and bad weather would have taught the English how to combine convenience with attractiveness, even under the greatest skyey disadvantages. But alas! on a wet day no one looks well. The lovely beings of whom England is justly proud are transformed into frights by a few hours' pelting rain and a little yellow fog under such conditions. Those who are brave enough to venture out prepared for the worst, present a depressing spectacle to a lover of the beautiful. There is a general smashedness of head-gear, and vagueness of outline as to feet, which ten centuries have not taught us to provide against. What can one expect when the 'little mice' are covered up in goloshes? ah, woe be to the man who invented that gutta-percha penance; why did he not elevate the gentle sex on pattens? Now a patten is not an ugly thing in itself, and it has the prestige of antiquity. Our countrywomen in the last

generation plodded through miry fields on 'clogs' of a very unpicturesque description, eminently worthy of the name, with an uncomfortable ring of iron beneath the foot; but this clog was not older than Anne's reign. A far better clog was the early wooden one, of which we see many representations in the mediæval MSS., and which is very clearly represented in a picture by John Van Eyck in the National Gallery, a clog that was made in the form of the shoe then worn, with two props beneath it, effectually preserving the decorated boots from injury in the ill-cared-for streets. Again, some of the old Italian pattens, tall, slender, light, formed of costly wood, or inlaid with delicate mother o' pearl or ivory, prove that even a clog can be idealised and made a becoming as well as a useful protection. Little feet were not concealed then, nor soiled with wet, when roads were heavy with mud; they were lightly lifted above it; indeed, a world of chivalrous thought and appreciation divides the two periods. *Then*, glittering props like the wings of Mercury upheld the dainty passenger, *now*, her feet and her petticoat-tails may be drenched with mire; *then* it was a delight to see the fairy slippers unharmed, though the street might be a torrent of mud; *now* they must not only descend into the depths, but, in addition, be swelled to unnatural proportions by the hideous golosh, and be ugly as well as dirty. Oh, will not some

fair lady who has pretty feet make a pilgrimage through the park in a neat little pair of pattens, and teach her timid sisters how to avoid the annual ordeal of mire?

I suggest two forms, figs. 40 and 41, for heeled and unheeled boots. The one simple, attached by straps: in

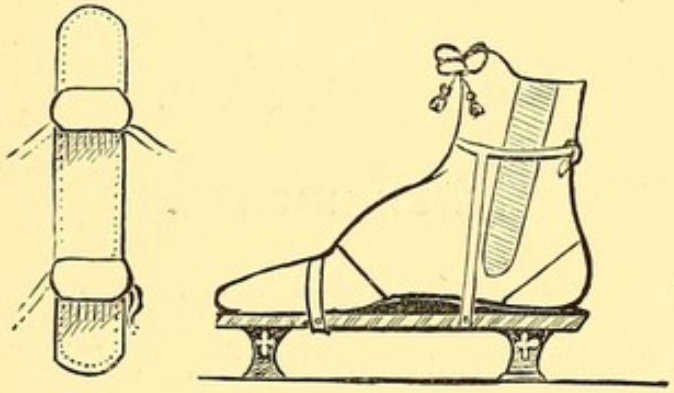


FIG. 40.

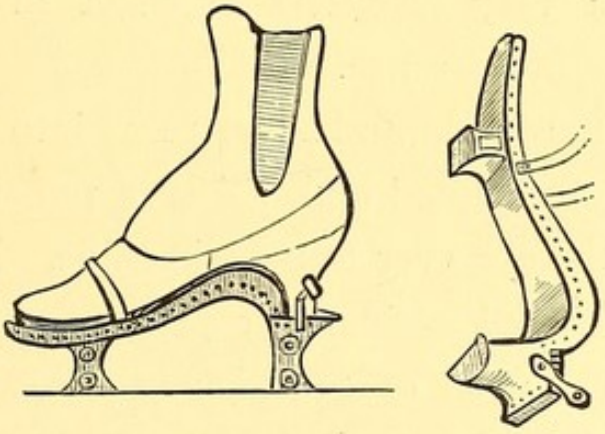


FIG. 41.—Suggestions for modern pattens.

these rinking days what is the difficulty? The other is curved to fit the heel, to which it is fastened by a screw and an almost invisible perforation through the heel. Either is pretty, practical, and in price, what you will.

CHAPTER VII.

Ornaments.

IT may not be superfluous to add here a few words upon ornaments, which form so important a part of a woman's attire, and no doubt have a very considerable effect in marring or improving her appearance.

Ornaments of gold and silver came into use too long ago, and have remained and will ever remain too great a delight to the eye ever to be laid aside. In vain have moralists inveighed against our propensity for outward adorning. The need of conspicuousness, which Darwin tells us results in the survival of the fittest, is at the root of this love of ornament, a healthy instinct not to be sneered down.

It is amusing, however, to see the amount of reviling which it has outlived. Worthy Philip Stubbes was, like a few persons now, much opposed to the use of earrings :

'Another sort of dissolute minions and wanton simpronians (for I can terme them no better) are so farre bewitched as they are not ashamed to make holes in their eares, whereat they hang ringes and other jewels of gold and precious stones. But what this signifieth in them, I will holde my peace, for the thing itself speaketh sufficiently.'

It is no doubt very sad to be a simpronian, whatever that is, and still worse to be left in the dark as to the fate reserved for simpronians—yet as there is no chance of ornaments going out of use, we had better turn our attention to the artistic significance and grace of such ornaments as we wear, and insist that good and not bad art be represented.

It ought to be considered, what sort of things are suited for personal adornment, and how they ought to be treated. The thing should be beautiful in itself, and it should be beautiful for you. The appropriate must have its part therein.

Some forms may be treated in a naturalistic spirit; others should be conventionalised. For instance, a large dried butterfly, though beautiful in itself, would not be beautiful for you—as a head-dress: its wings clasping the head, its antennæ surmounting it. The result would convey a painful sense of instability, fragility, and incongruousness. Whilst leaning against a cushion, the wings would

crush and shatter; the very stillness of the wood creature on a human head, and in a vitiated atmosphere, would outrage the possibility of nature; thus, a butterfly should always be treated conventionally and in an absolutely different material, such as metal.

Any woven material, plain or embroidered, is a fit ornament; it adapts itself to the shape of the body it enfolds, and recalls, at least, the notion of utility.

Metal and stones used in fragments, are also suitable, linked by various legitimate means, and under the latter heading falls jewelry, which we shall consider specially.

The quality of all ornaments is of three kinds—barbaric, artistic, or merely ostentatious. Of course the barbaric ornament was for ostentation too, but for a very different *motif*. The *motif* of the first period (the above-named healthy impulse—how many beautiful objects in nature and in art do we owe it!) may be called *one's body*; the second, *one's mind*; the third, *one's possessions*—the meanest of the three.

The barbarous man strings coloured stones together into various forms—hooks fragments of gold and silver—encloses gems that are not perforable in little frames or cases slung by chains—modes whose simplicity and appropriateness often arrive at grace; then he begins to select the forms of his fragments, to mould them to the images in his mind, and here begins art knowledge

and handicraft. From sheer lack of a school he draws upon the natural forms about him; he has no compasses, no machinery, no cut-and-dried rules; he never makes two objects alike; he has an imperfect sense of the charm of monotony; he loves the infinite surprises in nature, and he turns out an ornament that to all time will be beautiful. It is nature which made it beautiful—the leaf, the shell, the bird whence they came, and to which they carry back the mind.

Here is the artistic period grown out of the barbaric. And as the workman mentally progresses, as his soul opens to civilising influences and he becomes a deep and earnest thinker, the thought in his work deepens and burns. His creed, his memories, his imagination, are pressed into the service of his craft, and ennoble it. Scenes and subjects as well as natural forms enter in, as we find in Greek and mediæval art. Men who work thus never scamp. The art becomes to them something sacred, an emblem of their best self, whilst ever striving towards an ideal unachieved; something else to learn, something greater to attain to. In this spirit worked Quentin Matsys at his forge, Holbein at dagger-handle or queenly portrait, the ancient Greek or Celtic workman, whose name has disappeared, but whose works 'do follow him.'

Then come satiety, flagging thought, indifference,

and the third stage creeps on, the love of mere display. Every kind of extravagance follows, and the extravagance of wealth destroys art, because it does not care for beauty. Value of material is the one thing aimed at; lavishness, cutting down the rare materials into 'pairs' and 'sets,' and wasting them. Hence the mighty suites of diamonds and emeralds such as I saw in a shop recently, gaudy masses, but 'worth 12,000*l.*!' and, as workmanship goes for little or nothing, the result is usually as vulgar and ugly as any common mixture of large bits of glass and tinsel; for when wealth is the sole idol, higher feelings, especially that self-sacrifice and moderation which beauty ofttimes involves, have no room. A large pared emerald does not remind us of God's natural works like a row of unmatched pearls, as in the barbaric collar; no suggestion of ancient story and man's accomplishments, as in the gems of Greece, Rome, and the Renascence. No *idea* is conveyed. The mere coloured glitter is suggestive of nothing—we stare and pass on, and the mind is left as vacant as before.

Things are beautiful according to the degree in which they recall things more beautiful than themselves. A bit of enamel that records an accidental mineral effect (e.g. a streak of arsenic green or vivid cobalt) is less beautiful than a bit which recalls the sky or the grass; and the larger and more improbable quantity the small

bit of accidental colour occurs in, the less pleasing it is; whilst in reminding of the sky, or the grass, which is in broad masses, the colour gradated and not perfectly equal, is lovelier than an uniform tint, impossible in nature.

How beautiful are many barbaric forms may be best seen in an exhibition, such as that of the Prince of Wales's Indian presents; the leaf-shapen spoon of crystal, the flower-like bangles, myriad forms suggested more or less directly by mother Nature. Mediæval and the art of the Renascence may be studied in the South Kensington Museum.

It is depressing to see how incapable we appear in England of originating any new thing which is not bad in art composition. But it was more depressing a few years ago to mark how whilst nothing new was good, nothing old was recognised as being so. We are beginning *now* to borrow with intelligence and humility. Several of our fashionable jewellers' shops contain exquisite facsimiles of old work, so thoughtful in design, and charming in general effect, eminently fit for their purpose. Greek and Roman forms constantly occur, reproduced by careful copying or by electrotype.

Modern Jewellery.

Mr. Giuliano of Piccadilly, and Messrs. Phillips of Cockspur Street, merit especial notice for their artistic appreciation of good forms and good work. In the establishments of these gentlemen, who are most courteous in exhibiting their productions to artists and inquirers, work equal in technical ability to any of the old may be seen. Indeed, modern technical work actually excels the old, as I convinced myself one day at Mr. Giuliano's, in a necklace of his own design and workmanship, worthy, for its beauty, of a place in a museum of art. The grain work (each grain being made in gold, and laid on separately, not imitated by frosting) was finer than any I ever saw.

Under the direction of Messrs. Phillips, the most perfect models are sought for the ornaments they furnish. Museums and picture galleries are ransacked for devices of necklaces, earrings, and pendants. I there observed an elegant cross copied from a picture by Quentin Matsys in the National Gallery; a bracelet of enamel and gold, whose delicate traceries, with the Tudor roses and *fleur de lis*, are adapted from a fine frieze beneath the tomb of Henry VII. in Westminster Abbey; bonbon boxes of Louis Seize shapes, grafted on an Indian pattern, in which much of the Indian feeling

for colour is retained. In general, however, I found their form superior to their colour—the English eye lacks the Oriental instinct. I saw facsimiles of exquisite Etruscan and Greek collars in gold, every detail being carefully studied, and reproduced after the manner of the ancients.

This is as it should be ; real artistic feeling is carried into the work. Messrs. Phillips aim less perhaps at originating than Mr. Giuliano ; but this seems to me after all the higher mood, involving as it does the sacrifice of self. We are not an artistic nation—but we *are* a mechanical nation ; many a savage tribe can outdo us in conception, no country can match us in mechanism. It is, on the whole, wiser to wed our mechanical excellence to the vivid and passionate thoughts of past ages, than to strive to equal (since we can never excel) them in design, for which we have neither the spirit nor the range of opportunities. We have not enough beauty about us, nor have we leisure, for observation and meditation whence creative insight comes. People who dwell in streets, and have to supply a regular demand, cannot create, though they may reproduce, the beautiful. The conditions are not favourable. For instance, our miserable failure is chiefly manifest when we attempt to reproduce the human figure—how can we portray what we never see ?

No doubt the art of a period ought to be a chronicle

of the period, and not an effort to resuscitate past taste and past notions. Only when art is degenerate, owing to changed conditions, is it good to go back to the pure art of an earlier time, rather than perpetuate and spread the false principles and weak production which have succeeded it.

In the old days, the then celebrated artists—the Holbeins, the Durers, the Clouets, the Cellinis—did not disdain to design ornaments, plate, vases, dagger-hilts, and many other things; but now, when our chief artists do disdain so to employ themselves, the jewellers act in the best and wisest spirit when they reconstruct after the ancient models.

Many exquisite ornaments of early Greek and Renascence art in the British Museum and the Louvre, might be more commonly reproduced; and it would be well did buyers observe and compare more than they do, so that they could appreciate modern work when it really *is* good, and not spend large sums on poor workmanship and poorer designs, under high-sounding names. By these means art in England would receive a genuine impetus, and popular taste be gradually raised.

Yet it is greatly to be deplored that living artists should do so little to popularise good art, and bring it within the reach of the many who cannot buy pictures, but who can buy a bracelet or a tea service.

Machine-made jewellery has debased to the utmost the few fine forms which once were popular, and increased the ignorant and mistaken craze for 'sets' and 'pairs,' which are in themselves antagonistic to all true beauty, the essence of which is change, variety, freshness. It is food for regret that it has been found possible to manufacture so much cheap work, and to find buyers among the vulgar and uncultured masses.

We wish it were more widely understood that, like good forms and colours in dress, good forms and fancies in ornaments are a real aid to womanly beauty: and rather than bad art, it is almost better to have none.

Oriental and Ancient Ornaments.

I have laid before the reader for comparison, a few cuts from early, Oriental, and modern work. The history of the progress in ornamental art may be studied in various exhaustive works on the subject—best by the eye, which soon learns to see more than books can teach.

In fig. 42 we have the seven pendants of an Indian ornament, which I was fain to take from Mr. Eastlake's charming book, 'Hints on Household Taste.' They are a very good instance of the natural and agreeable variety running through Oriental and all semi-barbaric work.

The several drops will be found to be in colour and proportion of about equal value, and have the interest which belongs to variety, never to carefully matched and

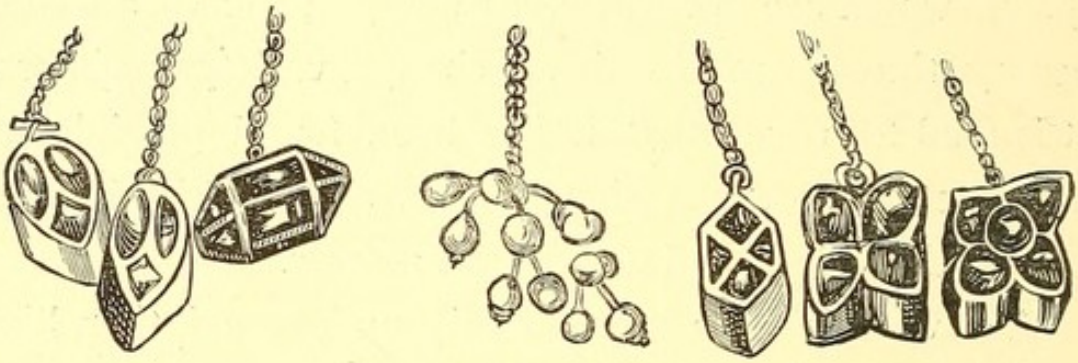


FIG. 42.—Indian pendants.

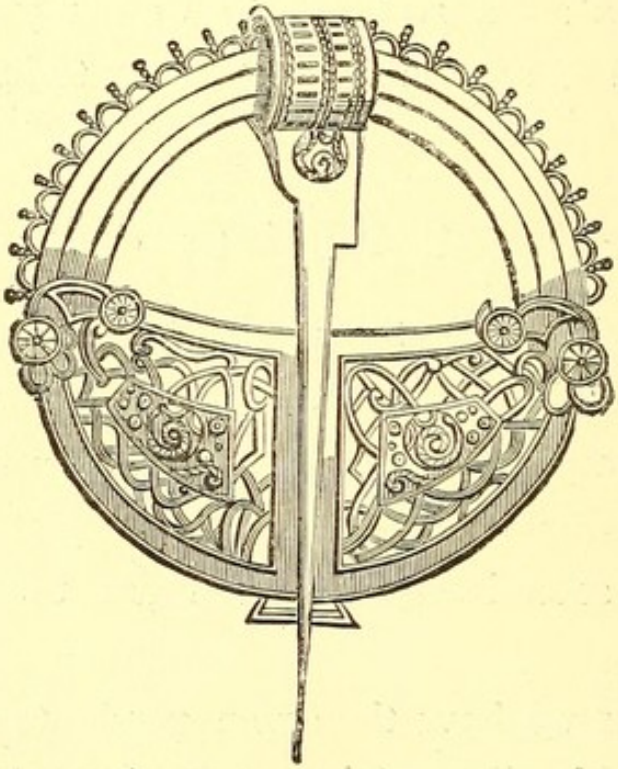


FIG. 43.—Irish brooch. From Walker's 'Hist. of the Irish Bards.'

paired sets of stones. No two pendants are alike, however, but this does not strike obnoxiously on the eye, it requires a second glance to observe it. No. 43 is a

fibula of ancient Irish work, very rich and involved in pattern, and the form is one worthy to revive. 44 and 45 are Keltic patterns, very simple instances of the

FIG. 44.—Keltic Ornament.

FIG. 45.—Keltic Ornament.

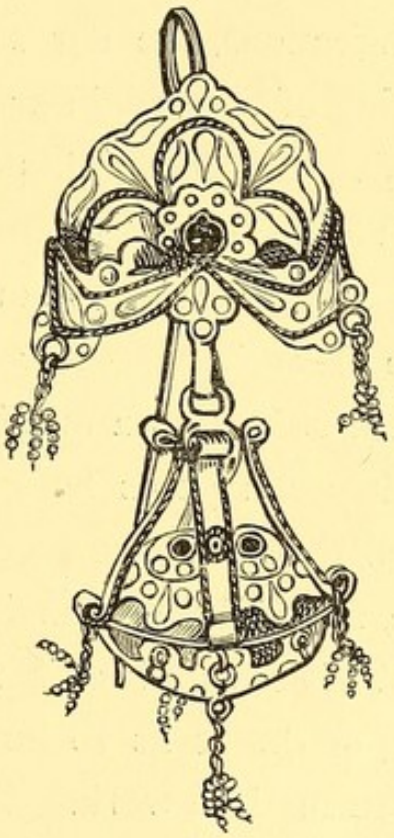


FIG. 46.—Old Italian earring.

Keltic love of interlaced ribbons, which I suggest for buttons, clasps, brooches, watch-backs, &c.

It is singular to observe how the old traditions linger in some countries—the simple and honest form of the Italian earring, fig. 46, not of the present century, but

still not extremely old, might have belonged to a workman ten centuries—nay, thrice that—ago. The pearls are all *strung*, not attached by partial boring, and the gold knot which keeps them safe is seen at the end of the wire. The whole system of decoration is simple and ingenuous, the flat surfaces being adorned with a trimming of wire, plain or twisted, in graceful curves, and one coloured stone lights up the centre. It is perfectly artistic and good.

In all the old work one is struck by the simplicity of the fastenings—never disguised, and as much safer than our solder, as a nail is safer than glue. The Greek and Etruscan gems hang from hooks of wire *passing through* them; the soft gold meant at times to be bent in use, as in fig. 47 (earring). The links of the chains are all visible and satisfactory to the eye, there is no feeling of doubt as to how they are held—so annoying in much modern work. No doubt this may be explained by the ancients' fear of passing delicate work through the fire to solder it, a process no longer dangerous in the present days of improved mechanical means; but the artistic effect is better when the fastening is seen than when it is disguised. You may ornament, but not conceal it: as mediæval artists ornamented a blot or flaw in the vellum, rather than cover or cut it away.

FIG. 47.—Greek earring, Russ. Coll.

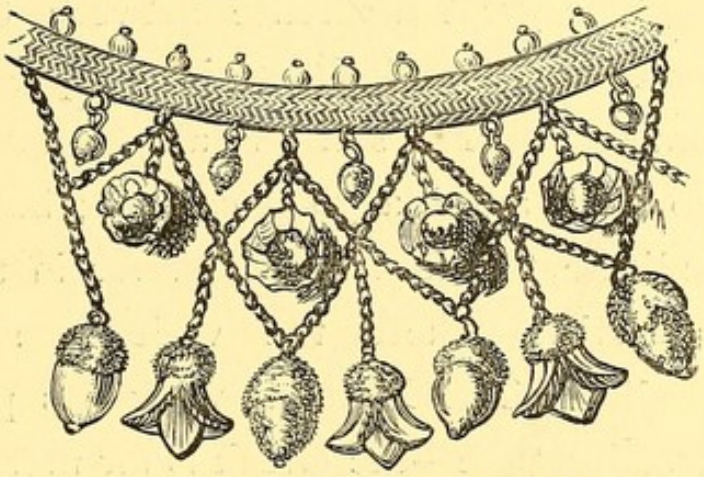


FIG. 49.—Etruscan necklace, Brit. Mus.

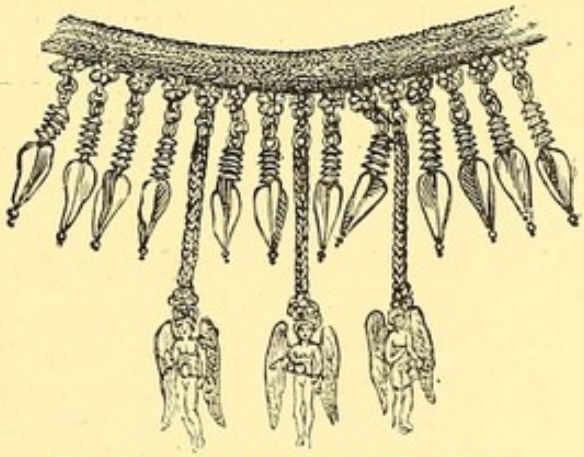


FIG. 50.—Greek necklace, Brit. Mus.

FIG. 48.—Greek earring, Russ. Coll.

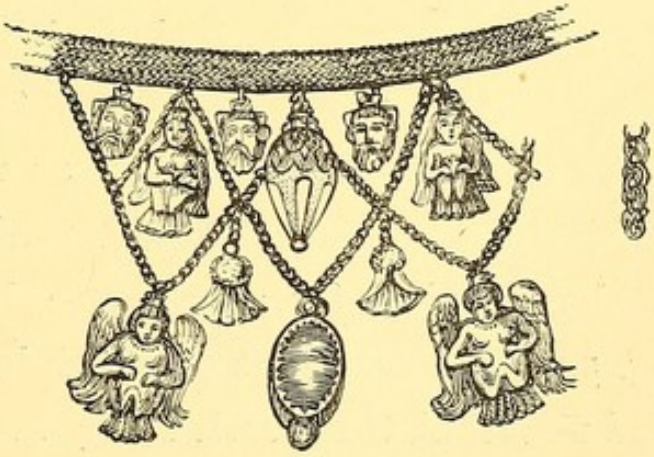


FIG. 51.—Etruscan necklace, Brit. Mus.

The great difference between Greek and Etruscan work, is not well shown in the present very inadequate drawings. The spirit is always lost in copying, and at no time am I a good copyist; but they will serve to indicate the forms to look for in the British Museum collection, where the varieties should be carefully studied. The Etruscan work has perhaps a larger and broader type—the Greek is far more subtle and refined. The earring (in the Russian collection), fig. 48, is one of the most graceful I have seen in such early work.

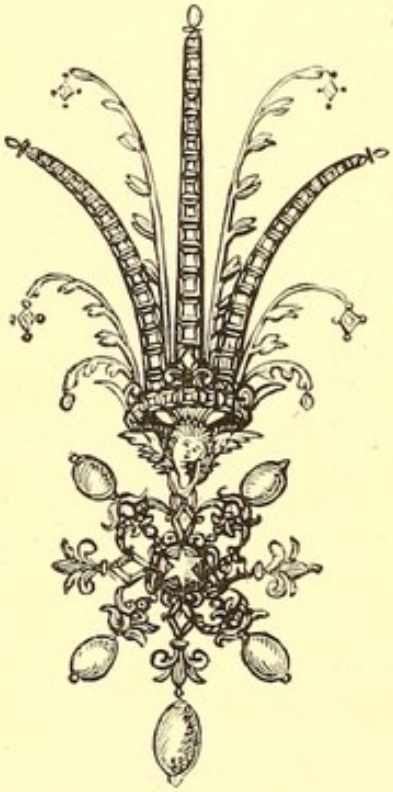


FIG. 52.—Modern aigrette.

I have included two designs, figs. 53 and 54, for brooches, form Holbein's sketches—fanciful and pretty, but he made many more intricate and ambitious.

Compare the good old designs—in which the setting is always adapted to the gems, not the gems, as now, sacrificed to the setting—with the comparatively modern design for an aigrette by Paul Birckenhultz, fig. 52, the lower part of which is exceedingly graceful and beautiful, the pearls safely secured, and the cherub-

head delicately handled, but the upper portion hard, heavy, and trenching on various modern defects.

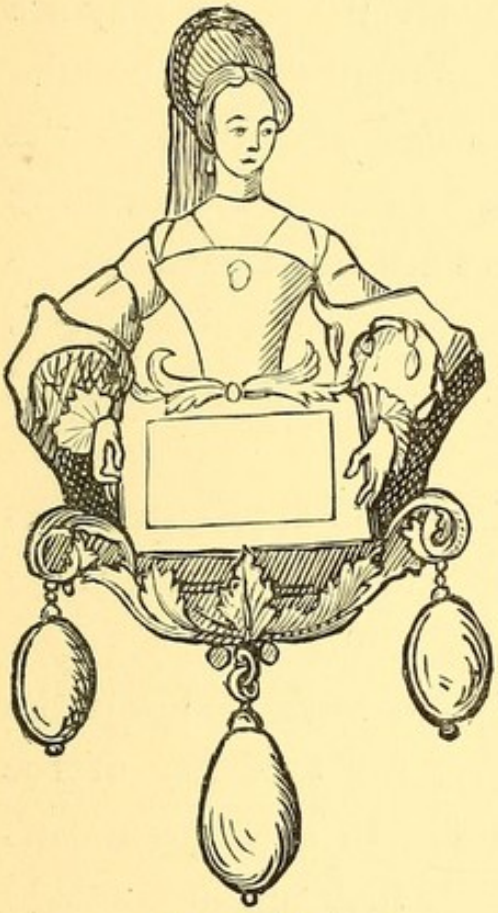


FIG. 53.—Pendant.

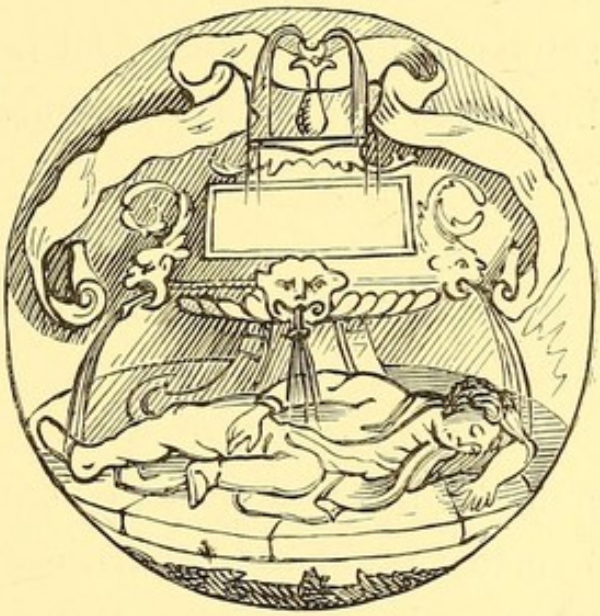


FIG. 54.—Button (?). Designs by Holbein, Brit. Mus.

Appropriate Patterns.

The class of patterns adapted for certain materials, is a subject too large for me to enter on at length in a book of this kind ; but a few general rules may be useful to those who have never considered the subject at all.

The ornament of an object which is required to be strong, should express strength ; if possible, it should

give an appearance of additional strength to what it would have had if undecorated. In the art (often extremely beautiful) of various savage tribes, we may see this principle expressed in the ornament of their paddle-handles, door-posts, &c.—the rings or stripes in the pattern run in such a manner as to strengthen not weaken the form. Flat surfaces are not treated in the same manner as cylindrical ones, perpendicular objects have their own class of ornament as opposed to horizontal or leaning objects.

The natural sense of what is fit and appropriate, unconfused by rules of art, thus leads to what we call 'high art.'

The ornament of a large plain surface should be skilfully balanced so as to correct the tendency of the eye to run in any one direction. In such ornaments as trimmings, the form of the body they surround should be considered ; round forms ought never to be made to look square, or angular forms round.

Geometrical patterns are eminently suited to woven materials, whose nature and form they express ; waved patterns, or shaded ones, should be admitted only where there is some possibility of natural movement, from fold, breeze, or billow entering in—e.g. a curtain, cloak, or loose garb ; not a stuffed chair or a carpet. Patterns of beetles and snails are out of place wherever they would

not be naturally admitted alive—such as on a dinner or tea service. Metallic ornament can only artistically describe living forms when they are treated purely conventionally. A wall ought never to simulate a landscape, after the debased Italian fashion—nor to represent trellis and sky like some modern wall-papers. It is false art, because it outrages nature, and is inconsistent; what comfort could there be in a house whose sides were open to the weather

Good Taste.

Some people instinctively surround themselves with right colours and appropriate forms. Without being always beautiful such persons always look attractive—to an artistic eye they are positive wells of refreshment. They are never seen slovenly, or tumbled, or in ungainly attitudes and foolish situations. The appropriate comes naturally to them, the beautiful is their own. Others must study it.

The greatest mistake a wife can make is to neglect her appearance; it is a direct surrender of a magic wand, without which a woman *may* still have charms, but most often punishes herself too severely, and sees her error too late.

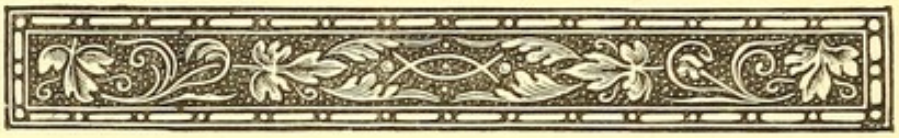
In a mother it is a mistake, too, for form and colour having a definite effect on minds of a certain constitu-

tion, even children are sensible of the influence Young boys take a deeper interest in their mothers' looks than is commonly believed. They are proud of their mothers' and sisters' appearance, and with a chivalrous affection, uphold their family 'beauties' against each other in their schools. A mother may often have more influence with her child by being a graceful and pleasing woman, than by the most admirable virtues combined with a dowdy or slovenly dress. Aunts and grandmothers are liked by children for a pretty look often, whereas ugliness and frowziness in dress may be the first step towards losing influence over them. A child who has ever been impelled to observe that 'Granny looks such a fright!' loses respect for Granny, and is less likely to obey her.

I always felt as a child sympathy with Rosamond in the tale of the 'pinch in the black bonnet.' Rosamond's antipathy to the kind lady of disagreeable appearance was a natural one, and betrayed an æsthetic sense in the child which ought to have been encouraged. The kind lady was much to blame for wearing a bonnet with an objectionable 'pinch' in it; and however justly Rosamond was reproved for judging merely by appearances, the lady, had she possessed wisdom and tact, should have left off the black bonnet, or at least effaced the pinch forthwith.

Whatever the pinch was, it must have been some bit

of slovenly work, or some milliner's freak, which struck Rosamond's sense as contradicting the natural lines of the human cranium—something singularly bad indeed, considering the grotesque ornaments people were used to on the gigantic bonnets of that day.



CHAPTER VIII.

The Reason Why.

A FEW remarks on recent fashions may not be out of place here, with the Reason Why.

The reason why a train is pretty, is because it increases height and grace of movement: the reason why a train too long (as in Court dress) or girt in (as in fig. 56) is ugly, is because it does just the reverse. Thus extremes meet.

The reason why the present tied-in style of petticoat, which recalls, without imitating, the Japanese costume, is good, and when not overdone, pretty—is because it does pretend to follow the natural lines. It does display the clear line of the hip, without the deformity of a 'bustle,' and this gives a pretty figure grace and lightness. It does fall in at the knees where the human figure naturally narrows, and spreads a little below with much the curve natural in walking. This curve may be

traced in any statue. All women have a slight tendency to be knock-kneed, whilst a man's leg is by nature straight. But any costume carried to an exaggerated extent becomes ridiculous, and if women have the bad taste to sacrifice the free use of their limbs in the attempt to out-Herod Herod, so much the worse for

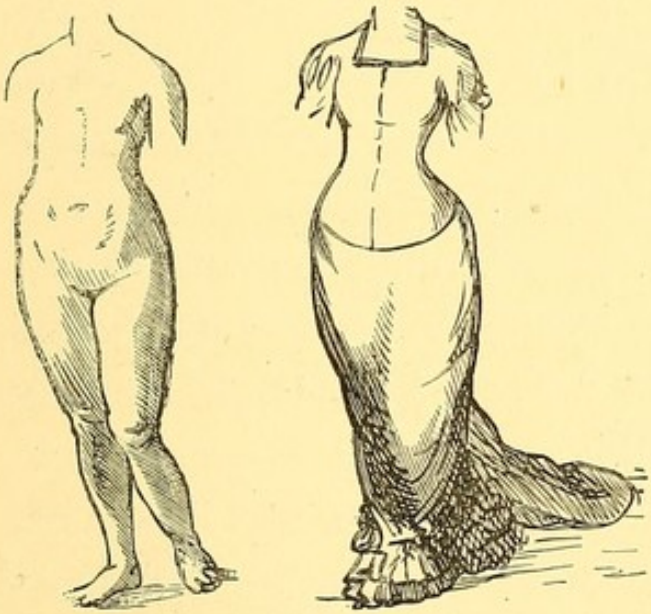


FIG. 55.—A dress that does not contradict the natural lines.

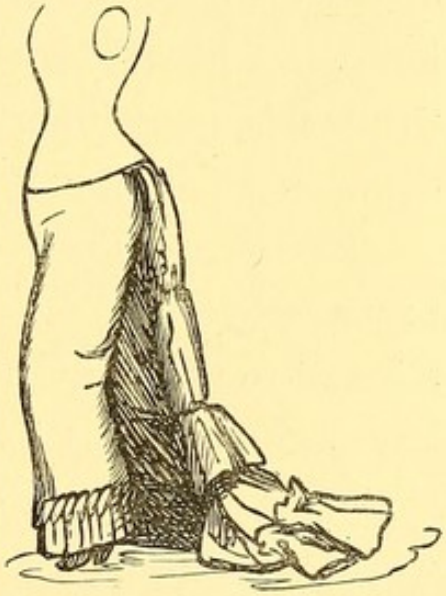


FIG. 56.—A dress that contradicts the natural lines.

them. A tied-in dress is also commendable because it indicates those forms of the body which have too long been completely hidden, and so far wasted; for beauty implying visibility, a beauty undiscovered is scarcely to be reckoned as a beauty.

The reason why the same dress, *too* tightly tied, is bad, is because when the limbs are deprived of com-

fort, grace is immediately lost, elasticity of carriage checked, the lines of the legs destroyed, and divers uglinesses result. The effect becomes that of an elephantine leg fastened to a weight to prevent its running away. Cows have sometimes a clog tied to the foot that they may not stray far, but that is scarcely a precedent for a pretty woman. The heavy tail or confined train is not allowed to soften and enhance the movements of the body, but in walking will jerk at each step, increasing the lady's resemblance to a clogged cow *without ever* displaying the form of the limb.

To properly display the form, the dress must be tied or made to fall back, but loosely, and a certain looseness allowed to the front, that the contour of the figure may have room to assert itself.

The reason why a small waist is a beauty, is because, when it is natural, it goes together with the peculiar litheness and activity of a slenderly built figure. All the bones are small, the shoulders and arms *petite*, and the general look is dainty and youthful.

The reason why tight-lacing is ugly, is because it distorts the natural lines of the figure, and gives an appearance of uncertainty and unsafeness. I put aside the fact that a woman so laced *must* be unhealthy, for if it comes to a choice between beauty and health, health would most likely be sacrificed by the majority. I am

not writing a treatise on sanitary laws, though I might fairly remind readers that men avoid and dislike unhealthy women, and seldom take to wife a girl who has too small a waist, whether natural or artificial. I am chiefly concerned with appearance.

In architecture, as before shown, a pillar or support of any kind is called debased and bad in art, if what is supported be too heavy for the thing supporting, and if a base be abnormally heavy and large for what it upholds. The laws of proportion and balance must be understood. In a waist of 15 inches both are destroyed, and the corresponding effect is unpleasant to the eye. The curve of the waist is coarse and immoderate, utterly opposed to what Ruskin has shown to be beauty in a curve. Real or artificial, such a waist is always ugly; if real, it is a deformity that should be disguised; if artificial it is culpable and nasty to boot.

I must here draw attention to some very mischievous advertisements of certain corsets now sold, because the name of a great man is dragged in to 'puff' them. These stays are of the usual form, and are said to be so closely fitting 'that a much smaller size can be worn without injury to the figure'—a statement absurd, because if a smaller waist than can fairly support the upper part of the body, be worn, it *must* injure the figure—artistically. Again, 'lay figures or models have been

constructed in exact accordance with Hogarth's line of beauty (!) Ample space is secured for the play of the chest and lungs, thus at the same time preserving health and improving (!) the contour of the figure.' The 'improvement' may be seen in fig. 10, p. 49, and the 'ample space,' too, from which many a girl has died, whilst others have escaped with heart-disease and a strawberry nose.

The folly of applying thus the name of Hogarth's curve (by the way, a very *slight* curve) which forms the *basis* of all beautiful forms, stamps the advertiser as ignorant of most things beyond the price of his 'puff'—and the thing is mischievous, because the public are in the main so ignorant too, that they will be taken in by it.

A waist of the tight description has happily disappeared entirely from good society, and is now the very badge of vulgarity—indeed exaggeration is always vulgar—in the true sense of the word: denoting the state of the ordinary uncultured mind, which is ever blind to those delicate lines of demarcation that separate good and evil; but it is never superfluous to point out *why* a fashion should be avoided. Tradesmen and medical men might alike with interest to themselves advocate corsets that were *comfortable*; and they can only be so when they do not squeeze the internal organs out of their natural place.

The reason why the fashionable Gainsborough hats are good, is because: firstly, they surround the face, thus isolating it from incongruous surroundings and forming a distinct background, which of course should be of a becoming colour; secondly, because they add to the height by the peculiar curve of the brim—*when* they are properly put on.

There is scarcely any hat which looks worse on a vulgar woman, or more inappropriate on a grave middle-aged face. But worn by a young and good-looking woman, it answers almost every purpose that a hat can—and therefore, no doubt, will not last long.

FIG. 57.—Vulgarity plus Unhealthiness.

The reason why masses of false hair are bad in art, is because they contradict the natural probabilities of the human cuticle. Any quantity within the limits of human growth is admissible, and in the case of partial baldness, strongly to be recommended. Beyond these limits, beauty ceases, and vulgarity reigns supreme.

The reason why high heels are good, is because they add height, elasticity to the gait sometimes, and materially diminish the size of the foot. The reason why they are bad, is because (though they do not in any case hide or contradict the natural form of the foot) they are apt to cause corns, they throw the balance of the body out (hence the miscalled 'Grecian bend'), and, when too high, impede rapid walking through the inability to take a long step, and cause a limping gait from the strain on the spine.

Second Book

Beauty and Head-dresses

CHAPTER I.—FORM.

The Function of a Head-dress.

OWING to its great and arresting importance I have reserved the adornment and management of the head for separate consideration.

A woman's head-dress may not be so important as her head; but there can be no doubt that what she chooses to wear on her head, and the way in which she chooses to wear it, vastly affect the impression she makes on others.

As this is an age when ladies receive from the sterner sex profuse hints for the cultivation of their brains, it can hardly be considered presumption if one of their own sex venture to give them a few hints about something exterior to the brain, but which ought never to be independent of it—namely, their head-dresses.

Since we desire to persuade, let us invert the stern

moral order which some writers on Art would doubtless adopt, and let us suggest that a head-dress must be—first, becoming—second, beautiful—and third, useful.

I put last that quality which naturally ought to come first, because we have quitted the primitive idea of what a head-dress should be. Of course, its first object was either to shield from cold or to shelter from heat, but the second quality almost immediately apparent, was that a head-dress has a powerful effect on the face, in either beautifying it or the reverse. And the whole recognised tone of modern fashions is such that no woman would ever adopt for its usefulness what was not becoming, while she would gladly sacrifice her own comfort to what she calls her 'looks'; and she would not necessarily be wrong, if she only knew a little more about the matter, and could sometimes see herself as others see her. But because women as a rule do not know what *beauty* means, do not consider that the 'fitting' and 'appropriate' have always their part in what is really beautiful, therefore they catch at whatever presents itself as a novelty. 'Oh,' they say, 'I never looked like this before! What a change—how delightful!' but they do not pause to think whether the old fashion became them better—whether the new one reveals more clearly the slight shrinking of the jaw, or spoils the pretty colour still blooming in the cheek.

Women usually like something which gives them height, piquancy, and above all conspicuousness. They are not to be blamed for this. A woman's *rôle* is to attract, and, when she has attracted, to enchain. But in following this aim too zealously, she often outruns the scent by a long way, after the fashion of young and inexperienced hounds. A woman ought never to forget that sometimes in gaining a little she loses much. As, for instance, when the hair a few years ago was turned up with a sweep, and the bonnet dwindled to a tuft, every woman gladly threw aside the 'curtain' which had shielded her throat from the sun, and every woman lost her white neck. Again, when a little hat was worn like a round target against a mountain, women said they were going to shade their eyes, but, in reality, they only sacrificed the whole of the forehead and eyebrows (usually the best part of the face) to the most unmeaning saucer that ever rested on a snub.

Firstly, then, a head-dress should set off, and should draw the eye to, the noblest portions of the face. It ought to conceal a bad outline; it should display a fine one; it should *not* deform the shape of the head; it should in colour enhance the complexion, whatever it may be; and 'throw up' the hue of the hair.

Secondly, it ought of course to be a pretty object in itself, and made of handsome materials. It occupies the

place of honour in the whole toilette, and is not, like the skirt, liable to collect the dirt of the ground, nor, like the bodice, apt to be hidden under a bushel; it is always conspicuous, and has a character to keep up. It might therefore with propriety be the most expensive part of the attire.

Thirdly, and in addition, we may just hint—we hope without offence—that if it can be useful and comfortable, it is just as well.

Can we not be content with some head-gear that might satisfy all three of the above demands? Can we not, by studying the pictures of the finest masters, and the costumes of distant climes, resuscitate, and keep to, some that *have* done so? Can we not curb the craving for mere novelty, when we have something that meets the requirements of the age; and indulge in variety only in colour, and not in form?

There are some races among whom, though they must be called nearly savage, the hair-dressing is of so ingenious and permanent a nature that it serves the purpose of a cap or hat. Livingstone and other travellers tell us of people, whose hair in childhood, when it is scanty, is considered *en déshabille*, but as it lengthens is gradually woven into peculiar forms which are never unloosed, and only at ripe age does the elaborate construction become perfect. It takes from five to ten

years (I quote from memory) to dress the hair. By that time it presents the appearance of a cap or helmet of close matted fabric decorated with beads and birds' feathers, and no extra protection is necessary, except perhaps an occasional broad leaf, as an umbrella, when the sun is very hot.

Now this is a wise and convenient plan—for internal Africa. I am not suggesting as a fashion fit for Englishwomen anything so conservative or so economical. Only we might take a hint from the savage in holding fast that which is good, and not insist on Proteus exerting himself without a reason as good as Proteus had in Greek story. We must discuss head-dressing, apart from hair-dressing, and we may return to the latter by-and-by.

All head-dresses originally sprang from two primitive forms—the hat and the cap, summer and winter gear. The more nearly modern forms recall these, the better: the less they recall them, the worse and more unmeaning the article is.

There is no question that hats are, as a rule, more beautiful than bonnets. An artist often introduces a hat on the grass or on a chair—never a modern bonnet, The reason is that a hat is generally of a definite shape. while a bonnet is not: and for the most part a hat fulfils some one of the requirements of a head-dress, and

thus carries out a meaning demanded by the artist in suggesting out-of-door subjects. The Gainsborough and a few other hats now (1877) in vogue are sensible and pretty, but a good fashion lasts so short a time that one has scarcely time to commend or blame what Is before it Is Not. It were safer to suggest what ought to be.

Head-dresses Ancient and Modern.

There are many caps which are not only appropriate ornaments for the head, but which are actually required by the rest of the dress. I would not instance the ordinary flat plaister of net which servants wear, as a beautiful ornament; and yet, when the dress is voluminous, and the whole person covered, anything upon the head is better than nothing, as it carries out the rest of the costume, and usually adds height to the figure.

When the rest of the body is only slightly covered, or the dress is very plain and close, the head may well be content with its natural covering, hair; but often a head-dress, however small, adds an appropriate finish to the toilette. The Watteau morning dress is naturally incomplete without the natty little cap to surmount it; the Watteau evening dress is now-a-days spoilt by the

want of powder, which is not only indispensable to the antique costume, but denotes that at least as much labour has been given to the head as to the rest of the body.

The turban is an old institution—as old probably as any head-gear we can find; and it has many merits. In the first place it has that of bringing into close contact with the face some self-colour or combination of colours, which at once gives character to the whole face, and, in most cases, improves the features. Unless the latter be very coarse or irregular, a turban, when not too heavy, usually has a good effect. It requires, however, to be put on with great care and grace, and the countenance should be well studied before its exact position is finally fixed. Guido probably felt the peculiar charm of the turban when he placed one upon the quiet melancholy head of Beatrice Cenci. There is a pathetic dignity in that face which is enhanced by this head-dress, and which would certainly be impaired were any other cap substituted. We could scarcely find a better example of an effective turban.

There are many turbans which might be quoted as beautiful artistically. But there are almost as many that are ridiculous. The turban that crowns the head of Beatrice is graceful and picturesque; the turban fashionable among ladies in the middle ages was a debased

imitation. The one is formed as in the East, by a natural coil of folds about the head, containing their own hundred and one delicate lights and darks, bold curves and splendid shadows—how beautiful is almost every material when crumpled up! The other is a stuffed cushion formed like a wreath—as one might paint old Father Christmas crowned with a sausage—through whose aperture the hair falls down like a horse's tail (fig. 64), whilst all the softening influence of the hair, and the grays and half-tints which it lends, are taken from the face. This ridiculous turban is very clearly represented in the panels of the shrine of St. Jean at Bruges, wherein there are ladies with and without it, their long hair tied close to the head and hanging down, a fashion which could not have had even convenience to recommend it. For either coolness or warmth such a head-dress is equally useless; not so the other—Guido's turban would shelter the head from the sun, or protect it from the winter's blast.

The turban has, however, the disadvantage of generally concealing the hair; and though a bad form of this head-dress was much in vogue fifty years ago with old and middle-aged ladies, it has never become a favourite with the young, who justly feel that they have only a few years to display those luxuriant tresses, which are certainly the most natural and appropriate ornaments of

a youthful face. And yet, in cases where the hair is not too beautiful and luxuriant to be dispensed with, a craftily-disposed turban would be a far more picturesque and seemly ornament than half a bushel of borrowed hair.

The ancient Romans appear to have consulted utility alone in their choice of head-gear; but in their grand and simple costume beauty came unsought. They had hats for travelling, and they also wore them while sitting in the theatre, to shade them from the burning sun; but on ordinary occasions they wore no covering on their heads; they walked abroad as free in attire as they were within their houses; on emergency they could always draw the graceful toga over them, and we may still see statues of their stately forms with the long folds reaching from the head to the feet, and following every movement of the frame as they fell.

If we confine ourselves to English fashions, we of course find our first ancestors clothed in the Roman dress, or something very like it—tunic, stola, and toga—the long folds fastened by fibulæ, and the cloak pulled over the head like a hood, other head-coverings being very rare. Later in the Anglo-Saxon time, the hood or 'head-rail' had become detached from the main garment, but was an indispensable part of the dress, females of all ranks being seldom or never seen without it, and even

royal ladies wearing it over their crowns, suggestive of placing the woman above the queen. It was a very graceful head-dress, especially when pinned over the forehead to the hair with a little cluster of folds, to keep it secure on the head; this, no doubt, was the origin of the hood, the link between *coverchief* and *capuchin* (fig. 58).

FIG. 58.—Anglo-Saxon lady.

FIG. 59.—Alfgyfe, Canute's queen.

But this was too good to last, and it is too good to hope to revive.

The Normans brought in the fashion of long plaits of hair, reaching to the hips, and sometimes bound with ribbons, or encased in silk of various colours (figs. 16, 18)—a pretty fashion, but one that made some additional

head-dress requisite. With the Plantagenets we have the first hint of the *veil* as distinct from the hood, and soon after appear the strange and varied head-dresses which we must discuss in detail, and wherein we may see how the simplicity and utility of the earlier times that had so much beauty in them had given place to a vain craving after mere beauty, which grew less and less

FIG. 60.—Lady of rank.

FIG. 61.—Lady of the middle class.

14th century.

as the fair wearers sacrificed more and more convenience, sense, and propriety in its pursuit.

Some of the first of these head-dresses, which were small and formed like crowns, or like caps, are very dignified as well as pretty, and would be most pleasing could they be introduced in the modern toilette, which

they would suit very well; but it seems as though

FIG. 62.—Countess of Suffolk, 1450.

FIG. 63.—Lady with 'a paire of locks and curls,' 1670.

directly the idea occurred to the ladies that a head-dress was to be beautiful, whether useful or no, they all lost

their heads together! When they found that a cap could be made of rich materials, and trimmed with jewels and goldsmith's work, the mania of every woman for outdoing her sisters in profusion and size, rapidly spread, and the caps soon ceased to be anything but ludicrous.

The stiff close caul, curiously enriched but (from the entire concealment of the hair) very trying to the face, with its pendent veil, soon began to swell into excrescences, and every variation of hardness and angularity was delighted in till the fatal horns were brought from

FIG. 64.—Lady early in the 15th century.

FIG. 65.—Lady in the 15th century.

the East, and turbans along with them. At first, these horns were only hinted at, by long wires upholding a

broad short veil, with heavy lumps of broidery covering the ears ; but ere long the real thing was preferred to a suggestion, and a time came when a bull's horns were faithfully imitated in form and position, so that a crowd of ladies really did look like a herd of cattle. The heart-shaped head-dress, long a favourite, stiff and absurd as it was, appears mild when compared with the two formidable horns ; but the decoration of them was often very fine.

There was one horn-shaped head-dress which had its merits—the single long horn (see fig. 21, p. 58) rising

FIG. 66.—Countess of Arundel, 1439.

backward from the forehead two feet or more, and which is still found in Syria. It was made of dark cloth or other stiff materials (sometimes, indeed, of metal), often em-

broidered, and from the summit hung a long transparent veil, which either fell upon the train or was gathered over the arm. There was much of stately grace in this curious head-dress, which was more sensible and less inconvenient than a good many we have tried since; but I do not think it will ever come in fashion again. It would be, indeed, too stately, and in many ways unfitted for the hurry and speed of our modern life—the crowd of modern parties, the narrowness of modern rooms, the bustle of modern streets. But in it every woman looked like a queen; there was more room in life then.

FIG. 67.—The gorget, 14th century.

The 'gorget' or 'wimple' was one of the most remarkable articles of feminine wearing apparel, as showing that when woman has a fit of good sense, she

may carry it beyond the boundary of good taste. The wimple succeeded the head-rail, which was, as I have said, a cross between the veil and the hood; it no doubt originated in the absolute need of defending the ears and throat, in those days of draughts and damp floors. We

FIG. 68. The wimple. FIG. 69.

trace it under various forms:—*au naturel*, in fig. 67; fastened to the hat, fig. 68; attached to a veiled head-dress, fig. 69; all of them from fourteenth-century portraits. At one time it lay in thick folds, like what it was actually named after, a 'barbe'; and however convenient for the aged, it was infallibly ugly and disfiguring to a young face.

A veil is almost always a beautiful thing, though at

this time it was made as ugly as it well could be, extended by long wires into fantastic shapes, such as horns, (see fig. 66), wings, and other monstrosities, as if women dreaded lest it should perform any requirement of a veil. The two long wires aloft spread out the gauze—too wide to admit of entrance through a narrow doorway, too short to shelter neck or face, too thin quite to take the place of an umbrella. It was well-nigh impossible for a lady to sit in any chair with a moderately high back. But as in those days the bed, or the bench that ran along its side, was the usual seat, perhaps this was not felt to be a drawback.

When the horns ceased to be fashionable the cauls became again closer and closer to the head till the huge ruffs of the sixteenth century banished them altogether. Holbein, whose minute conscientiousness is of peculiar value to the student of costume, gives us many of the varied head-dresses simultaneously in use during his sojourn in England. We have from his pencil portraits from every class—from Mother Iak, Edward VI.'s nurse, in her fur cap and peasant garb, to the various queens of Henry VIII.

It is interesting to see how one head-dress grew out of another, or formed part of another: to note how long the veil was in dying. We infer from figs. 70–75, copied from drawings in the Queen's possession, that the gorget was

gone, but the ears were protected by a close lace caul with upturned ends on the cheek. In fig. 74, p. 148, this is

FIG. 70.—Lady Butts. From a drawing by Holbein.

simply surmounted by a hat; in fig. 71, stiff braids[1] to

[1] These braids or ribbons, occurring in so many of Holbein's portraits, and invariably of reddish yellow, sometimes concealing the hair entirely, at others betraying that the hair beneath is of a different colour, seem to me to point to a fashion referable to some great lady, perhaps the Queen. We know how Queen Elizabeth's hair was copied in colour by the court

simulate hair (in all Holbein's drawings reddish) are laid across it, over this a jewelled coif, over this a hood-shaped coif of rich stuff, and over that a thing which

FIG. 71.—From a drawing by Holbein.

may still have been called a veil—stiff, weighty, and surely hard to balance! Fig. 72, the shrewd and

and other ladies, and her reddish-yellow locks may have descended from her mother Anne Boleyn ; in which case these singular and far from elegant braids are easily accounted for.

clever Lady Berkeley, gives us, probably, the outdoor apparel, or bonnet, over the lace coif and silk lappets, without the veil (these lappets are better understood in

FIG. 72.—Lady Berkeley. From a drawing by Holbein.

fig. 75 over the veil) and the veil for weight's sake seems to have been occasionally pinned up, as in the portrait of Lady Butts, fig. 70. Mistress Souch, probably con-

temporary with Henry's daughters, shows the jewelled coif which followed, with its shrunken veil behind: the immediate predecessor to the 'cushion' and the 'ruff.'

The neck-ruff, except in its hugest phase, is a very

FIG. 73.—Mistress Souch. From a drawing by Holbein.

becoming ornament, and improves the face. So much so that it deserves to be included among head-dresses.

Many a pretty face surmounts a thin and unshapely throat—indeed, a beautiful throat is a very rare thing—and the ruff conceals an ugly neck, detracts from a worn jaw, and yet can be coaxed down in the front with advantage, if the throat be pretty enough to render its exposure advisable. The ruff, running around a dress

FIG. 74.—From a drawing by Holbein.

low in the front, the plaits lessened in depth towards the extremities, had often an extremely good effect, and would be a good thing to introduce, only when it had to be held up by a wire support it became ridiculous. Hoods and broad hats were alike worn with the ruff; the latter sometimes very tall, at others with a low flat

crown; beauty, apparently, being sought for at home only, while convenience was consulted out of doors.

A head-dress admitting of very pretty modifications, which we may see in one of its best forms in the pictures of Mary Stuart, was worn in Elizabeth's reign. It consisted of a broad cap with a wired edge, and the wire could

FIG. 75.—From a drawing by Holbein.

be bent in any way around the face. The form adopted by the Queen of Scots, fig. 77, is exceedingly pretty—a simple dip over the forehead, the ears being displayed. The richest lace was profusely used at this time. The ruff, the cap, the cuffs, collars, handkerchiefs, and aprons were all adorned with point lace, and there is no more beautiful ornament for a woman than these laces, of which

the patterns are graceful in the extreme, and the manufacture a *chef d'œuvre* of art, though they were in those days sometimes spoiled with blue, red, and green starch.

In Charles I.'s reign there was a considerable alteration in dress. The ruff was discarded, and the hair

FIG. 76.—Elderly lady, 1631.

brushed back from the forehead—the new growing hair at the roots falling downward, and frequently simulated by cut portions curled with tongs—with heavy clusters of frizzed curls over the ears (see fig. 26, p. 62). It was a fashion full of elegance and simplicity save for a few vagaries, in spite of Puritan influence. The vulgar

vulgarised it with wired-out locks, as in fig. 63 (p. 138). Later, the Puritans had it all their own way, and their righteous (?) horror of all that was beautiful was symbolised in their rigid and trying dress, and the muslin cap that strove to abolish what they believed a snare of Satan—a pretty face. In the middle of the seventeenth

FIG. 77.—Mary Stuart's cap.

FIG. 78.—Lady of rank, 1604.

century, we find women wearing their hair loose, and covered by a long *couvrechef* with or without a hood beneath it, descending in easy graceful folds almost to the feet. Charles II. obliterated the Puritan taste to a great extent, and the æsthetic element had a chance. We see in Vandyck's and Lely's pictures how graceful the fashion grew; indeed, the easy splendour of the whole costume

of Charles II.'s time has never been surpassed. But in head-dresses there was nothing very distinctive worn, rather a picturesque *abandon* of nature was preferred —a string of pearls, a cloud of lace, and *laisser-aller.*

If our fair ladies would adopt the beauty of this costume, without its defects, we should have no more to

FIG. 79.—The 'Commode,' 1680.

desire. It is painful to look on *that* picture, and then on *this !*

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries many monstrosities arose on the head, which we cannot wish to revive—exaggerations of styles pretty in themselves—enormous caps, and the thing called, perhaps in irony, a 'commode.' This we are daily expecting to see in modern drawing-rooms; for, besides its extreme uncomfortableness

and temporary nature, which alone would recommend it to the milliner, it fulfilled one of a lady's favourite requirements—it was very tall. The commode was a row, or series of rows one above another, of stiff plaited lace, that shot up from the face, unsupported, like a peacock's crest, sometimes to more than the face's length. Women had tried to be bullocks, they now tried to be birds; and though the crest, perhaps, gave piquancy to some faces, it utterly ruined any but a saucy or a stern one; the straight V-shaped body, the long skinny train, assisted to impart a birdlike appearance. We may see, however, that, to a cross old lady, the commode lent a sharp and threatening aspect, which might prove a sufficiently wholesome check on a family of unruly children. It must have been almost as powerful as a birch rod.

After this came the beautiful little coquettish Watteau cap, which we have lately adopted in an emasculated form; and then, about 1750, the ladies' heads began to swell and assume those proportions which speedily rendered woman so much higher an animal than man. This soon followed the introduction of hair-powder and wigs.

Hair-powder and Patches.

Hair-powder is said to have taken its rise from some of the ballad-singers at the fair at St. Germain's, whitening their heads in order to make themselves ridiculous. If so, no doubt because some shrewd eye had marked the effect of the powder in making them handsome.

No doubt hair-powder and wigs were carried ultimately to great excesses, both as regards uncleanness and extravagance of arrangement. The hair, from being simply and tastefully arranged, rose into mountains of wool, pomade, and meal ; and there is no question that through the extreme and increasing difficulty of erecting them, as well as the expense of hairdressing, ladies frequently combed and brushed their hair but once in eight or even twelve weeks, sleeping in calashes or caps large enough to contain the greasy piles, and on the eve of balls scarcely at all ; for in the season the manifold engagements of the hairdresser made it necessary to employ him days before the event, if he had not received notice sufficiently early to appoint a later date. The horrible results of these habits may be better imagined than described.

For all that, let it be remembered, there is nothing in the world so becoming as grey hair-powder, both to old and young. It softens the whole face, gives a strange

brilliancy to the eyes and complexion, and makes the eyebrows and eyelashes appear much darker than they really are. These considerations probably account for the length of time during which it continued in fashion.

There is another fashion which has generally gone hand-in-hand with hair-powder, and which came in vogue during the reign of Charles I. and continued up to the end of the last century. The *patch*, as it first came in, was one of the most harmless and effective aids to beauty ever invented. It was but a tiny mole-like spot of black velvet or silk, which was used to draw attention to some particular feature, as well as to enhance, by contrast, the fairness of the cheek. Thus, if a girl was conscious of a pretty dimple in her chin, or of long eyebrows; if her forehead formed the best part of her face, or her mouth—she cunningly placed the little patch near it, and consequently every time you looked at her your eye was insensibly drawn by the patch to the best feature, so that you partly forgot any less handsome detail. To an accustomed eye, the patch gives a singular finish to the toilette; it is like the seal on a letter or the frame to a picture. You see the grey powdered curls and the bright eyes, and the low, luxurious bodice, and the ribbon necklet around the throat—and if the patch be absent, it is instantly missed, and the whole toilet seems incomplete. This crafty little piece of vanity was

afterwards vulgarised, of course. Perhaps the origin of this was flattery to some scarred warrior or pimpled duchess, for we are told (1658)—

> 'Her patches are of every cut,
> For pimples and for scars,
> Here's all the wandering planets' signs,
> And some of the fixed stars,
> Already gummed to make them stick,
> They need no other sky.'

At any rate the tiny round spot was transformed into a star or a crescent, that increased in size and multiplied in number—blind vanity forgot that in trying to draw attention to all her features at once, she drew attention to *none*; and, later on, it ran into such absurd extremes that ships, chariots, and horses, and other devices in black paper, began to disfigure the female visage, and at last the whole face was bespattered with vulgar shapes, having no meaning, unless sometimes a political one, and being of no value to beauty whatever, and then the degraded fashion died a natural death. There is a picture by C. Coypel, in the Louvre (No. 188), at Paris, of a lady whose face is positively blurred, effaced, by large patches of various patterns, eleven in number,

Fig. 80.—Patches, 1650.

in which it is easy to see how *many* patches defeat the aim of *one*. Some are boat-shaped, some circular, one on the neck being as big as a black beetle, and little ones nestle close to the large ones as if for a better simulation of disease! It is indeed amazing how any fashion so foolish could have been ever followed even for a single season.

It was about 1780 that the heads of the ladies were at their biggest. They had been steadily growing for

FIG. 81. Fashionable ladies in 1780. FIG. 82.

some years, and, according to the published directions for hairdressing by the fashionable barbers of the period,

they rose rapidly from 'one foot' to 'three feet high.' The above sketches are mild examples of woman's martyrdom. Many of Reynolds's portraits show the hair rising two feet above the face, and these probably are moderated and idealised. Of course no human hair could cover a cushion as tall as this, and proportionably wide; the monstrous curls and rolls were, therefore, chiefly false, stuffed with tow, and additionally trimmed with 'ten yards of ribbon,' vulgarly large ropes of beads, artificial flowers, immense plumes of ostrich feathers and scarfs of gauze, as well as other ornaments, and—to reach the acme of bad taste—models, in glass, of ships, horses and chariots, caterpillars, and litters of pigs (very much liked, and certainly suggestive), and many more. At no period of the world's history was anything more vulgar, dirty, and detestable made a fashion than at this time. In 1787 the unclean towers fell, paint went out, and it became fashionable to arrange the hair in a looser and certainly more tasteful style—large curls to the waist, unpowdered, ornamented by a gauze scarf and flowers, as Greuze painted them.

This was followed by the vagaries of the Reign of Terror, and the delirious grasping after an unattainable simplicity, and there have been hardly any pretty head-dresses since, until the last year or two. If we except, perhaps, the immensely broad hats (which Sir Joshua

Reynolds contrived to make beautiful), lined with a colour, and nicknamed, from their extent, 'donkey races' —the sugar-loaf bonnet, and the fashions which superseded the attempt to introduce classic forms, of a detestable and debased kind, are all too ugly, and, moreover, too wearisome, to describe at length. There was not even humour to break the blank monotony of ugliness in both shape and colour (the mixtures of which were simply awful); and if we wish to find any hints available for our own apparel we shall have now to leave England for other lands. Here, dropping history for the present, we shall proceed to inquire what kind of head-gear the ladies of our own time may wear with advantage.

Out of Doors.

For summer out-door wear, nothing in the world can be so beautiful and convenient as the short black or white lace veil worn by the Milanese and other Italian women, which can be made to answer every purpose of a head-dress, and fulfils every quality loved by an artist. The Milanese is a black veil, of a triangular form, and, of course, of varying quality; it is disposed in many styles, the point usually resting on the head; sometimes it covers the entire face and shoulders, and shades the neck completely; at others it is caught up in order to

show the hair in massive braids and plaits. Sometimes it seems all on the top of the head; sometimes all at the back of it, with a spray of jessamine behind the ear. Indeed, individual taste could hardly have better scope than in these little veils. We are struck at Milan by the extreme beauty and grace of the women, some of them with hair powdered white, others with their native dark tresses—but all veiled. The same woman in a veil and in a bonnet is hardly to be recognised: in the first she will, perhaps, look stately and most graceful; while in the second, with no flow of folds to enhance the easy movements of the throat—no softening shadow of delicate patterns around the shoulders—she will appear stiff and uninteresting. The explanation is not far to seek. Everybody has not the unspeakable charm of carriage and action of a really graceful woman, any more than everybody has a beautiful face; but there are some fashions of dress which undoubtedly add grace, as there are others which add piquancy, &c. Long folds always lend a smoothness, an undulating flow, to the body: anything that fills up and furnishes the sides of the face adds softness and roundness to even the fairest. Something rather full and lofty on the top of the head is *generally* an improvement, as so many heads are flat or uneven at the top. This light and manageable Italian veil has all sorts of merits, as it can be gathered in any

number of forms; and when the lace is mingled with a flower or a broad ribbon, it is, perhaps, the most entirely satisfactory head-dress that can be found.

There is really no reason why this should not be adopted in England. The material might cost just as much or as little as one chose—from five shillings to fifty pounds; a white crape veil would not last a shorter time than a white crape bonnet, and there would be no wires to press the head, when the heat makes clothing of any kind a nuisance; while a black lace veil would last a long time, would preserve that greatest of all charms, a snowy neck, and be lighter than a hat. And how beautiful would a fair English girl's face appear in it! A very simple little veil was worn in summer in the seventeenth century, as seen in Hollar's prints.

Matsys' pictures show us veils of green or peach-coloured gauzes, falling in long, smooth, and exquisitely tinted folds, half revealing, half concealing, half alluring, half repelling; but, indeed, there is scarcely a veil of anything like a simple form, that is not beyond all things graceful and becoming, whatever be its colour or material. We are wrong: two degraded forms of veil there have been which we must condemn, whilst confessing the extreme ingenuity of women in spoiling what is good. One is the veil that was stretched on wires, like a vallance hung out to dry, in the fifteenth century. There are

many paintings and drawings of this hopelessly foolish apparatus. The other objectionable veil is the little scrap of cheap net, in the shape of a half-moon, that modern women have but just cast by, and which binds the nose flat to the face, and ruins the eyelashes. What it was ever adopted for we do not know. Not for warmth, as the mouth and nose were exposed: whilst a mask is more sensible if disguise be sought, for a mask does not injure, like this 'veil,' the eyes or lashes, or spoil the outline of the nose.

Gipsy and other hats that throw a pleasing shadow over the eyes (and, by the way, preserve the forehead) are extremely becoming. The muslin Dolly Varden hat was eminently so.

For winter wear the nearest approach to beauty would be a hood. The round hoods worn in Watteau's time, of black silk, or other material, lined with a colour, often crowned with a saucy little shepherdess hat, proved beyond everything becoming to the face. A still more picturesque hood is the Russian *bashlyk*, which is drawn *over* the hat a little way, and, crossing under the chin, falls in two embroidered ends behind. The ears may be exposed or not; a well-chosen colour adds wonderfully to the beauty of the face; the hood preserves from cold—there are no red tips to noses and ears in this at once coquettish and comfortable hood, and were

it general in England, there would soon be no more influenzas and red eyes. The only objection that could at present be urged against the bashlyk is that it conceals the 'back hair'; but a little hair may be coaxed forward with wonderfully good effect, and even the golden-haired need not fear that their locks will shine unseen. Surely the chignon is of less consequence than a red nose? And besides this, an objection which was not thought of throughout so many centuries of head-dressing can hardly be all-important now. The entire display of the hair in the public streets is a very recent fashion, and is significant of the safety of modern cities.

It always seems to me a great fault in the bonnets of the present day that they are—and look—so temporary. I am not going to urge young ladies to spend less money on them; that were too visionary!—but I do say, that when a couple of guineas or so have to be spent on a construction of most unmeaning tufts and spangles intrinsically worth less than a third of that money, something better might be got for a very little more, and something which would last more than a very little longer. A wired edifice of tulle and velvet (two materials that, from their contrast, do not easily mix well), trimmed with a mass of valueless blonde, a spray of tinsel, and perhaps a bird's-nest in an impossible

position at one side, or something else equally bad in taste—e.g. moths, beetles, lizards, mice, &c.—can never be a beautiful object; and when stuck at the top of a tall chignon, fails to soften or set off the face, and yet it has cost two pounds! Why not spend five or ten pounds once in the season, or twice if you like, and have a graceful head-dress of fine lace or some other rare material; or else some cap of definite shape, ornamented with *real* jewels, filagree, or embroidery? A 'bonnet,' which after all is to occupy the place of honour, might then be a work of art in itself, and could be made really to suit the countenance, which a formless tuft of fluff, requiring to be fastened on with hair-pins, and too often recalling the head-dress of Miss Sally Brass, never can be.

I confess that I am unable to see why, when jewels, furs, and lace of real value are worn on every other part of the person, the head and crown of all should be oftenest decked with a mass of rubbish. Scarcely a *modiste* dares to push a really good pattern, though London bristles with art-academies. The artificial flowers in bonnets and hats are generally execrable (indeed, artificial flowers, except when quite deceptive, should never be worn, and all who can afford it should wear real flowers). The large and gaudy insects that crawl over them are cheap and nasty to the last degree. The blonde, when once soiled, is of no further use, and

the feathers are dyed and often mutilated scraps from the commonest fowls—a sight detestable to anyone loving either art or nature. The same money spent in fewer and better ornaments would make ladies' head-dresses appear less trivial, less obviously temporary, than they do now. But before women put sensible, not to say beautiful, things outside their heads, they will have to put a little more inside them. At present the bonnets and the brains they cover are too often not unfit companions.

In-doors.

For in-door wear we could wish more head-dresses were in vogue. Hair unornamented, when plentiful, and *when prettily arranged*, is always beautiful, of course; but there are so many cases where, from the hair not being of a very fine colour, or the complexion being pale or imperfect, some decoration of the head would be a vast improvement. The simple ribbon or snood that many young girls wear, simply passed around the hair and tied, is an extremely good and simple fashion, and, when the tint is well chosen, often makes a bad coarse brown appear richer, and the face clearer. The net, in vogue some years ago, may be a very beautiful ornament. A gold net, or one netted in colours and beads, especially

light blue, is very pretty and appropriate, but the hair requires to be tastefully arranged beneath it. The slovenly habit of just brushing the hair into a tail, and then passing a net over it, so that the net hangs down askew and only half filled, soon brings the net into disgrace whenever it comes in fashion; no hair is sufficiently abundant to fill out a net well without some care in arrangement; at the same time hard and ill-disguised padding is equally out of place. The hair usually requires to be waved, and then gathered up broadly and shortly—the meshes of the net being sufficiently wide to show the colour of the hair within it.

It is a pity that caps are so entirely forgotten by young people. They seem to be considered only fit for servants and great-grandmothers. Even middle-aged ladies fancy that, by assuming a cap, they are renouncing youth; whereas, by continuing to expose the bald patch on their heads, and the increasing thinness of their locks, they imagine they still retain it. This is a terrible mistake. The bad taste which does not scrupulously conceal such a misfortune as a bald patch cannot be too severely condemned; at the same time there is no reason why anything so becoming, so coquettish, and so cleanly as some sort of cap should not be adopted by the young. Fifty years ago, or even thirty, girls were never seen without a cap in the morning, and very pretty they

looked, with the transparent halo around their rosy faces, and a blue ribbon to crown it. The modern mania for showing off the whole of the hair in season and out of season, in the street and in the house, is of quite recent date, and has many demerits; and as the greater part of our mighty plaits are false, they are not such a 'glory' after all.

For full dress, I have already advocated the use of hair-powder, so that I need only repeat that this is one of the most surprisingly becoming fashions ever invented by a crafty woman to beautify herself, and only uncleanly when the powder is of a kind that clots, and is seldom or never brushed out. The powder used in the last century with such disagreeable results was a kind of meal, very unfit for our purpose; modern hair-powders are quite different. The 'bends' of silk, metal, &c. worn in the Middle Ages, across the head, in imitation of the circlets of gold termed '*bindæ*,' among the Normans, are very pretty, and have been adopted among some of the ladies who admire a pre-Raphaelite style of dress. But, beyond all head-dresses, real flowers are the most perfect, and the least appreciated.

Flowers.—Why are artificial flowers so unworthy an ornament for the head? For two reasons. One is, because when the real thing is to be had, only ignorance and absolute tastelessness can be content with a bad

copy of it. And another is, because the beauty of real flowers consists more in their texture and their colour than even their form. In artificial flowers we often come near enough to the general form, but the colour—in itself matchless, and made more wondrous by the refraction of light on myriads of little cells and breathing pores, giving sometimes the appearance of sparkling—is *never* right—nearest in wax—but the texture is always bad. The milliners' bouquet, though far better in manufacture than that of twenty years ago, is often full of mistakes. A milliner will mix corn-bottles and cowslips, the roses of June with the primroses of April, and she almost always adorns a flower with the wrong leaves. Now the leaves of a flower are as much a part of the flower as the hand or the hair is an inseparable part of the person. People have condemned Sir Thomas Lawrence for occasionally substituting in his portraits hands or feet more elegant than those of his sitters. Well, to strip a flower of its natural leaves is worse than what Sir Thomas Lawrence did. It is as bad as shaving the black hair from a woman's head to make room for a yellow wig! A lady once said to me, she had met a man whose appearance struck her so much that for a time she could not take her attention off him. There was something about him that looked remarkably wrong and incongruous. At last a light broke upon her. That

man possessed the peculiar complexion that belongs only to red hair; but his red hair he had dyed as black as night! and the impossible combination was quite ludicrous.

That is just what the milliner does when she thinks that fern leaves 'look lighter' for a rose than its own broad substantial sprays, or the leaves of a water-lily more 'handsome-looking' for snowdrops. And we may generally notice, in a wreath of artificial flowers, however good, that the leaves never approach the originals in colour, even when the blossom does: the whole thing is like a picture by a bad artist, who has taken pains with the face, but left the hands dead-coloured, out of drawing, and 'scamped.' And in addition, the sprays are frequently made to bend according to cockney taste, as they never could possibly bend in nature. Stalks that are succulent and brittle like the daffodil or geranium, may be seen elegantly 'twisted,' or ending in a spiral, screwed over a pencil-end by the intelligent shopwoman —like a tendril. I have myself bought daisies and primroses with tendrils springing out of them!

And after these mutilations and vagaries of the 'ignoble grotesque,' ladies think real flowers less handsome and less stately than their wretched muslin counterparts!

Of course the excuse will be that in a hot room real

flowers tumble to pieces. The answer is—Not if you choose the right ones. Camellias, rose-buds, seringas, orchids, and many thick and succulent kinds of greenhouse flowers, will last out a day and night, sometimes several, especially when judiciously wired. But even if a leaf or petal fall, half a real flower is better than a whole sham. However, their price (in towns) and their fragility are a hindrance to many who love them; but why, when they are both loved, and within one's means, are they only used at little quiet parties; while for a formal party, or a large ball, they are contemned in favour of a hideous stiff wreath of artificial ones, gummed and wired into the most unnatural directions! It has often made us angry to hear it said, 'Oh yes, a camellia or a rose in the hair is verp pretty to wear at home, but it would not be proper for a *good* party!' People who say this are unworthy ever to see or touch real flowers.

The Hair.

I shall now say a few words on the subject of arranging the hair.

We are often annoyed by the incapacity to see what is becoming to the face or the reverse, as well as the utter disregard of anatomy evinced by the perruquiers and their pitiably blind and thoughtless victims. Worse

than the stupid sheep that fights to follow its fellows to the slaughter-house, when a means of escape offers itself in another direction, is the woman who, never having studied any rules of art, wastes or deforms the personal advantages nature may have bestowed upon her, by following a fashion which is unsuited to her, because it is the fashion. When the style, beautiful and simple in itself, but usually most trying to the English face, of wearing all the hair scraped back and bound into a circle of close plaits behind, came in ten years ago, every woman discarded the slovenly net that had been ruining the backs of her dresses for years, and scraped her hair tight to her skull. She was right to discard the net, but she was wrong to force the classic style upon herself, *bon gré, mal gré.* The consequence was obvious, hardly one woman in ten looked fit to be seen; for the head must be exceptionally fine, the features exceptionally regular, that can stand this treatment. Much the same thing is occurring now among ladies who are striving for heads 'like a bird,' but the fashion is not very general, nor held so indispensable as to demand comment. Let every woman study her face before she dresses her hair, as she studies her hands before she buys her gloves.

If she finds her forehead narrowing above the cheek-bone, let her never fail to insert pads in her hair at the side. If it be a broad forehead, while her face is narrow,

let her avoid this style rigidly, *whatever be the fashion.* If her forehead be ill-shapen, let her cultivate a 'fringe': if she possesses a fine brow, she should not so disguise it. If her head be slightly flat, a coronet of plaits, or the hair turned over a cushion, are the only alternatives; but if naturally too high, let her disperse elsewhere the fulness of hair. And should the head be perfect in shape, still let her disregard the fashion, and make a point of showing a charm that is exceedingly rare. It would be simply waste and ruin to pad it into all sorts of shapes.

There was another practice very common in the Middle Ages, and which might with advantage be adopted by some people, that of trimming the eyebrows when too bushy or scattered. When feminine beauty had grown to be so greatly prized as it had in the days of chivalry, naturally no means to enhance it were neglected; and as a delicate curved eyebrow lent archness to the face, women were in the habit of so forming their brows by the aid of tweezers and courage. Chaucer (from whom how much we might learn if we would but read him!) tells us of the 'bent brows,' 'full small y-pulled' of the dainty Alison, that naughty monkey who was so sweet to see; and we get many hints that the practice lasted for centuries, yet we have never heard of a modern woman following it.

One word against the huge bundles of false hair now

worn. Far be it from me to condemn wholly the practice of wearing false hair. This fashion will never go out while hair is considered a 'glory' to a woman, and while, through age and other causes, the glory is liable to become 'Ichabod,' and to fall off.

Moreover there are cases (since caps are not in use) in which a few bands of extra tresses are more than as

FIG. 83.—Vulgarity pure and simple.

improvement—they are even a necessity; witness a very scanty supply of hair, or hair in patches, on a young head. And in spite of opponents, the practice cannot be fairly condemned as uncleanly, any more than wearing one's own hair.

But women should beware, in the interests of Art, of piling on their heads a greater mass of hair than a human head is able to grow. The huge plaits of three, stuffed and padded, which are so *obviously* artificial; the mighty cables, half as thick as one's arm, that rise up aloft and swell out behind, till the effect of them merely as a burden, not a beauty, is quite painful to the eye; in addition to rows of ringlets which in themselves would require the whole head of hair to form them; debased fashions such as these, are a few of the many that detract from the beauty of the head and face, instead of enhancing it, imposed by the foolish on themselves. The eye soon becomes vitiated, and does not perceive, in fact, the vulgar and painful effect that is instantly apparent to another.

CHAPTER II.—COLOUR.

Blue.

WE shall now be tempted to be a little discursive on the colours most worn and most appropriate for head-dresses, but we trust that the practical bearing of the following remarks upon the art of beauty in dress will be too obvious to need any further apology. Many colours are suitable enough to wear in a dress that are most unbecoming in a head-dress; a colour may even be used in the former that could not for a moment be admitted close to the face, as its defects may be remedied artistically by some contrasting colour on the head which improves the face and also harmonises with the dress. Black and white are not, however, necessarily more becoming than colours, as some erroneously suppose—white, indeed, being most trying in masses near complexions that are not very

clear or very rosy; and black being extremely gloomy if unrelieved by some other colour—except, of course, in the case of lace, which, from its variation in texture, is never either pure black or pure white. Lace is in itself black and grey, or white and grey, and, in addition, reveals the colours that lie beneath it.

We will commence with blue, as the most important of wearable colours.

Blue has always been a favourite hue among nations past and present. It is difficult to account for its popularity. In large masses it gives the impression of coldness. It is neither as stately as yellow, as vivid as scarlet, nor as manageable as black or white. Perhaps it is because there is so little real blue in nature (if we except the sky) compared with other colours, that it commends itself somewhat as a refreshment to our eyes.

There are very few blue flowers; not many blue birds, nor fishes, nor insects, nor minerals; in animals and in the human race there may be said to be no blue at all. No beast has blue fur, nor has anybody, by nature at least, a blue skin. Blue eyes, which light-haired persons all fancy they possess, are about the rarest things in nature; and when they do occur, are not pleasing. We may even give up the 'blue vein' which poets love, as visionary: the veins perceptible, for the most part, are either grey, red, or greenish.

Dark blue was the mourning colour among the ancient Romans, under the Republic, as it is at the present day in Turkey; violet being confined to the nobler classes.

Blue and purple have, from time immemorial, been in high favour with spiritualists; it is needless to point out that Fra Angelico's famous blues—singularly pure, transparent, and beautiful—are all associated with what we may call intensely spiritual atmospheres. Blue is said to be the colour of truth; purple and white signify purity. Professor Tyndall says it is the colour of the air.

The early Britons evidently admired the colour, as they were in the habit of tattooing divers forms and figures on their bodies, which they stained blue with the plant woad, and which, Cæsar says, gave them a frightful aspect in battle. They were exceedingly proud of these marks, and Herodian attributes their very light and airy style of dress to their desire of displaying them.

Our Saxon ancestors appear to have dyed or otherwise coloured their long bushy hair of a blue tint, as in Saxon drawings they are frequently thus portrayed. It is not known clearly by what means—whether by steeping it in a dye, or filling it with powders of the desired hue. Some suppose the fashion to have been introduced from the East. The use of coloured hair-

powders and dyes was practised, according to Josephus, by the Jews, who had a very extensive knowledge of the art of self-adornment. We also find the hair painted green and orange in these Saxon drawings, but blue was the favourite tint. We must not, however, confound this colour with that of Mr. Fox's wig, as described in the 'Monthly Magazine' of 1806, when he is said to have worn 'blue hair-powder,' as this was probably about as blue as the fur of the blue foxes in the Arctic regions —a kind of grey white. No one, as far as we can find out, has been bold enough since the old Saxon time to appear with blue or green hair.

Yet it would probably be a pretty fashion, and to many faces most becoming. If people whose hair is grey-brown dye it bright chestnut, they might just as well dye it blue. The description of the Sea-queen in the old fairy tale, with her pale strange face, bright eyes, and sea-green hair, leaves on us an impression of beauty. At any rate, whatever 'goody' people may say about the folly of dyeing one's natural locks, if women *must* beautify beauty, it would be far more pretty to powder their heads with colour or gold, which could easily be brushed out, than to give themselves the appearance of deformity by ill-studied pads that outrage nature and good taste, to say nothing of art.

The Tyrian Dye.

The famed 'Tyrian blue,' once in such wide request, was not blue at all. The great difficulty of accurately describing colours, owing probably in some measure to the fact that hardly two people see colours quite alike, has given us very mistaken ideas of this dye. It is sometimes spoken of as blue, at other times as purple, at other times as bright red.

When we now speak of purple in contradistinction to *violet*, most persons properly mean a *rich dark blue*; but people have such mixed ideas of what this colour is, that when anybody says a thing is purple one is always justified in asking whether he means red or blue. The Romans and Greeks used the word in so many senses that it seems to have signified at length no hue in particular, but ranged from pink to coal black, inclusive of every shade of lilac and blue.

The word *purpura* appears to find its derivation in the Greek *porphura* (porphyry), which is a dark-brown red.

Virgil speaks of the blue sea—*mare purpureum*; Propertius, of the rainbow—*arcus purpureus*. Ovid calls a blush purple—*pudor purpureus*, *genæ purpureæ*, &c. Also he mentions purple hair; in the latter case he might mean either the deep-blue black, which we now

admire in Italian tresses, or he might mean *red* hair. I incline to the latter, from the fact of so many of the small Greek figures in the British Museum having the hair coloured undoubtedly red. In the case of the cheeks, as it is impossible any face could grow blue unless by doses of mercury, he must have used 'purple' in its pink or rose-red sense. We cannot, however, assume that it always signified red, as in that case the word could scarcely have been applied to the sea—or to the night—or actually termed *nigra purpura* (Virgil).

Blue was used in as optional a sense as purple. Ovid calls Neptune the 'blue god,' *deus cæruleus*; and Virgil applies the same term to Neptune's chariot. The night, the boat of Charon, the horses of Pluto, usually supposed to be black—

'The coal-black horses rise, they rise'—

trees (*cærulea arbor Palladis*), vegetables (*cæruleus cucumis*, for instance) [Propert.], are alike called blue, when they must mean either *black* or *green*. Indeed, the Roman love for varieties of blue was such that purple came to signify 'beautiful,' 'shining.' Hence, the verb 'to empurple,' meant to beautify, to adorn. To be born in the purple is a term we still use, though the colour is no longer sacred to royalty; and we sometimes say 'purple blood,' 'purple sunset,' &c. when we mean to say *red*.

Thus there has been much speculation about the blues and purples of the ancients, and especially about the famous Tyrian dye. Some have supposed it to have been identical with our own dark blue; others bright violet, or even scarlet! But colours[1] in those times were not what modern chemistry has made them; we can almost match the flowers now. There is every reason to suppose from the vague way in which colours were applied to objects pale or dark throughout the ancient world, that they were mostly dull and imperfect, and, like the modern Oriental colours, each partook greatly of some other, so that there was not much incongruity in calling a black horse 'cerulean,' or a red cheek and the sea alike 'purple,' or a cucumber either.

The Tyrian dye was, in reality, nearly allied to our own *puce* (flea-colour). Now, puce wavers between brown, red, and blue; but its general hue is a kind of dull red violet —in fact much the colour of clotted blood, and to most modern eyes it would probably be an unattractive one. Nevertheless, in large masses this is a very picturesque colour, and beneath the bright and glowing skies of Italy it doubtless had a magnificent effect.

This was the only purple colour known to the ancient world, and is believed to have been discovered by an inhabitant of Tyre, fifteen hundred years before Christ, and

[1] See Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, art. *Colours*.

perhaps its costliness commended it in great measure to the luxurious Romans; in Cicero's day one pound weight of wool double-dyed with this colour being valued at 1,000 denarii [35*l.*]; and when we consider the immense numbers of the little creatures (not fleas, as the French word *puce* would indicate) whence it was obtained, that were necessary to dye even a pound of wool, the labour of gathering them, and the slow and clumsy process of extracting the tiny drop of colour that each contributed, it was really hardly more than it was worth.

It is now generally known that the dye was provided by a few kinds of whelk, found along the shores of the Mediterranean—the *Murex trunculus* and the *Purpura lapillus*—but the trouble of procuring it is hardly realised. The colouring matter is a small drop of a yellowish hue contained in a sac or vessel at the head of the shell, and this yellow matter, when spread on a white slab in the sunshine, is acted on by the sun's rays, which send a bluish tinge into the yellow, turning it green. Presently the green is conquered by the blue, and then a red tinge makes its appearance, which gradually increases in strength and predominates in the final colour, a deep reddish purple or puce, and there is the Tyrian dye.

There is some reason for supposing that the famous dye was even less brilliant than the colour obtained from

the fish in this way, for in their clumsy process of extracting it they mixed the colouring matter with the juices of the fish (Plin. ix. 60), and thus impaired it—a mistake which is not at all unavoidable.

At Otranto, the ancient Tarentum, are found enormous heaps of these shells, showing that the place was one of the great *murex* fisheries of the Romans.

The '*purple* and fine linen' and the scarlet and crimson dyes mentioned in the Bible were the same, of course, as the Tyrian dye. The Jews derived all their know ledge of these colours, and the art of extracting and applying them, from Phœnicia and Egypt. Solomon sent to Tyre for the pigments and purple stuffs used in the draperies and colouring of the Temple.

'True blue' was the colour adopted by the Scottish Covenanters in the seventeenth century.

Blue has also been nationalised in England—in the cavalry regiment instituted in the reign of Charles II. which takes its name (the Blue) from the colour of their coats and cloaks; and in the Royal Navy, in which case it is of a very dark indigo, with a slight warmth in it, and is universally known by the term 'navy blue'; also by the University rowers of Oxford and Cambridge, the former having chosen dark, the latter light blue, and on the annual race-day the dense crowds that throng the banks of the Thames, presenting literally a general blue

tint, from the number of favours and shawls of the popular colour, are a wonderful sight.

There are so many different kinds of blue, or rather so many names to a few kinds, that we have not space to enumerate them here, even were it necessary. Many are only known to dyers and manufacturers, and possess slight differences in the mixture of the chemicals which compose them, which, in some cases, change hardly or not at all the general tint of the colour. There are only three blues in reality—yellow blue, red blue, and black blue: pure blue is that which does not savour of one colour more than another. Turquoise might be an example of the first, ultramarine of the second, and indigo of the third.

I have before said that blue gives an impression of cold, but some blues of course are less cold than others. A blue formed of indigo and white is very cold and dull, and walls, or any large space covered with this colour, are most unpleasing—even depressing—unless relieved to a very great extent by warm colours in close proximity. It is also unbecoming to the face, except when reduced by white to lavender.

Ultramarine is the least cold of blues, as there is a certain amount of red pervading it, so that in the shadows it often looks quite violet. It is too brilliant for the face; but is very beautiful in small quantities in

dress, or when sparingly introduced in mouldings, decoration of furniture, and the like.

It is worth noting that ultramarine, *in a very deep shade* (when it borrows the name 'Alexandra,' 'royal,' &c., according to the period), is one of the most unbecoming colours that can be placed near the face in masses. Its brilliancy lends a yellow hue to the skin, while its deepness withholds the grey shadows cast by pale blues, which are so valuable to delicate complexions: it should be shunned alike by the florid and the fair.

Turquoise blue, which might be made with cobalt and Naples yellow, and which is seen in perfection in the enamelled porcelain of the Indians and other Orientals, is a most beautiful pale colour, less cold than indigo, yet colder than ultramarine, but in the decoration of rooms should be used rather in small than large quantities. In dress, when not too brilliant, it is exceedingly becoming, especially to fair persons, adding grey to the shadows of the complexion, enhancing the rose of the cheek and any shade of yellow latent in the hair. It is, though not the *brightest*, the most penetrating of all blues.

The admixture of either red or green in blue for purposes of dress must always be managed with caution. A green blue is a most exquisite hue, but many faces are ruined by a *soupçon* of green, whilst others are made

over-red, or worse, too yellow, by the propinquity of violet. Some mauves are more delicate even than lavender, but others destroy the bloom of the skin. Hardly one woman in ten knows—or even considers—in selecting colours, their properties in those respects. Indeed, when a woman habitually looks well, it is almost always because she is too pretty to be spoiled; scarcely ever because she is 'wise in her generation,' as to the artistic selection or arrangement of the colours employed in her attire.

The chief blues used by artists are indigo, Prussian, Antwerp, cobalt, and ultramarine. Prussian blue is the most powerful of the five, the smallest scrap being sufficient to make a bright blue when mixed with white. This is also identical with the blue used by laundresses. In painting, what we now call *violet*, which we have only recently brought to a dazzling perfection, and made a 'fast' colour (violet twenty years ago was a miserably dull hue and extremely fugitive), can be produced by a judicious admixture of the finest blue with crimson lake or madder. Cobalt and rose-madder will make violet; but no common red mixed with any common blue makes violet at all. 'Chambers's Encyclopædia' is very misleading when it says that the admixture of pure red and pure blue will form this colour; and when Redgrave announces that violet is produced by 'five red and eight

blue,' we are not very much wiser. Crimson or a blue red is the only red admissible, and the finest and rarest blue is indispensable to form anything approaching the bright violet we now so much value. Opaque reds are useless, and so is Prussian blue. Indeed, until the discovery of the two exquisite colours *magenta* and *mauve* in the coal tar about 1857, we did not really know what violet was. (It is a curious fact that the aniline colours are the only ones that will not mix harmoniously with any others. When introduced in a pattern or mass they always stand aloof, as it were, like members of an alien tribe that refuse to hold any intercourse with strangers.)[1]

A very beautiful blue, little inferior to ultramarine, is said to have been extracted by Elizabeth Rowe from the *cyanus*, or corn-flower, whose colour is so deep and transparent an azure that it has taken its name, some say from the Greek *κύανος*, blue. Others suppose it to have been called after the nymph Cyane, who played with Persephone in the fields of Sicily before Pluto carried her away. But as Persephone was enchanted by

[1] This is almost universally true. In even the Oriental carpets and fabrics we can at once see how the mixture of these European colours ruins the harmony of all the other colours. But we have seen a Turkish embroidered cloth in which both magenta and modern violet have been introduced with the happiest results. This is, however, a remarkable exception.

a daffodil, and as daffodils belong to April while the cyanus never appears until August, we think the latter derivation a failure.

Green.

From blue to green is a natural transition, and I am rejoiced to tell my younger readers that the dark sage green, which has become so fashionable during the last few years, although often in the London climate looking so gloomy as to be scarcely distinguishable from black, is an exceedingly becoming colour, and has a fine effect in combination with other colours. It is becoming in itself, because it annuls any tinge of green which may be latent in the complexion, and which, in dark persons, is often more obtrusive than the owners are aware of. The most sallow woman would be indignant at a hint of this, and generally contrives to defy herself by wearing the very colours which increase the defect. Fair persons are also frequently improved by this dingy green, when a pale green would make them look corpse-like.

Sage-green mixes beautifully with salmon-colour; both are most perfect colours to set off a pallid dark complexion. Sage-green also goes well with deep lake, with primrose, and with dull or greenish blues. In the

decoration of rooms it may be largely used, on account of its being so good a background. It is a less sharp contrast with surrounding colours than black, and in a pattern will go well with almost everything. It is appropriate for doors and shutters, especially when relieved with gold. For ceilings it is generally too dark.

There are some bright greens which are becoming to the face, but only a few shades. I say *bright* in contradistinction to sage. A dull grass-green with a slight yellow tinge in it is a picturesque colour, and often proves a success in a woollen day-dress—some material, that is to say, without gloss. In silks or satins it is nearly as coarse and unpleasant as a pure bright green, innocent of any hint of blue or yellow ; and when worn, as hundreds of women persist in wearing it, with a mass of scarlet, is so horrible as to give positive pain to a sensitive eye. In any concert-room or large assemblage a scarlet opera-cloak usually covers a green dress, and is capped by a green bow in the hair. One may count these mistakes by the dozen, and they arise from the generally diffused milliners' creed, that scarlet and emerald *must* go hand in hand, because green and red are complementaries. The vulgarity and disagreeableness of this mixture ought to be apparent to anybody with the very rudiments of artistic feeling.

Green is often mentioned in mediæval poems as a

favourite colour for dress for both men and women. The beautiful 'Rosial' (in the 'Court of Love,' attributed to Chaucer) is robed in a green gown, 'light and summer-wise, shapen full well,' with rubies around her neck; but, as we have often explained, antique colours as a rule were very much less brilliant than modern ones, and rubies are very far from being scarlet. A dull yellow green and dark crimson are a fine mixture.

Pale green, so trying to the majority of faces, is, in some cases, a pretty ornament, and may be mixed craftily with pale blue in a most charming manner. The dress offered to Enid, 'where like a shoaling sea the lovely blue played into green,' is one of Tennyson's happiest thoughts. It requires, however, taste to do this well; and, alone, pale green is better shunned by the inexperienced, unless they be blest with complexions so beautiful that they will survive any ill-treatment.

Red.

The reds admissible in close proximity to the face must be arranged with caution. The red in the face is usually easy to extinguish; while persons who are very florid must be even more careful what reds they use than the pale people.

Pink I need not say much about. It is suitable to

most young faces, especially the fair, except when the hair inclines to red.

Among reds the chief are 'light red' (which has yellow in it), Indian red (a dark red with blue in it), both dull, and both beautiful colours for dress or any decorative purpose. They are, however, not often made pure in stuffs, as more brilliant hues find a readier sale. Carmine and vermilion are the most vivid scarlets—the one having a hint of blue, the other of yellow. Crimson lake is a deep blue red, far more suitable for dress than either of the former, which are almost intolerable in large masses. Rose is a very beautiful hue, having nearly the brilliancy of scarlet, but softened by a blue bloom; this, however, can only be worn by young and pretty persons, and even then in any quantity is trying, but mingled with black, white, or grey, has a most delicate effect. Little Red Riding-hood was a child, and had the clear skin of childhood—besides, we are not told exactly what red she wore in any authentic record; but grown persons are seldom improved by any bright red close around the face.

The Spanish women have made a deep red rose in the hair, just under the ear, an undying fashion; but then their peculiar complexion and ebony hair are set off by what injures ordinary English faces; and, moreover, it is usually softened by the graceful mantilla. On our

hideous little wire frames, which we call bonnets, a great red rose generally looks absurd, even when the wearer does not suffer from the colour.

Deep heavy reds are much used in the draperies of the old Italian masters, especially of Titian; but they are always aided and contrasted, as no woman can contrive to be when moving from place to place. It is generally unsafe to copy a portion of a whole. But some women look picturesque and pleasing in deep red, even that called Turkey red; and maroon, which is a shade of red, is a very becoming colour to many. Magenta should be carefully eschewed, as it ruins the complexion, and will not amalgamate with surrounding colours.

Yellow.

Yellow has been for many years greatly and most unjustly despised. It is one of the finest of colours, with many exquisitely beautiful shades, and only when too pure is it unmanageable.

The cold, pale primrose, that shines like a light in the hedgerows, may be massed about a young face with impunity. The dandelion must be used only in single vivid spots of flame. An older face must be more gently dealt with, by a brownish yellow. The brunette may wear a green yellow, and be all the better for it. Pure

chrome or mustard-colour is intolerable by day; but even that by gas or candle-light is so much softened and paled that it becomes perfectly permissible in a dress. Apricot is beautiful for some people; orange, however, in large masses should be generally avoided, except in soft dull materials.

Yellows of some shades are the most suitable of all colours to place near the face, so good is the effect on the complexion; they make the skin look fairer than it really is, and, of course, enhance the blues and pinks. What is called buff, a somewhat dull, tawny, or warm yellow, is one of these. We all know how beautiful is the effect of yellow (not 'light') hair when it occurs, which is not often, certainly; and how finely a bit of this colour lightens and vivifies a picture. I have in my mind at this moment two instances of this—the flowing hair of the Magdalen at the foot of the cross, in one of Rubens's superb paintings in Antwerp; and that of a figure in a picture by John Bellini, a wondrous work at Venice. The girl's hair is golden, with a ripple in it, and her eyes are large, haunting, pellucid brown. Yellow was a favourite colour with most of the old masters. Many early painters reproduce again and again pet draperies of shot yellow and green, yellow and red, &c. Paul Veronese has a *penchant* for a certain yellow shot with pink, which is extremely beautiful.

Rubens often puts in a mass of deep yellow in a curtain or garment in his pictures with singularly good effect; and many other instances might be given. Vandyck is fond of a rich shade, almost the colour of ale, which seems to go well with everything.

Yellow also goes pleasantly with a number of colours. A pale, dull blue is one; but pure blue and pure yellow are very harsh together. Plum, salmon, maroon, sage, also mix well with yellow. Primrose tint may be carefully mingled with pale rose; but the more vivid a colour is, the more care is needed in mixing it with others without a jar. *One out of two colours should always be dull and not too pure;* this is not generally known, or it is forgotten, and the result is the coarse and vulgar contrasts that we see around us. Ambers of all shades are exceedingly good and becoming.

In conclusion, let me assure my readers that I am only desirous that the few hints I have here been able to give, with regard to the colours and forms admitted near the face, should lead them to perceive the real importance of this matter, if dress is to be considered at all as a decorative and not merely a decent covering.

I have alluded to the importance of carefully decorating our rooms as a background to our figures; but I must also emphatically add, that it is useless to make one's walls beautiful, if the objects placed against them

are out of keeping. A good background cannot correct ungainly lines about your own person, and discordant colours brought in contact with them. If you wish to look as you were meant to look—as every wild thing looks in its natural state and place—always harmonious, always in drawing, always appropriate, and, in fact, exactly right, you *must* eschew some of the hateful disguises that imprison half the body and deform the rest. You must fling the opinions of the dressmaker, the barber, and the haberdasher to the four winds, and bring the same care and intelligence to bear upon your dress and your surroundings as are lavished upon higher matters, whose purposes may be grander, but which are not more influential or more civilising than the arts, proprieties, and fascinations of personal adornment.

Sham Delicacy.

I should be very sorry were the corrupt fashion of the eighteenth century to return, in which a woman was considered only half dressed till her natural complexion was concealed ; and hence many a lovely cheek and lip be disguised at the bidding of those who had no beauty to lose.

At the same time, the face is always exposed, and it does demand at least as much attention as the rest of

the person, and cosmetics have their use as well as their abuse.

Possibly because paint is considered to be a characteristic of a certain showy vulgarity which we cannot wish to imitate, an unnecessary amount of contempt and contumely has been cast on cosmetics. It seems to me that (apart from the risk of injuring the cuticle of the skin, a common result of opaque and bad pastes and powders) there is not any more harm or degradation in avowedly hiding defects of complexion, or touching the face with pink or white, than in padding the dress, piercing the ears, or replacing a lost tooth ; nor can half the objections be urged against this practice that can be urged against that of wearing false hair. It is generally a harmless, and, in some cases, a most necessary and decent practice. There are numberless girls who are most amiable, and who would be almost pretty, perhaps quite so, if they were not afflicted with thoroughly bad complexions. Some by nature, some through a peculiarity of health, are martyrs to pimples and other eruptions which might be considerably disguised ; some have been ruined by smallpox, by fire—indeed, everyone knows cases of the kind, where the use of cosmetics would be a real kindness to the victim's friends. But these girls, though any other personal improvement, such as padding or false teeth, is quite

allowable in their eyes, have been educated in a righteous horror of 'paint,' and are apt to talk with a flourish about the superiority of 'honesty,' as they call it. They are indeed honest where they can least afford to be so, and with the unpleasant result of disgusting their friends. But after all how far does their 'honesty' go? Let them take off that ridiculous bustle, and put a little harmless powder over that unsightly red scar on the cheek; let them let out their poor wasp-like waists to something like a sane circumference, and just evaporate with one tiny touch of white the red spot on their nose. It seems to me an inexpressibly absurd and inconsistent 'crack' of modern middle-class society, that if an honest girl is known to use a *soupçon* of colour or tinted powder, she is sneered at and laughed at by her virtuous female friends, and so she gives in; but let me remind her that she is also laughed at if she has great feet, or scarcely any hair, or thick fingers, or any other defect. Crows will always persecute their weaklier brethren. There are always crows in every company; and if your mistaken 'honesty' forbids you to conceal or improve your bad skin, these benevolent fowls will none the less set upon you with their stinging beaks and hoarse screams. Your honesty will only be another feather to wing the shafts of such enemies; you will not save yourself, but you will succeed in annoying society. If a woman have the mis-

fortune to lose a conspicuous tooth, it is worse than folly not to replace it by art, rather than force upon everyone who speaks to her the extremely unpleasant appearance of her tongue through the gap. If a girl has the trial of a complexion so bad that the sight of it gives one a turn, it is simply a duty for her either not to go into society at all, or, if she does, to conceal it as she would not scruple to conceal lameness or leanness. You have no right to inflict your misfortune on everybody—it is an unpardonable offence against good taste. You can't alter your great feet; but who will blame you for wearing well-made boots? You can't help losing your teeth; but who will quarrel with you for wearing false ones? You cannot make your thin hair thick; but who will decline your acquaintance because you intermingle an artificial plait or two? Yet, a few years ago, false teeth and false hair were among the most proscribed of proscribed enormities; while now everyone with common sense approves the former, and borrowed locks avowedly form the commonest 'burden of fair women.' I blame some of them—I do not blame all. It is needless for a woman who has plenty of natural hair to add false hair to it; and if carried to a very fashionable extent, the impossible plaits and cables become a folly on a young head, and really as out of place as a treble row of teeth; but I do not blame them altogether, for it is better they

should study their appearance badly than not study it at all; and when England nurtures a more cultivated and intelligent race, these monstrosities of fashion will grow beautifully less.

Lastly, let us have moderation and good taste. If an emaciated woman pad her dress, she must not overdo it, or pad it in the wrong place—that outrages nature more than if she left it alone. If a woman powder or paint, she must not smear her face carelessly with unnatural tints, like a clown in a pantomime or last-century ladies. I should never recommend unguents injurious or dangerous—belladonna dropped in the eyes, for instance, which, after a time, destroys the sight. There are transparent cosmetics which leave the pores open whilst they tint the skin, and will safely bear contact with soap and water. I should strenuously enjoin the wise use of those which are quite compatible with health and cleanliness. Women have no right to injure their health in order to enhance their beauty *quand même.*

Health is a sacred possession whose value is often learnt too late.

A girl who starves herself in order to acquire a 'genteel' pallor, or who *goes in* for being delicate, deserves the ill health she courts, and misses her aim—for men shrink from sickly women, who are unfit for wives and

mothers, and despise the simulation of a small appetite and weak nerves.

A lady who squeezes her waist into ten inches, risks her life in order to become a disagreeable object; a thousand grim diseases threaten her, and she ought to be excluded from the company of all æsthetic and sensible people till she sees her sin against herself and against the next generation. The same must be said of a girl who wears heels so lofty that she is half-crippled (the spine as well as the feet being sometimes injured), and whose features are actually drawn with pain.

But when health is not endangered the outcry might subside. Critics should discriminate. The girl who plucks her eyebrows hurts no one but herself, and may reap advantage for the time.

The woman who ruins her fine head of dark hair in making it yellow to follow the fashion is—I would say, a goose, but that it libels the bird; but if she does not injure it by the process, and she prefers to wear it yellow it is nobody's business to criticise her. Let them leave her alone, and be more wise themselves.

But away with the pretence of indifference to your own charms: it is not true, and were it true, it would be a disastrous blunder. Remember that others are not indifferent to you. A beautiful woman is a joy even to her own sex. Beauty is so precious in the eyes of

women that they never fail to appreciate it even in rivals unless they themselves happen to be ugly, in which case envy must have a tendency to make them spiteful—not through real ill-nature, but from inherent impulse; not even consciously very often, but infallibly. A woman is naturally jealous of her rival; but when that which to her affectionate soul is dearer than life itself—and which begets her love of beauty—affection, is not compromised, she will always do justice to her sisters. Goldsmith put a true sentiment into the mouth of Emma Hardcastle, 'The next best thing to being pretty oneself, is to have pretty relations,' and a pretty face is such a delight to the eye that it ought surely to be prized and cultivated. Do then your best with the body; and next, do your best with its covering.

Third Book

Beauty and Surroundings

CHAPTER I.

Surroundings.

THERE can be no doubt that people look different in different rooms. A pale person in a pale room is obliterated, whereas in a deep or richly coloured room, the paleness might become enhanced and beautified. A person of high colour in a room the colours of which do not properly contrast with her own, is lost and wasted, while with different surroundings her colour may be improved and softened. There are people who look vulgar in one place and refined in another—so great is the effect of surroundings on the appearance.

When the fishes make unto themselves a habitation, either by appropriating someone else's house, like the hermit crab, or by building a shell piecemeal, like the tubicolous annelids, is self-protection the only instinct which animates the fishly bosom? Nay, other con-

siderations have their part—that of conspicuousness for sexual motives, the great instinct of self-embellishment. Brown creatures live in rosy homes, white creatures cull hues from the rainbow, and snooze in delicate beds of mother-of-pearl—yellow creatures bring black, and blue, and similar contrasting colours to set themselves off. The notion may be thought fantastic, but on observation it will be found that such creatures as are not helpless enough for concealment to be their best protection (such as the sole, plaice, &c., who force themselves to resemble the ground they like to lie on) almost always wear the most beautifully contrasted and harmonised hues.

I have before pointed out that it is no reproach for humanity to follow the universal instinct to attract.

The march of intellect does not oppose natural laws, it only teaches us better to understand and apply those laws. It teaches us to recognise the wisdom of the bird, the beast, the worm, which amid all the other purposes and functions for which it was intended finds time to be beautiful, and knows when to develop all its resources for being so.

And shall bird, beast, and worm be cleverer than we? Is it not our need too, to be seen, and loved—to give pleasure to our fellows, and to embellish the world we live in? Certainly, it is one of the duties of all crea-

tures, and one which deserves a little more thought than is generally given to it.

Our surroundings being then important, both for the cultivation of the eye and for the enhancement of our own inner and outer self, we naturally turn to the great army of artists to tell us what to do.

Alas, our artists hang back. They only paint pictures, and carve statues, of scenes and forms of visionary beauty, which they have not taught us to assimilate in any way—which they do not expect us to assimilate—only to pay for. Not one of our stars in the art world, and that is a large one, feels that he is called upon, as David felt in the last century, to set a fashion or improve the present ones, to design a mantle or a fabric, to remodel a dwelling-house or to paint a wall. With one or two exceptions, the artist thinks it is not his business to protest against the woful subjection of the beautiful to the ugly commonplace, outside his own studio. It concerns not him that his wife's bracelet is a coarse and gaudy metal trinket, that his tea-cups are ill-shapen, his candlesticks unmeaning and perhaps inconvenient, his stair carpet crude and bad in both colour and design. It is not for him, he thinks (if he thinks at all), to be a teacher of men; it is for him to support his family, and to win a narrow name.

Artists and Artists.

The old masters were truer to the spirit within them. As Woltmann[1] says, 'These were not merely architects, or sculptors, or painters, but they were all together, they were artists generally. All that human hands created they wished to see beautiful, whatever purpose it served, and to whatever art it belonged, and they found for everything the appropriate form.'[2]

In the position of court painter, for instance, one reads with astonishment of the works that occupied the hands of great artists, such as Jan van Eyck at the Court of Burgundy, Holbein in England, and many more; duties actually expected of them—decorating, painting, designing anything that was needed, the coats of arms and the shields, title-pages and stained windows, dagger-sheaths and altar-pieces, the saddles of the horses --nay, even the sweetmeats that came to table. And whilst one rebels for one foolish moment against what seems to be beneath the dignity of men whose names are a shining light for all time, we cannot help a pang of admiration for the spirit of an age which so loved art that it craved for it everywhere and always—that it thought

[1] *Life of Holbein.*

[2] This is true of many other crafts besides painting. Read the lives of the old violin-makers, Stradiuarius and others.

nothing too mean or too great for art to expend itself upon, and only asked for scope—yes! a pang of envy of the days when the saddles, the dagger-hilts, the garments of girls, and the cakes on the board, were burning with the rich thoughts of such men as Van Eyck and Holbein!

It is true, these were ARTISTS—our makers of pictures are painters only—dealers in but one small department of art. It is our condemnation that we should smile at the notion of such men as Watts, Leighton, or Millais designing regularly for goldsmiths and weavers—men whose least works are beyond the reach of all but a few. Since Fuseli who worked for Wedgwood, Leighton, who has certainly designed himself a habitation, Whistler, who occasionally devotes his great but eccentric genius to chamber decoration—or better, Walter Crane, who has actually come forward and designed for the School of Art Needlework, &c. and by so doing is really giving, an impetus to art feeling in England, and raising the standard of popular taste, are the sole living names one can quote as inheriting something of the spirit of the old ARTIST.

While our carpets, our wall-hangings, our tea-trays, most of our china-ware, even (shame upon us!) our presentation plate, are left to designers of a wholly lower order, we can never rank as an æsthetic nation, or aspire to possess a national school of art.

Meanwhile, there are a few people who see the necessity of a reformation in our style of living, and thence (since we have lost the spirit of invention) a revival of the old modes of decoration. Here and there protests spring up, a word here, a word there—these protests spring from a few independent minds who are forming a centre of *Art-Protestants.*

Owen Jones and Morris have gained for themselves a certain reputation, they protested first, and immediately the cry, 'Who is on my side, who?' was responded to by an attempt to dethrone the goddess of bad art so safely seated on our necks, and although the feeling was not and still is not very widely diffused, it spreads, and gradually we may hope that a great change will be seen. Other men, with knowledge and enthusiasm backing their native gift of an eye for colour, such as Eastlake, Burges, Cottier, sprang up, and said their say either in colour, or in the form of print—chiefly pointing to the old things as our ensample, and explaining why and how they are better than the new.

But these names, although to a certain extent known, are not recognised as they should be, especially by the 'artists.'

Why is not Cottier, for instance, a Royal Academician? Why is many a mediocre architect to rank as an artist, because he has designed a façade for some insignificant church or lecture room, while a

decorator is considered on the plane of tradesmen? In one sense, every occupation by which a man lives is a trade, and our most renowned painters are men who live by their handicraft—but just as every handicraft to be well done calls the mind into play, and the more brain power required the higher the work is said to be, so painting, architecture, and mural or window decoration call the brain specially into play, and ought to be considered equally fine arts on a similar plane, and the professors ought to be recognised as equals. It is the brain that makes the man: and we ought to gather into the aristocracy of talent all those who have shown themselves in any degree teachers in their own department—having opened up any new line of thought or beautiful point of view.

It is not very easy to explain why one colour or one form is more beautiful than another; why one is said to be good and another bad. There are general rules to be laid down such as that colours should never be used too pure—that nature furnishes combinations and hues which may give us important hints, but the subdivisionary rules must be left in great measure to the 'eye' for colour or for form, which many persons whether artists or not, possess, and which is always traceable in their attire and in their dwellings, by the rightness of the shapes and hues about them.

The houses decorated by the above names are always right in the main, both in design and colour, and no doubt certain rules are discoverable, and even certain mannerisms or 'fads,' such as we find in pictures, inseparable from a man, like his handwriting.

But the little subtle combinations, delicate transitions of tint, certain indefinable angles or curves, which make or mar a pattern, are beyond description, and must be learnt and understood by perpetual study of forms and hues. By observing and comparing good art and bad, unmeaning devices and designs full of thought and interest, one soon learns to distinguish which is which. Old missals, mediæval needlework and carving, Roman pavements, old Indian temple decoration—in fact any decoration whatever is good for study, the eye readily becomes educated to the varieties of tint and the superiority of one form over another—in a short time one sees, without quite knowing, why the old is better than the new—wherein lies good art as opposed to bad art.

CHAPTER II.

Why 'Old Things are Best.'

IT has often been supposed by people ignorant of the principles of art, that it is a mere fashion without reason to prefer old carvings, pictures, and fabrics to new.

'Why,' they cry, 'is not the bad workmanship the only thing that a morbid craving for change pretends to admire? have we not better machinery now, better workmen, better materials?'

So we have—but the improvement in machinery, work, and material is our bane, not our blessing, in art. Perhaps we give too much attention to perfecting the means and too little to the end—at any rate, the art spirit is nearly dead among us and the perfection of the means does not revive it at all.

One reason why the early designs and workmanship are so much better than the modern, is that they were always thoughtful. Carvings and pictures were not made, except under pressure of some spirit that was within, and would out! Therefore strong feeling was

put into them, and in attention to the end the means were comparatively insignificant—yet how satisfactory the result became *in spite of* the inadequacy of the means.

The work was always interesting, and very often beautiful. It got beautiful partly without trying for beauty, because nature, which they alone tried for, is almost always beautiful. It is the thought put into a work which renders it interesting and touching—and when a thing interests the mind and touches the heart, it is generally beautiful too.

The old workmen tried to utter their burning thoughts so strongly, that stone, wood, and pigment became the vehicle for feeling, rather than for workmanship. If a man wished to represent the Virgin, he did not as now consult conventional rules of beauty for the perfection of womanhood. He did not carefully pose and arrange and whittle away all strength and passion in the mere attempt to produce a pretty woman with a baby—never did he think of sparing time or skill in his task, it would have seemed to him sacrilege—both religious and artistic.

No, he concentrated all his thoughts upon the attributes of the Virgin mother, and upon those of the child. He tried to describe Mary immaculate, mother of God, her protecting sympathy with man, her adoration of the

Babe; and the Babe's divine humanity. Naturally her face reflected that of the workman's 'dearest one,' wife or mistress, the attitude was calculated to suggest her tender qualities—the children about his atelier and in the fields taught him a child's gestures. Thus we find naturalistic touches in the old statues, carefully and lovingly finished in every part—the child's hand which is out of sight clutching her veil with a child's instinct—a delicate fold of vesture belonging to motherhood—the conventional crown upon her head enfolded in the modest and matronly head-gear of the period, dear to him for his wife's sake—and perhaps the long hair of maidenhood combined with it, in the effort to represent maid, mother, and queen in one.

There was no 'scamping' either mental or manual—up to his lights the artist did his utter best, and thus, whatever the result is, we respect him.

When his workmanship is indifferent, his conception, it may be, a little coarse, and his view completely behind nineteenth century revelation, we still feel the indestructible thought and the strength of meaning there, we forgive coarseness—nay, not coarseness, he thought it not such, but the sacred realities of nature as he saw them, —for the sake of its truth, we forgive superstition on account of its earnestness, and even ugliness for the sake of its vigour.

There are innumerable instances we might quote of early work, in which ignorance and mediocre ability go hand in hand with an enthusiasm and thoroughness of conception worthy of any age, which ennobles and redeems the whole production. I possess a carving in high relief, probably of the fifteenth century, representing Abraham's sacrifice, in which there is scarcely any knowledge of anatomy—(although in many works of the period and centuries older, the drawing will be found correct and graceful to the last degree of excellence) but there are points about it which give it interest.

Abraham, it is true, labours under the disadvantage of having one arm much larger than the other, and as it is the right one it seems to have developed abnormally under habitual sacrifices of the kind—and I must say, the angel is a very poor specimen of humanity or divinity either, seated apparently on a penny roll. But the whole pathos of the rude carving lies in Isaac. The artist felt that a little child would be harder to butcher than a young man—the defencelessness of the victim would augment the pain—perhaps he had a little boy of his own. He carved, then, a small child in the straight smock of infancy, and with a child's mass of curly yellow hair; the little creature kneels as bidden under the knife, too young to fear harm at those kind hands, and the emotion is heightened by the home (in defiance of the

sacred narrative), with its outside staircase, and its playroom window, being close at hand.

The whole scene appeals to the domestic affections, and it was a fine touch to put in the house; it brings the sacrifice more sharply home to the mind. We feel that the artist had all that makes an artist—feeling and enthusiasm, though he was so unconscious of anatomy—so ignorant, that not knowing what a 'thicket' was, he entangled the ram in a sort of scroll of ribbon.

When do we find this kind of vivid feeling now, like speaking in stone and wood? not among our artisans certainly—not in the capitals of modern pillars—not, even, with a few exceptions, at the Royal Academy, among our hosts of sculptors and painters. Only here and there we find a man speaking in stone or colour because he cannot be silent—when we do, we know the work will live—but in the old days men did not speak without having something to say. That is what makes the old work[1] better than the new. Not

[1] In using the wide term 'old work,' I am speaking chiefly of mediæval work, and of that chiefly English, though much that I say applies to all Europe, old Greece, Etruria, Egypt, or India. I find the most feeling and most striving for truth between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, most knowledge with waning fervour between the sixteenth and eighteenth, starting from Raffaelle, and the bathos (speaking generally) between the middle of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

To the obvious reminder of two or three immortal names I answer that the merit of the followers of a school does not redeem the school.

because it is old merely, not because it is rare, or the fashion, not that there was no bad art in the olden time, for there was then as now every degree of technical skill and knowledge, but because the spirit gave it utterance. Life was not so easy, interests were fewer and more concentrated; with less knowledge there seems to have been actually more feeling.

Not only is this true of subjects containing figures and suggesting a story, it is also true of scroll and geometric patterns, such as those that adorn old cabinets, old gateways, and old missals. They seem to be done *con amore*, under some pressure of enthusiasm and delight—under the need of having beautiful things at hand everywhere. This pressure pervades these designs and makes them 'strong,' while the same thing copied now is found to be weak and lacking in something indefinable. At a time when landscape was not cared for or noticed as it is now (it is a commonplace to say that the love of landscape belongs entirely to the moderns), the details that made up the landscape and originated hosts of flowing patterns were more cared for. Men who do not seem to have loved—or, at least, cared to perpetuate in verse or in picture—distant views of hill and dale and the wondrous sunset-colours, *did* care to lavish days of labour on conventionalising a group of stems, or representing a daisy, a wild strawberry, a flaw in the leaf of a weed, and the exact texture of a moth's wing.

It was these old works which reminded us of the beauty of the 'infinitely little,' forgotten by the later schools, and thus the so-called 'præ-Raphaelite' school of artists sprang up; but by mere imitation we do not get back to the spirit which begot the type—we only convince ourselves in comparing old and new, how much of the *feu sacré* departed with the technical difficulties which beset old art. *Then* there were fewer artists, because no one followed art without enough enthusiasm to baffle the difficulties—*now* everyone dabbles in art, and the generality of people have ceased to discriminate between what is really worthy of the name of art, and what is not.

We hold, indeed, towards mediæval and old world art much the same position as Roman art held to Greek—whilst the one was ennobled by the worship of the Beautiful, and dedicated to the gods, the other aimed simply at the glorification of self, and was debased proportionately.

The thought obtrudes itself, that the increased facility of means is actually the cause of our backslidings.

We have *too much* art now—too much and too poor—the result of competition, want of leisure, avidity of demand for cheap production, and too great a subdivision of labour. The same motive that renders our highest artists painters or sculptors *only*, makes the

workman narrow his handicraft to some small detail. People are not sufficiently *artists* all round.

But we ought never to shrink from learning of those who did so much better what we try to do. There is endless interest, endless teaching, an endless moral, to be culled from these dead masters, who, although silent, still speak to us, and tell us of their views, their woes, their pleasures, their simple strong feelings, their restless search after knowledge and new light, the daily routine of their narrow and concentrated lives—they tell us ever more and more, and we see how like, and yet how unlike, they were to ourselves—when we come to understand that language intelligible for all time—speech knotted and frozen into stone and wood.

I have no wish to depreciate modern art in what I have said. No one is more sensible than myself of the immense and sudden stride made by art in England during the latter half of the present century. We are ahead of every nation except Holland. We have some painters who will live as Matsys, Velasquez, and Rubens have lived, and all we can condemn them for is their inaccessibleness and the narrowness of their range. But we are still only imitators and assimilators, there is little sign of the advent of any new school. New blood is wanted We ought to open our ranks and admit to the fraternity of artists all those who seek the Beautiful

through mechanical means in whatever direction; we may amuse ourselves with distinctions such as high art, low art, middle art, if needful, but equally art is every form of intelligent decoration into which originality of thought enters.

Mrs. Cameron, Col. Stuart Wortley, Helbronner, Morris, and Cottier, are as worthy of the coveted title of R.A. (nay, more so, perhaps) as a good many who hold it among our painters, sculptors, and architects. I had almost added Mr. Worth to the list—because I have heard that he really endeavours to suit the dresses he supplies to the appearance and character of the buyer; but though I have seen several pretty and novel combinations of colour and material of his devising, I have as yet seen no costume of his which is formed on art principles, or supplies all the requirements of dress—no costume that is picturesque—and therefore I do not think he is an artist.

What are we to do?

As matters stand then, the Artists on one side and the People on the other, what are we to do?

We must educate ourselves. But how?

By multiplying Schools of Art, to help us in at the 'Gate which is called Beautiful'—to train up artisans

and workmen to whom we may entrust whatsoever we want made fair?

Nay! The Schools of Art in London are useful, but not useful as they might be. Their principle is wrong. Their principle is to instil into the learner's mind rules, methods, standards. Students of various capacity assemble, and are taught all alike after one method. Each successive master naturally prefers and enforces his own method. The pupils are not enough *let alone*: not advised, far less encouraged to get what effect they want by what means they like; and, no doubt, some are kept back by the backwardness of others. This course has the defect of well-nigh destroying, instead of fostering, originality, which means individuality of method quite as much as of idea.

I do not believe that original geniuses will spring, or could be expected to spring, from, *e.g.* the Art Schools of Kensington and Gower Street, though good and careful workers may and do. The pupils are *taught* too much, not *educated* enough—for the system rather strives to *put in* than to *draw out* what is already there. The fixed doctrine preached especially by Mr. Poynter, that Art is for the few, not for the masses, has a tendency to depress and paralyse the people—no new thing is ventured lest it outrage or contradict some standard. I have noticed (speaking generally) that the work of students most

praised by the profession (whether teachers or not teachers) is not that which has a touch of originality, but that which is most scholarly—*i.e.* it is a kind of technical orthodoxy, which commends itself to them—never any attempt to 'kick over the traces.'

The two greatest colourists of England—in some respects of the world—Turner and Burne Jones, may be cited, I think, as cases in point: like Wagner in a very different department of Art. All three are men who have dared to defy precedent and strike out a wholly new line. Turner in landscape, Burne Jones in figure painting, Wagner in the musical drama, had a mighty individuality in view and in method, and the obstinate courage to assert it.

Persecution of some kind is the certain penalty of originality, and in these cases was not wanting—the new is ever suspicious. No doubt ridicule and blame had to be borne, and were. They did not care. They went on in their own way—and they won. I do not say the persecution is ended. One still hears that Wagner 'has no music in him;' that Burne Jones's effects of overpowering beauty are got 'not by legitimate means'—as though all means were not legitimate that express thought!—There yet linger people who find Turner 'simply mad.'

Still, they have all three won their laurels, and a last-

ing name. But it is not to the Profession, but to the People, that they owe it.

After all, it is the People that must originate, that must discriminate, that must encourage Art. It is from the outside world not from the schools that originality will arise—an outside world that rejects cut-and-dried rules. We cannot all hope to develop into Turners, Burne Joneses, Wagners—nor will 'kicking over the traces' make us—yet the mother of originality is freedom, to think for ourselves and to do as we like.

What are we to do? In dress, in home-adornment, in every department of art—regardless of derision, censure, and 'advice'—WE MUST DO AS WE LIKE.

CHAPTER III.

Practical Hints.

IN the foregoing remarks I do not intend to imply that the Beautiful will be attained by everybody rashly falling foul of everybody else, and by ignorant persons outraging the laws of good taste and feeling in Art more than in other things. Only good taste has a wider margin than some would allow. I have said, educate yourself before you act, and this may be best done by studying and comparing various styles, and determining one's own by careful judgment. Read the hosts of books on art and colour that are published, question nature, study the 'why' and 'how' which celebrated pictures teach, and think—think—think.

It may not here be superfluous to offer a few hints on the decoration of rooms as affecting our personal appearance.

1st, as to Colour in Rooms.

Too much cannot be said against the pale, glossy,

or white papers so much in fashion for drawing-rooms and boudoirs. They are ruination to any material, to any picture hung upon them, to any complexion. The same objection applies to white ceilings, and still more to carpets. A pale carpet not only destroys everything in the room, but it visibly decreases the size of the room—pictures simply disappear. A light ceiling may pass unnoticed, since we have lost the habit of ever looking upwards in a room, owing to the glare, and to the certainty of there being nothing to see; but a light floor cannot be forgotten. It forces itself on your attention whichever way you turn, casts up unpleasant reflected lights upon the polished legs of chairs, and destroys the colours and outlines of all the furniture by its own obtrusiveness. Once having purchased a curious carved cabinet of light oak made in the sixteenth century, and brought it home to my white drawing-room, I experienced an unaccountable sense of disappointment on seeing it in its place. I found it only half the size I expected. I found the carving more trivial, the colour more dull—the whole thing an eyesore. I could not for a time understand how I had been deceived into spending money on it. I mourned over my empty purse, and decided, not without feeling rather small, on selling it again, without boasting about it to my friends. About

that time I conceived a plan of covering the walls of my drawing-room with some very dark tapestry which I possessed, and did so, just before my cabinet's destined departure. When all was done, behold my eyes were opened—a sudden light flashed upon me! To my astonishment, against the darkened walls my cabinet once more became its former self. Never had I supposed that oak could 'tell' against brown—but it did so: it rose in height, it spread in breadth, the colour brightened, and the carving seemed to be under a spell—to move and live! I hardly recognised my lamented bargain now that it was going away. And then I saw at once that the whole thing was owing to the altered background; and I have waged eternal war against pale walls ever since.

Furniture and Dress.

I suppose in the happy days for artists, when there were panelled oak walls and carved window-seats, everyone looked well against them, and perhaps these very walls had an indirect influence in moulding the fashions; for the constantly observing even a bit of grained oak may cultivate the eye in some measure unconsciously; but the oak, from being of a pale colour, darkened with age, and in about a hundred years from the time when it

was put up, the extreme darkness of the rooms, especially in towns, with the black walls and low ceilings, drove the inmates in self-defence to light tints somewhere. Now as shaving the wood or repanelling would have been far too expensive a process for our thrifty ancestors, they generally took the simple means of white-washing their walls and ceilings, and so first let in the demon of white ugliness who has at last lured most of us into his snare. Are not white walls and ceilings to be found everywhere?

Now, in a white room, when the eye is unaccustomed to it, one can scarcely for a time distinguish forms and textures. The pale glare takes the gloss out of silks, and habituates the taste to pallid colours, and an absence of shadows. Small detail is lost: witness the effect on my cabinet just described. And when use has brought the eye back to its original perceptive power, there is the chance that the white will have done its woful work; the 'favourite' colours will be found greatly heightened, without any regard to complexion or propinquity, and the fashionable shapes more *prononcés* and grotesque. No one but old Father Time, with an infinite compassion, is brave enough to tone down our glaring white, to dim our dazzling blues, our raw greens, and warp our contorted shapes into something more easy and graceful.

The whole style of our modern furniture, as well as our modern dress, is largely due to these terrible white walls. Unlimited cheap gilding came in, *glacé* silks and satins came in, plentiful varnish, the very designs for furniture we see all about us, coarse, florid, and conspicuous, are all due to the white walls. The reason for this probably never occurred to the public—that a want of some kind was felt, and the want was falsely interpreted to mean contrast. Everything to 'tell' against them must be of this kind, gaudy and 'loud,' to avoid washiness. Hence the staring *suites* of furniture which seem positively to scream at one in their obtrusiveness, with the result of obliterating the company, who vainly struggle still to be conspicuous by still gaudier phantasies in dress. I am not denying the benefit of the introduction of wall papers, which have been getting paler and paler, and shinier and shinier, every year; I am not even depreciating the wholesome delight in 'cleanness,' and the advantages of being able to see when dust accumulates; but I am convinced that the whitewash upon our oak was the commencement of our artistic deterioration, and we are only now beginning to see how great that deterioration has been.

How it was that in the ancient days—when cleanliness had not come into fashion—when carpets were not, but floors were covered with rushes and strewn with rejected

bones and wine lees—when forks and pocket-handkerchiefs did not exist—and when people were recommended in the directions of etiquette of the period to inspect the very seats in noble halls before they sat on them—

> 'Se aucune chose y verras
> Qui soit deshonneste ou vilaine ;' (15th century)—

how it was that in those days people could have indulged to the extent they did indulge in quaint conceits of dress —flowing trains edged with rich furs, delicate veils that fell to the feet, and trailing sleeves of cloth of gold or velvet—I cannot tell. At that time windows were few and small, chimneys had only just come into general use, and the walls of the low rooms were entirely bare, mere brick or stone, save for here and there in rich houses, a 'hanging of worsted'—the tapestry we now see in our museums—or a very rude stencilled decoration. Costly and graceful dresses seem to us strangely out of place, even for high days and festivals, in such abodes. And yet this was the period of the greatest and most profuse magnificence of attire in England, as it was that of the richest and most gorgeous architecture, and many of the most beautiful and artistic shapes and patterns. Perhaps the darkness and bareness of the interiors created a desire for brightness of some sort at any cost, and the mediæval love of minute detail; and hence the people's garments were made rich and varied, as an un-

conscious atonement for the lack of furniture and light and beauty about them. Detail 'told' against the dark walls: it never 'tells' against pale ones. They were in fact the only furniture and attraction within the massive granite walls. The attention was concentrated on the people, and the walls were (as they should be) the background to set the people off. *Now*, when an ordinary dwelling-house is handsomer, cleaner, and more comfortable than the royal palace was in 1400, we make ourselves subservient to the rooms in which we live—we are content to be always secondary (sometimes imperceptible) objects in our glittering saloons which we cannot outglitter.[1] Or in the endeavour to eclipse the bad taste of our mural decoration with the worse taste of our ignorant self-adornment from the sheer necessity of being visible, we become conspicuous without grace, and expensive without beauty.

Old and New Colours.

The colours long contemned as 'old-fashioned'—the colours in vogue before the present century—have been generally more beautiful and more becoming than any we now have. Why? The truth of the matter is,

[1] This is true in another way of the beautiful rooms decorated by artistic firms. People are apt to forget that a room is but a background.

a colour may be too pure: and of late our manufacturers, urged on by the vulgar craving for gaudiness, have so much advanced in colour-distilling and dyeing that our modern colours are hideous through their extreme purity. Hence colours faded by age are often more beautiful than in their pristine freshness. The old-fashioned blue, which had a dash of yellow in it, and which looks sadly faded against the fashionable staring blues, was one of the most exquisite hues ever worn: so was the warm dun yellow we see in the old masters' pictures: so was the soft, brownish crimson. The same remark applies to Oriental colours. The old Indian and Persian manufactures, which will never grow old, look for ever perfect and grand, and this is not only due to the wondrous Oriental feeling for combining colours—it is partly due to the imperfection of the colours they used. The reds are chiefly dull, the blues greenish, the white yellowish or grey, the black half-brown: this may be noticed in any old Indian carpet or shawl. Unhappily, the same undiscriminating demand for cheap work which demoralised art in England is demoralising the Oriental markets, since it has become the fashion to ransack them; and it is becoming more and more difficult to procure the old subdued mixtures. In the goods they fabricate for the French and English markets, they are beginning to use the cheap imported European dyes

although they still, through sheer ignorance, adhere to the old patterns. Soon *they* may give place to the modern bad ones, and we shall have nothing better from the East than we can make at home, as far as harmony of tints and poetry of design are concerned.

CHAPTER IV.

Colours in Furniture.

OF course every colour can be made beautiful and becoming to the face by being cunningly arranged and relieved. It may always be done by mixing it *into* another colour. You may tone down a raw colour with net. You may select a colour which partakes of another, *i.e.* is not too pure—even a shot colour—many shots are most beautiful—or you may put other colours with it. Do not place blue and yellow together in pure colours; let the blue be a pale yellow-blue. Do not place orange and yellow, or pink and scarlet, near together, unless they are *intentionally* mingled in one mass; and it requires some skill to do this well.

The best way to educate yourself is to look at models of colouring. Stothard had a collection of butterflies, which taught him many things about the mixtures and contrasts of colours. Or go to the

flowers. You can have no better tutors; all the books on art and manuals of colour will never teach as well as they.

In a flower containing strong contrasts, such as purple and white, *e.g.*, you will generally find a third tint placed between the two, in however small a quantity. A warm colour usually divides two cold colours, or a cold colour two warm ones, or the two are *mingled into* a third tint at the junction. For instance, see this tulip, whose petals half-way down are of the brightest red and the base of the calyx white; these colours are softened into one another by a streak of purest ultramarine, and so perfect is this combination that one can conceive nothing beyond it. See this sweet-william blossom—the centre white, or nearly, the edges darkest crimson. There is no blue between them, but the uniting colour is *pink*. You can distinctly trace the narrow band of blue-pink, which takes away all hardness from the junction. Orange is mixed into white with pale yellow, or pink, or green veins.

Blue flowers seldom lack a touch of warmer colour—lilac, pink, or yellow—to relieve their coldness; white ones are softened with yellow, greenish, or pinkish shadows or veins. In fact, as a result of the mingling of many hues into each other for a perfect whole, I am very doubtful whether every flower has not in it *every*

colour—secondaries as well as primaries; and probably, were our sight but clear enough to distinguish them, even the tertiaries, and the twenty tones of intensity belonging to each. In many flowers we may see the gradations, in others we may guess at them; but our sight, even with the aid of microscopes, is very limited.

What an eye for colour has Mother Nature! Does she not plant white roses in a dark mould? does she not set her blossoms in leaves of just that subtle hue which will set them off to the greatest advantage? When her skies are grey, does she not stretch a brown network of boughs across them? If she has a bright object, does she not set it in the sun, and never fail to cast behind it a shadow that shall throw it up? She does her best even with our white walls. If you see a face against any pale wall where the sun strikes one side of it, the background will always look darker than it is on the bright side, the lighter than it is on the dark side. That is Mother Nature helping us out of our ugliness.

In some strange way, a certain amount of imperfection is necessary to beauty. Our perfect machinery cannot make the curiously charming fabrics that these poor Eastern people weave with their obsolete looms; we have lost the strange charm of colour which we, in common with them, once possessed to a great degree, and certainly we have not improved on the ancient patterns;

we have to go back to them again and again for our lace, for our brocades, and for our carpets. We have perfected our method, and lost our picturesque effects; we have perfected our colours, and lost our perceptions of, and feeling for, real beauty. How is it? Because we have lost the sense that true beauty involves change, inequality, an endless dissimilarity. There must be symmetry, but never monotony.

As for colours about us, we have quite forgotten that they must be always subservient to the complexion. For instance, no 'blue' eyes can bear the propinquity of the modern bright blues, without turning grey—indeed, there are no 'blue' eyes now; no cheek can out-bloom the modern pinks and scarlets; it is because these colours have been brought to such a pitch of perfection that they dazzle, but enhance nothing, and they have the retributive effect of not lasting. The antique colours, like the Oriental ones, may have faded, and probably did so, but they never suffered either the change of time nor the stains of wear to anything like the same extent, nor so early, as the modern colours; they were not so bright, though they were far more subtle. In those days one could put on a gown half-a-dozen times without looking slovenly; it would look beautiful and good to the last. Ruskin says truly, that 'no colour harmony is of high order unless involving indescribable tints';

and this is the secret of the antique colours—each partook of some other; their very imperfection made them the most perfect of all colours. I will nevertheless confess with joy that I see in the shops a glimmer of hope for the British public. Recently there has been a great struggle to defeat the glaring colours by dun colours—tertiaries of every hue, and mixtures of the same colour in various shades in a single material. Some of the new wall-papers and stuffs for hangings founded on old materials are excellent. There is hope in the new shades of olive, salmon, and citron, and green-blue. They are often desperately bright, but they are refreshing, having lost the sharp edge of their purity, and become tempered with remote or opposing colours.

To Mr. Owen Jones, Mr. Morris, Mr. Cottier, who is a pupil of Ruskin's, and a few other intelligent artists and architects, we owe a debt of gratitude. These gentlemen have lavished their great gift of an 'eye' for form and colour in the direction of mural and room decoration—the stained glass, the ceilings, and stencils designed by them are very beautiful. The forms are studied and adapted from the finest examples in old Roman and Greek decoration, and their colours are all exquisite in themselves and exquisitely harmonised. Queer blues, that are neither blue, nor green, nor lilac; queerer greens and yellows, and all variations of tertiary tints, are

tenderly united and mixed ; at rare intervals a small bit of raw colour is introduced with peculiarly brilliant effect. Very little gold is employed, but what there is, is most craftily managed. Many colours are clouded or gradated in tint, in one pattern ; black comes in well, or invisible greens or browns. The stencillings, though always effective, are never sufficiently so to kill the after furnishing of the apartment, or the people in it.

I do not approve of delegating to others what is so completely our own department as the decoration of the home. Yet, as the painter and glazier must be called in, whether Paterfamilias cares for Art or no, it would be well for those who are about to redecorate their dwellings, and have no idea beyond white and gold, if they do not make over to one of these artistic firms the entire responsibility of so arduous an undertaking, at least to study their works and rules, and follow them as far as they can, so that the house may reflect the owner's taste and character. It is not more expensive to paint one's rooms with some warm tertiary colour, here and there stencilled with some standard pattern (procurable for a few pence at any decorator's) in a darker or lighter shade of the same colour, or an opposing colour, *not too vivid*, than to paper it with some shiny monstrosity; rather the reverse, it is a good deal cheaper. Neither is it more difficult to make a wall dark in colour half-

way up, and the higher portion a delicate hue, the contrast united by a broad border, stencilled or in paper, combining both colours. It is not more expensive to have one's ceiling washed with a purple or any other soft-coloured wash, than to have three coats of white paint, and then varnish laid on it; and no one, understanding anything about art, will fail to see at once the superiority of the one effect over the other. Doors, too, should never stand out in staring contrast to the walls. The square form of a door is not a pretty one; and even a door with a rounded top, which is a much better form, is generally spoiled by not being carried up to the cornice. Doors should be tall, and should match *in effect*, if not in colour, the walls and ceiling—that is, a room with a deep blue ceiling and walls of Vandyck brown, and similar dark colours, may have doors black, or deep sage green; a room whose walls and ceiling are chiefly coloured with the tertiary *citrine* (a mixture of orange and green—a yellowish colour), may have doors of a very dull green or brownish purple; a room papered with scarlet, deeply indented to break the monotony of tint, may have black or sage-green doors and wainscot. Doors may with good effect be touched slightly with gold, or with paler shades of their own colour, or painted in the panels with devices according to the owner's taste.

There is no more perfect background than the old

Spanish leather of the sixteenth or seventeenth century; but as this is hard to procure and of great price—nearly 5*l.* per yard, at the least—the modern imitations in paper do as well for all practical purposes. They are copies of the finest antique patterns and colours, and a wall covered partly with these and with some cheaper plain tint above, and a ceiling of any colour but white—will always be a beautiful room, and a becoming room to any person wise enough to enter it.

These are very rough and bare hints, but it would take too much space to describe half the complications of colour and shape, which may be better understood by looking at a room decorated in any of the above styles.

Form in Furniture.

When you have got your background right, you will soon learn to see what forms to put against it, what are most beautiful in themselves, and what are most suitable to it. The eye so easily becomes educated, the mind so soon grows alive to harmonies and incongruities, after a short time of devotion to art-studies.

The question of furniture, which naturally falls under this head, is by far too wide for me to enter on at length. My department is rather to suggest æsthetic interests than to exhaust the subject, and I claim rather to urge

people to use their own eyes and to form their own taste than to offer mine as a substitute. Moreover, for those who wish to be led, Mr. C. L. Eastlake has provided a work, 'Hints on Household Taste,' which is so extremely good, practical, and interesting, that I cannot do better than recommend it to my readers.

One word may be advisable on the subject of the recent rage for 'Chippendale' and so-called 'Queen

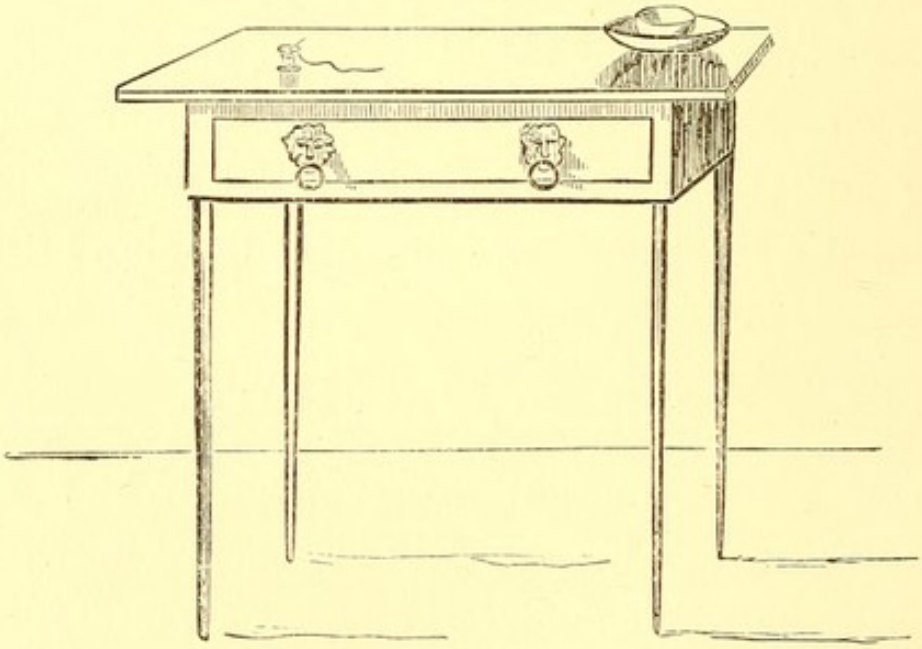


FIG. 84.—'Chippendale' Fine Art.

Anne' furniture. Let no one suppose that in furnishing with this kind of manufacture they are encouraging art, or supporting the Beautiful. The greater part of the objects which pass under the name of Queen Anne are (I speak of genuine old work), of course, not of the period of Queen Anne at all, but of the later Georges.

Chippendale is the name of a conscientious manufacturer, at the beginning of the present century, whose chief merit was that he possessed the now-extinct art of making joints that were strong, yet delicate, and drawers that would open without shrieking, and without undue violence on the part of the puller. His renown has given to all the furniture made after his method, his name, by no means fairly, for in his day there were several other furniture makers equal to himself in skilled work.

But beautiful his work was not, in the artistic sense, but only in a mechanical one. The heavy lyre-backed chairs with horse-hair seats, the fragile tables which seem to aim at having *no* legs—the straight diamond-paned book-cases of mahogany, with brazen-handled drawers—useful they may all be in their way—beautiful they never can be called.

The age of Queen Anne (1702–14) was an age equally celebrated for the absence of art, an absence so complete and so conscious, that no attempt was made to break the monotony of straight lines, and, where there is no real creative ability, there is certainly some virtue in avoiding offence. The 'art' of this period aimed then at simplicity, and hence sometimes arrived by accident at the sublime. Much of the plate is pleasing by its very unpretentiousness and propriety.

Simple urn shapes, chased arabesques, with their slight and well executed curves, have a grace of their own, whether borrowed from Greece or not.

The rage for this kind of thing is the natural reaction among cultivated persons against the vulgarity of all the forms of furniture to which they have been for too long accustomed; these forms being in their turn a reaction against the excess of quietness, and artistic asceticism of seventy years ago. It *is* better to have no art than bad art, though it is a mistake to sacrifice, with bad art, comfort as well.

On this principle, buy Chippendale—buy 'Queen Anne' objects at your own sweet will—but on no other; and remember that, supposing your pocket permits you to indulge the fashionable taste, it were wiser to go a few years further back, and purchase older and far more beautiful and valuable furniture, which is still possible for those who frequent auction rooms, and who know a good thing when they see it.

The cabinet on the next page (seventeenth century) is one in my own possession, unpretentious and eminently useful in its strength and roominess. The free-hand carving which decorates it, grows upon the eye, and is seen to be full of real art-feeling, and skill. The petals of the conventional flowers, are alternately concave and flat, and thus the light that strikes upon

them, lends them a variety of colour: the two sides of course differ, although symmetrical, and the supports are at once handsome and indicative of strength and safeness, and the flowing patterns are very graceful.

This kind of cabinet is usually relegated to the servants' hall, in modern houses not being showy enough

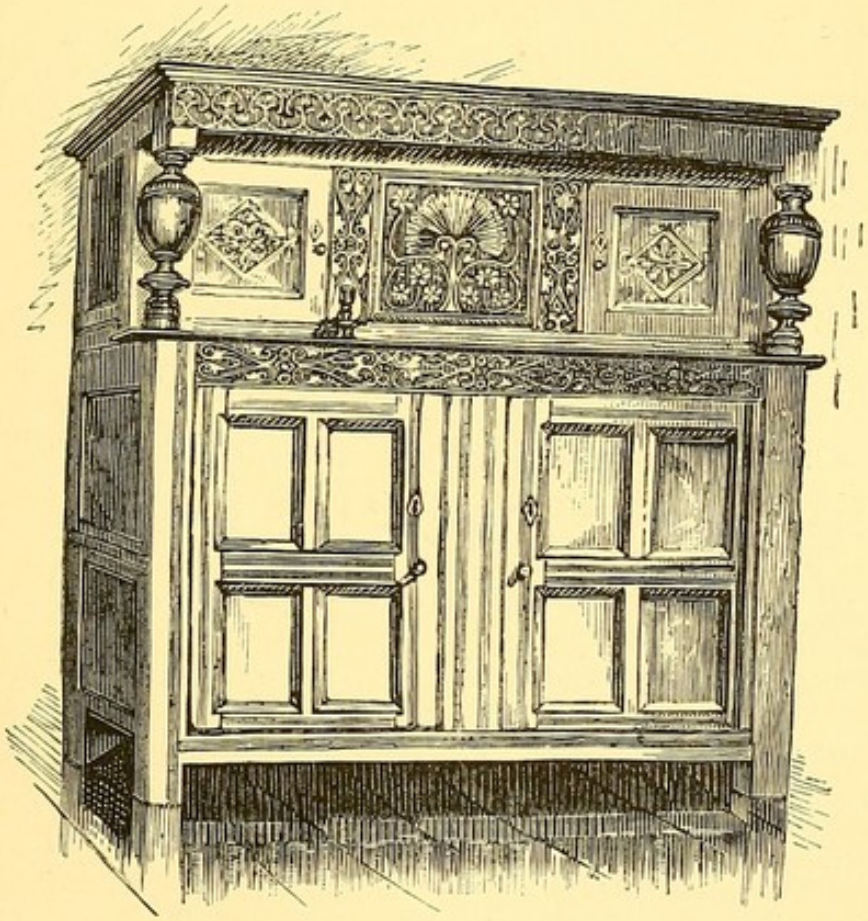


FIG. 85.—Seventeenth-century cabinet.

to be promoted as an 'antique'; but it is of a class that deserves notice, being genuine old English work, and good of its kind. Many of the Dutch and Flemish cabinets of the same period are most elaborately and exquisitely carved.

I have sketched, moreover, a modern chair, the upholsterer's favourite form, as an instance of thoroughly bad art. Every prop that should be straight and firm is bent and weakened—every curve of the body demanding accommodation reversed—and the whole outline a miracle of lumpiness, vulgarity, and unnaturalness.

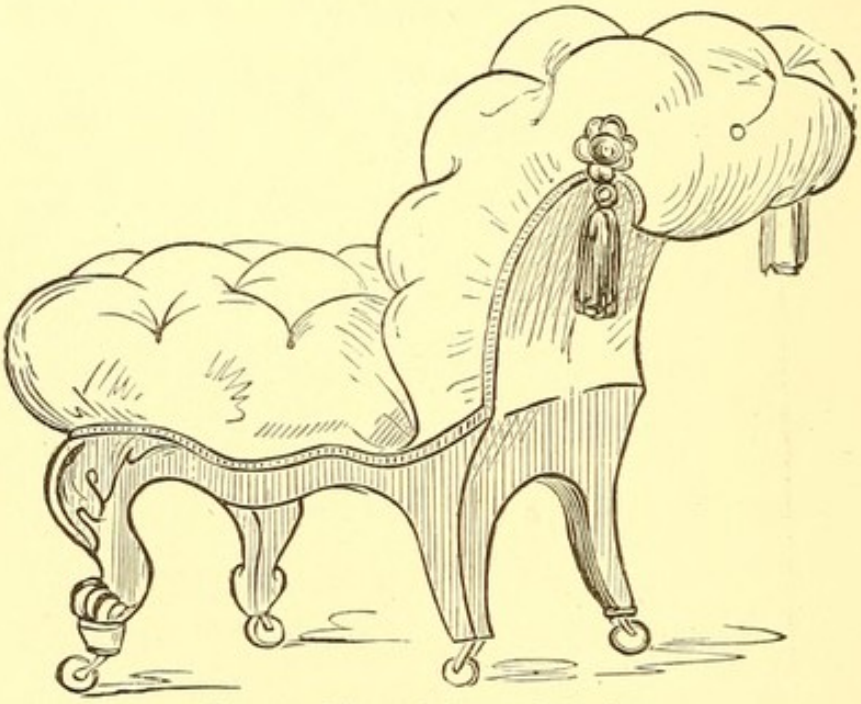


FIG. 86.—The upholsterer's daring.

Louis XIV. and other furniture of good design is creeping into use again. Some of the forms are extremely simple, yet refined—though not particularly comfortable. But why cannot pure form be combined with spring-seats?

Materials.

And now one word about choosing materials for dress and furniture.

Consider, when choosing a colour for any purpose, where it will have to be seen, in what quantity, and in what substance. If you are going to paint a ceiling with it, choose a tint lighter than you mean it to appear; for a ceiling is always in shade, and a very dark colour will be in that position hardly distinguishable from black. If you mean to veil it with white, choose a brighter, deeper tint than that of the unveiled trimmings which you may intend for it, as it will otherwise not match them. If for dress or furniture, consider the material—a yellow which looks gorgeous in satin is detestable in cloth; a pale tint which in flannel would look like dirty white, may in a rich silk or fine cashmere have the most elegant effect. Never put green and red *of equal intensity* in juxtaposition; although these are complementary colours, there is no more disagreeable mixture. A pale dull sea-green goes admirably with a rich crimson or Indian red; a pale dull red with deep green—but they *must* always be of very different intensity to look well together, and are always difficult to mingle pleasantly. Turquoise, the antique yellow-blue, mixes very sweetly with a pale green; ultramarine, being a red blue, almost lilac in the shadows, is horrible with green. Pure pale yellow is a very becoming colour, and will harmonise with purple; with blue the contrast is too coarse.

For curtains and table-coverings get whatever stuff

you like. Chintz or velvet are always good. In patterns, be wary. Patterns suitable for a hanging are not always suitable for a chair seat. For instance, to be sitting on a bird or a butterfly is an unpleasant sensation ; a vase of flowers on a curtain is absurd. 'Italian' patterns are usually debased. Stout boys standing upon scarfs attached to boughs in an impossible manner — swans perched on twigs of plants that never could support their weight—butterflies rather bigger than the storks beside them—are bad, because ridiculous ; they hurt our sense of propriety, and worry the eye. Choose good patterns —common sense will guide you—and let your hangings be equal *in tone* with that of your walls.

One hint may not be out of place—that money is half wasted which is spent on the enormously expensive chair and sofa coverings of antique and embroidered silks now prepared in Paris. While the room is empty, and the covers off, each chair is a bijou of beauty ; when a guest is sitting on each, the chair seats are invisible ; and unless the rest of the room is equally rich and costly there is a sudden loss in effect. The 'hobby' of chair-seats is a delusion and a snare !

As to the combination of materials, your taste must be your guide. For my part, I do not like a Turkey or Indian heavy carpet with white satin furniture : I prefer a velvet carpet or silken rugs. Neither do I like silken

tapestry with heavy leathern chairs against it and *cretonne* window curtains. I think fur unsuitable for a drawing-room, though not for a boudoir. These appear to me incongruities; but some margin must be left for variety in opinion, which is as little a matter for blame sometimes as variety in digestive power.

Light and Shade.

It is important to consider, when decorating a room, by what light its decorations are to be seen. Colours which combine sweetly by day, are sometimes inharmonious by candle-light, and of course any room that is to be used only in the evening should be decorated by the same light. For instance, some blues become green by candle-light, and some do not; a combination of a certain shade of Magenta and Turkey red, which by daylight are a powerful contrast (not that it is one I could recommend), by candle-light would cease to exist, as they become one tint; and certain yellow-pinks and blue-pinks, which by daylight are most discordant together, match at night. Also, some colours require more, some less, light than others to look well.

There are two things that should be remembered in lighting an apartment:—1st, candles give a far *pleasanter* light than gas, if they are in sufficient numbers to illumi-

nate the room ; 2nd, the light should never come from several places at once, in equal proportions, so as to perplex the shadows of things. Light that comes from *above*, as nearly as possible like sunlight, is preferable ; the corners of a room should always be light *enough*, but not so light as to destroy the principal light, wherever that is placed. Thus :—a face that catches two equally strong lights at once, so as to be without shadow, never looks its best, and a dress, or a wall, suffers in exactly the same proportion. It is a great mistake to make a room *too light*, as many rooms are made which have numerous gas-branches. Too much gas-light exposes wrinkles and lines which the kinder sun forgets ; the strong light from below which illuminates the stage at a theatre is *only* tolerable with the equally strong light from above, because the actors are at a distance, and in no otherwise could their faces be sufficiently visible.

By day, a skylight, not too expansive, is a good light for a room, or tall windows at one side only ; and in artificial lighting the same principle should be observed. If a chandelier be used, other lights must be subservient to it. If gas-branches, those at one end of the room, at least, should be shaded, so that they may give light without glare, and assist instead of destroying the shadows of the rooms. The extremely good effect of *shaded* gas jets or lamps is very little recognised in modern rooms.

To return to our walls. A dark crimson wall, especially in flock, fine as the effect is, cannot be recommended for any evening room, as it is so difficult to light. Scarlet lights well; but crimson absorbs light to such an extent that hardly any amount of candles, lamps, and gas jets, are able properly to *éclaircir* the room. I can only tell my readers that flock paper is a splendid foundation for a painted wall, as it then has the effect of a wall stamped or indented, and not papered. A red room, with a black ceiling starred with dull sea-green or yellow, is very bright and good. Any drawings, or pictures or furniture against scarlet or pale red walls, are wonderfully set off, either by night or day. A room painted with murrey colour, a kind of dull light lilac, warmed up with amber hangings, may also have a very delicate and beautiful effect.

Let me also warn my patient readers against grained painting. This is a very odious fashion, which we may suppose came in for cheapness' sake. But let me entreat the introduction of real woods: there are many inexpensive ones, and the markings in them are inexpressibly lovely. Even plain deal, stained with some semi-transparent varnish (this is much used in ecclesiastical decoration nowadays), is a very clean, durable, and beautiful ornament for walls, floors, and ceilings.

Now let me say a word about carpets. Pale ones I

ignore ; they do not exist for me. But the patterns and the colours even of the dark ones! What is to be done with a room whose carpet is grass-green, with large red spots or big flowers on it? What is to be done with any 'cheerful' patterned carpet? Nothing—but to part with it to some member of that tribe whose armorial bearings are the Three Hats. Have we not seen the Royal Academy's walls defaced by artists who *will* place their sitters on some such carpet, and then paint the horror that they see? Has not that been a warning to us? It is a good test to apply to one's furniture as to one's dress, 'Would it look well in a picture?' Reader, if you must have a Brussels, buy some moss pattern, or something very dark and neat, else you will never make your drawing-room other than a grief of heart to any cultivated person who may come into it.

But my advice on the whole is—send away all your carpets, get a quantity of the common rush matting for your rooms, and lay on it at intervals one of the rugs made by the Orientals. Turkish, Moorish, Indian, or African carpets (but only the antique make), will never fail to look right, for they are the most perfect in colour, fabric, and design that can be procured.

Fourth Book

A Garden of Girls

CHAPTER I.

Pretty and Ugly Women.

NO woman can say truthfully that she does not care whether she is pretty or not. Every woman does care. The immutable laws of her being have made physical attractiveness as much a natural glory to her as strength is to a man.

Here I may be told that what I am saying is superfluous, for perfect beauty has no need of art to enhance it, and that those who have been born with hard, or worse, with perfectly uninteresting features, do not want to be told that physical attractiveness is indispensable to them. But it is especially to the plain and to the generally ill-favoured that I address these words of advice and warning, and should Beauty's self find a few useful hints, I see no reason why she should not avail herself of them. I know that there are people who look well anywhere and anyhow; no vulgarity, no carelessness of speech, dress, or attitude seems able to dethrone them;

but these rarely-gifted persons are but the exceptions that prove the rule; and even in their case what Sir Philip Sidney spake is true—there is that in well-chosen surroundings

> 'Which doth even beauty beautify,
> And most bewitch the captived eye;'

and Herrick, too, in his 'Poetry of Dress,' seems to have had an astute appreciation of how beauty may be beautified. These men lived in the sixteenth century—a time when colour in dress was still an understood and valued adjunct, and before we had learned to make our dwellings intolerable to the eye.

An immense number of ill-tempered ugly women are ill-tempered because they are ugly. They do not know it; their friends don't understand, and make no allowances; but heavy, indeed, is the burden upon these poor women, and pernicious is its effect on their moral character very often. I have heard it said that ugly women are *always* bad-tempered; this is an over-statement, but there is a certain degree of truth in the saying, cruel as it is. An ugly child cares nothing for its ugliness, but when it grows older, and perceives that it lacks something which is prized and honoured, and is twitted with the deficiency, and neglected through it, and is reminded of it every time it looks in the glass or in another face, the constant disappointment begins very

early to embitter the whole nature, and creates a melancholy shyness; and when the desire to attract awakes with years, and the young girl finds her fairer friends preferred before her, the vain endeavours to please by other means dishearten her, and she grows sarcastic, ill-natured, envious of everybody, though half unconsciously; many other faults follow, and she becomes unhappy and morose.

But one chief aim I have in writing these reflections is to prove that no woman need be ugly if she knows her points, and points of attractiveness every woman has. There is manner, there is mind, as well as *physique*; but whilst I should advise all women to become as intelligent and clever as they can, whether they be plain or pretty, still I wish mere beauty and the study of 'points' were made more an acknowledged and honourable art than it is, by all those to whom God has given eyes and an intelligent brain. It is *not* a sin or a folly to long, as every woman longs, to be lovely. She is so constituted, and her beauty 'is a glory to her.'

In England more than in any other country, people pretend to care nothing how they look. A foolish shame traceable to old Huguenot feeling survives, about some vague wrongness in trying to improve the looks, and a fossilised prejudice against 'vanity.' Many girls fear

censure of this kind in England, and act stupidly in mere self-defence. If they are handsome, they surround themselves with as many disadvantages as their plainer sisters, and do their best to look their very worst; if they are ugly—well, God 'made them so,' and they have got to be content. Why not say, that as babies are born ignorant, no one is ever to educate them because God 'made them so'?

After all, what *is* vanity? If it means only a certain innocent wish to look one's best, is it not another name for self-respect—and without it, what would woman be worth? If it means inordinate self-admiration (very rare among persons with some occupation) it is less wicked than absurd. We are too timid of names; but it were wise to examine our bugbears before handing them down to posterity.

The Englishwomen are considered by all nations to be among the most beautiful in the world, whilst the French are commonly far less gifted by nature, but a Frenchwoman understands how to hide her defects and enhance her beauties to a far greater extent than an Englishwoman—and this, not because her moral character is necessarily lower, but simply because she belongs to an artistic race, cultivating æsthetic tastes—whereby sculpture, and painting, and music, and beauty

within and without are regarded, not as distinct *trades*, as in England, but as parts of a duty owed to our fellow-creatures, and to the best that is in us.

On Some Girls.

But after reading the foregoing voluminous advice, my young lady friends may still ask the pointed and practical question—'How am *I* to make the best of myself?' I can only offer a few closing suggestions and episodes in the hope of applying my general rules to particular cases.

Girls may be divided into two classes—the Visible and the Invisible. A girl is Invisible when for any reason she fails to attract: and to attract is the indispensable attribute of woman *per se*, without which she may be, no doubt, a capital individual, lay-figure, buffer, 'brick,' or anything else good in its way, but not a woman: just as a magnet that has lost its magnetism might be called a good stone, a weight, a stopper, or what not, but hardly a magnet.

But Beauty blushing unseen is a waste of wealth which political economy forbids us to sanction. To be beautiful implies to be seen, and it follows that one of women's first duties is to be visible. As I have already

observed, every woman has her points, if she knows *comment se faire voir.*

There are several subdivisions of the two classes above named. Under the Class I. *Visible,* we place the handsome, the talented, the brilliant, the learned, and the indispensable in any way.

Under the Class II. *Invisible,* we place

A The Nonentity.
B The Ill-educated.
C The Stupid.
D The Ordinary or Plain.
E The Discouraged.

The latter subdivision may be further subdivided into the

1. The Naturally shy.
2. The Family-ridden.
3. The *Passée.*

It is our intention here to treat chiefly of the 2nd class, as those contained in the 1st will be sure to shift for themselves: they always marry—or, at least, always can if they wish—sometimes they bud out into 'sweet girl graduates with golden hair,' or blossom on the margin of the learned professions. They are in any case always 'Visible,' and make their mark in whatsoever orbit they aspire to revolve in.

Most girls look forward to getting married. They

are right. It is a woman's instinct. Most mothers hold out marriage as the chief aim of a girl's existence. They are right—it is so; but it is a pity that they do not tell them *why* it is so.

Marriage from a right point of view is indeed the 'better part.' To be the companion and help-meet of another soul—to select a life-companion whose guidance and sympathy will raise you—to beget and to mould the spirit and mind of the new generation—and to fit oneself for these supreme duties—what can be a higher and grander choice? The single woman's part in life may be a noble one, she may elevate herself, she may help others, but hers must always be the secondary place. She is never fulfilling the *whole* position which nature intended her to fill, however fully she may do her part; but the wife and mother is a crowned queen. The Jews, to whom, however persistently we have oppressed them, we owe at least our entire religious teaching and scheme of morals, rendered a rare homage to woman married. To her,[1] as Emanuel Deutsch pointed out, the Talmud ascribed all the blessings of the household. From her emanated everything noble, wise, and true. It had not words enough to impress man with the absolute necessity of getting married. Not only was he said to be bereaved of peace, joy, comfort,

[1] *Literary Remains of Emanuel Deutsch*, p. 150. John Murray.

and faith without a wife, but he was not even called a man. 'Who is best taught?' it asked: and the answer is, 'He who has learned first from his mother.'

Again, the Talmud says, 'He who sees his wife die before him has, as it were, been present at the sanctuary itself—around him the world grows dark.' The value set by the Jews on family life may indeed be founded on the requirements of a social state now passed away; but the last quotation certainly embodies the idea of woman not as a mother only, but as the help-meet, the guide, the keeper of the house, which every thoughtful woman hopes to be in marriage.

But all cannot marry. It remains to be seen who will.

The importance of Visibility is peculiarly clear in a land which boasts nearly 6,000 more women than men. The latest returns (1871) for England and Wales only, were startling—males, 11,058,934, to females, 11,653,332—and with such facts staring us in the face we still ask why young men don't marry?

Alas, when people complain of men not marrying (even they who are able), they forget how little women offer in exchange for all they get by marriage. Girls are so seldom taught to be of any use whatever to a man that I am only astonished at the numbers of men who do marry! Many girls do not even try to be agreeable

to look at, much less to live with. They forget how numerous they are, and the small absolute need men have of wives; but, nevertheless, men do still marry, and would oftener marry could they find mates—women who are either helpful to them, or amusing, or pleasing to their eye.

Society is like a crowded picture, in which here and there a bit of bright colour or a gleam of sunlight brings into relief one object or another: but the mass is confusion. These brightly coloured figures are the visible ones, and the rest are but a background to throw them up. Why don't girls marry? Because the press is great, and girls are indistinguishable in the crowd. The distinguishable ones marry—those who are beautiful, or magnetic in some way, whose characters have some definite colouring, and who can make their individuality felt. I would have said—who can make themselves in any way conspicuous, but that the word has been too long associated with an *undesirable* prominence. Yet after all, prominence is the thing needed, prominence of character, or individuality. Men, so to speak, pitch upon the girls they can see: those who are completely negative, unnoticeable, colourless, formless, invisible—are left behind.

I am prepared for a scream from the strong-minded, who are superior to marriage, and think that a single

life is the higher aspiration for the girl of the period, as in it she has more scope for the development of the *ego.* I do not think so, I agree with the Jews; but to those otherwise minded, I humbly point out, that no one need marry who does not choose. A man may lead the girl he loves twenty times to the goal of proposal, but he can't make her marry him, so there is no cause for fear. But whether a girl marry or no, her possession of energy to strike out a new line and fit herself for a worthy and industrious single life, at once links her with the Visible ones: for my 'Visible' means rather perceptible than obtrusive. A woman may be conspicuous by her virtues, her talents, her industry—as the violet is by its scent, but nothing except want of energy and character can virtually make her invisible.

Blue-stocking or not, every woman ought to make the best of herself inside and out. To be healthy, handsome, and cheerful, is no disadvantage even in a learned professor. It is one of the most potent objections to the cause of female education, that clever women go in for huge boots and Gampian umbrellas, setting at nought many graces essentially womanly and indispensable in woman: and the fact, which really has some truth in it, positively damages the cause.

Recollect that you have a body, although exceptionally gifted with a mind: a little attention to it will

neither nip your mental powers nor impede you as you clamber up the tree of knowledge. Busy sisters, if you climb at all, climb gracefully, rather than bring the tree into disrepute. The apples are worth winning—they are even worth your setting a good example to those who crowd the foot!

What shall we do then? Alas, one can never tell a girl what to do if she lack the instinct. It will be perhaps better to demonstrate in pictures of Invisible women what qualities render a woman Visible, by a sort of reflective system akin to that of Pepper's Ghost.

CHAPTER II.

The Nonentity.

THE Nonentity is often at first rather pretty. Hers is, however, a prettiness evanescent in its very essence; for the face being a reflection of the mind, and the mind obeying a universal law and withering under disuse, she lacks the life-giving element which lies in the mind. The prettiness of mere youth lasts a year or two, during which, if poor, the nonentity is idle, and ultimately starves. If rich, she lies in bed late, does a little worsted work after breakfast (always in villainous colours), varied by scribbling vacant little notes to everybody she thinks likely to read them; and spends the afternoon under a pink parasol in the park.

She dines out, and goes to balls—no one quite knows why: she is no great acquisition in looks, and her conversation cannot be the attraction, for she has none! The Nonentity would be bored if her partners alluded to

any subject outside the small round of petty joys which make the occupation of her useless life; and boredom might bring a few months too soon the lines in her face which it is her only chance to stave off. The Nonentity never reads, never thinks, never does anything for anyone, and never improves; had she any sense of her position or any will to amend, she would not be a Nonentity!

The Nonentity *may* marry—if she has a fortune; and in wedded life is utterly unfit to be a wife or mother. Cheated by the servants, *ménagée* by the dressmaker, disobeyed by her children, neglected by her husband, it never occurs to her to question whether her own uselessness is to blame for her solitude. All find their lot complete without her. Winning neither love nor hate (there is nothing definite enough in her to waken either), if she steers clear of the many snares that beset social life, it is only by chance; if her children turn out well it is in spite of her; and, at length, the *Times* will tell us where and when the Nonentity took herself out of the way.

If the Nonentity does not marry, which is likeliest, her case is worse. She soon fancies herself ailing, grows querulous; she fritters away her foolish youth, and wanes into that most odious of social thorns, a mischievous and scandal-loving old maid. Not what the old maid *may*

be, and so often is, the loving and valued friend, the ready comforter, the industrious promoter of many a good cause, helper in a hundred ways, as only a free and unattached woman can be; for this is invariably a woman of mind and heart, who *need not* have been an old maid, but who chose her lot—one of the Visible blessings of life.

The Nonentity finds no real friends, for friendship exists only on the basis of a mutual 'give and take' of interest or advantage, and there is no interest in her. Night-time comes, the long sleep falls on her unready, and now

> 'De ses mains est tombé le livre
> Dans lequel elle n'a rien lu.'

The Ill-educated Girl.

To her I have but one word to say: educate yourself—somehow to some extent, whether parental neglect or your own indolence be to blame for your fault. The disadvantage of not knowing the commonest things is felt most in elder girlhood—you cannot join in, you can only interrupt a conversation; but books are so cheap, and your leisure probably so large that there is little to prevent an effort to redeem lost time.

However gaily clad in other people's hair and as many dead birds as a savage, the maiden can never be

more than a laughing-stock, who believes that Alexander the Great conquered Britain, and that Newton invented electricity.

The Discouraged Girl.

To the Discouraged I sound the *réveillée.* Be so no longer! Up! up! Forget the past. Forget the sneers of cousins and sisters. Forget the coxcomb who grew tired of you and married someone else. Forget the mistakes you have made—so many are worse than you! Up! up! things mayn't be so bad, there are still pleasures in life, there is still work to be done, there are still friends to be found!

The Discouraged Girls are of three kinds, as already tabulated. Very hard to rouse, all of them, as apathy drags its slow length along their minds like a worm which dieth not—and they cannot easily be convinced. But like the last in the list, they are by no means hopeless, they only require to make an effort, and cast off the enervating self-mistrust and moral cowardice which forbids their asserting themselves.

The Shy Girl.

The Shy Girl can do something to help herself. She can force herself to talk. She can constantly bear in mind that a certain amount of confidence in her own powers is needful to bring out whatever powers she possesses; nay, that complete withdrawal from the strife of tongues is a form of selfishness which often shackles and depresses those about her. There is the girl who is shy from believing that she is not 'clever enough' to talk; the girl who has 'nothing to say'—why, let her read the papers and talk about the giant gooseberries rather than be mute; even an inveterate habit of blushing may be brought within reasonable bounds.

At whatever cost, come out of your shell. Do not sit dumb; for this oppressive shyness, from being the cage in which your ideas die as they try to emerge, will after a time become the unwholesome vacuum precluding the very birth of them. Silence which forbids the utterance of thought not seldom destroys the capacity for thought. From being a very silent girl, you may become a very stupid woman; the vital force which once gave you unused ideas will cease to traverse your brain at all, and you will end a '*bouche inutile*,' and a burden to the community.

It must be clearly borne in mind that shyness can

be conquered, if not wilfully encouraged, just as it undoubtedly can be fostered by indulgence; for as our desires act strongly upon our will, so it is possible for our will to act on our desires, controlling both our attractions and our repulsions. Shyness is a kind of collapse of will, a form of moral paralysis; but we can strengthen the natural powers of our will as we can strengthen a feeble limb, by steadily exerting it, and each effort will make the succeeding effort less painful. How often one sees children, too young to be reasoned with, suffering almost physical pain from shyness, and making everybody suffer with them, till a merciful nurse removes them!

To

The Stupid Girl

I have I fear little to say; she is the most hopeless of the Invisibles. She is a bore in and out of her family circle; yet she may perhaps be of use in hemming dusters and doing what she is told.

It may, however, be comforting to know that a thoroughly stupid woman is a *rara avis* (and in these days every rarity is a prize). Therefore, do not venture to conclude that you come under this class on the mere authority of rude brothers and unsympathetic mamas.

Yes. The Stupid Girl is often miscalled. Plenty are

voted 'stupid' whose capacities lie outside the sphere of their fellows, or are of another order. For instance, in an energetic family, one weakly member may lack her sisters' application to given tasks; or in a conversational circle, one member may have no head for dates, events, no sense of certain kinds of humour—yet may secretly be a miracle of presence of mind. Or in a literary family, one member may hate the sight of pen, ink, and books, yet may possess a sweet voice. These may possibly each be voted 'stupid' by those who do not understand them—too often one's own immediate companions; yet were their latent talent developed, not stupidity but genius might be drawn forth.

Let everyone who has been branded as 'stupid' examine herself steadily, coolly, and in secret. Let her consider what she takes most pleasure in, what she can do best or least ill—and let her patiently set about improving that little germinal faculty till she sees her way to being of some use to somebody. When she is that, she will know she is no longer Invisible, but a Visible ministering spirit.

Can she not sing? perhaps she can write. Can she not do the simplest sum? perhaps she can nurse the sick. If she cannot understand a problem, or a joke, or draw an inference, or learn languages, or play chess, or catch a tune, perhaps she can act, or cook, or paint, or

manage a garden, or comfort the sad, or teach children (which not everyone can do, however clever, and seldomest those who can do nothing else). Whatever she thinks she likes doing, let her try to do it well, at whatever cost of trouble or money, and in spite of all dissuasion.

Come forward, 'stupid' friends, cast off the stigma which is enervating you, cultivate your powers of helping, and don't for pity's sake neglect your powers of pleasing.

The Plain Girl

is the most promising of the group. People can't make themselves witty if they were born with a sluggish circulation of blood to the brain; they can't be clever if the cerebral works have been left out of their composition; but they *can* by the aid of dress make themselves ornamental if they are plain. Lord Chesterfield said, no woman is ugly when she is dressed; that is truer of our day even than of his, for the wind is tempered just now to the shorn lamb. Those dear and much abused 'præ-Raphaelite' painters, whom it is still in some circles the fashion to decry, are the plain girls' best friends. They have taken all the neglected ones by the hand. All the ugly flowers, all the ugly buildings, all the ugly faces, they have shown us have a certain

crooked beauty of their own, entirely apart from the oddness which supplies the place of actual beauty sometimes, and is almost as attractive. There is a charm in low colouring, in straight or irregular lines, in restful tame faces *per se.* The præ-Raphaelites have taught us that there is no ugliness in fact, except deformity—nay, even *that* sometimes is not ugly, *cela dépend,* for things are all comparative. Do not some people admire a cast in the eye, a slight goître, even a limp? There is a 'beauté du diable,' stricken with imperfection, but with its own charm.

Morris, Burne Jones, and others, have made certain types of face and figure once literally hated, actually the fashion. Red hair—once, to say a woman had red hair was social assassination—is the rage. A pallid face with a protruding upper lip is highly esteemed. Green eyes, a squint, square eyebrows, whitey-brown complexions are not left out in the cold. In fact, the pink-cheeked dolls are nowhere; they are said to have 'no character'—and a pretty little hand is occasionally voted characterless too. Now is the time for plain women. Only dress after the præ-Raphaelite style, and you will be astonished to find that so far from being an 'ugly duck' you are a full fledged swan!

Thus, if pretty, you can do as you like: you can't be spoilt except by time. If plain, you cannot do as you

like: you must adopt quaintness of action and of garb; but time is powerless to spoil you, and in the long run you have actually the advantage. Whilst your pretty sisters are fretting over their lost bloom, you flourish ever in your soberer hues; the losses of age are more easily replaced in *you* than in *them*, and the probability is that you are more popular.

But to gain this end, care and thought must be employed. No one can be great without working for it. Take the utmost care in selecting good and indescribable colours, and graceful forms, whether fashionable or no—study your countenance, and dress your hair as best beseems it, whether gibes pursue you or applause. Take pains with your manners, be patient with scoffers, yet inflexible, and in a very short time a merry harvest will be yours!

Meanwhile, we must group our girls. We must, as I promised, demonstrate by the test of comparison, as we may see demonstrated at every ball, tea fight, or other garden of girls, how the Visible girls obliterate the Invisible ones, and how the Invisibles only serve to set off the Visibles. Come with me to a couple of very ordinary parties, in-door and out-door, where both may be seen *in extenso*, and you can prefer which you please.

CHAPTER III.

An 'At Home.'

SUPPOSE me to be an eligible suitor.

I go one evening to visit a family of sisters, well-born, well-educated, and sufficiently well off. The eldest is called Emily. She is not pretty, and never was, and has now reached eight-and-twenty, and become the chaperone of her younger sisters. She has never been engaged, and seems to think that as her fourth sister is now eighteen, she has herself no further chance of marrying, and has only to accept cheerfully her *rôle* of old maid of the family. It is no doubt her destiny never to be cared for by anybody, and she was intended for one of the useful ones. So she goes in for being fearfully useful, is an admirable daughter, despises amusements as 'nice for the young ones, but rather frivolous,' wears her soft brown hair scraped down on each side of her face 'tidily,' high unfashionable dresses in the evening, thinks of everyone's comfort and happiness but her own, and refuses to dance. I find Emily, on my arrival, in a dark silk dress knitting

a stocking, in the strongest light in the room. As the gas pours on her patient face, I notice instantly that she is somewhat *passée*; in any other place this might have been unobserved, for I know her to be only twenty-eight, though to-night I find it difficult to believe it; her features are well-formed, but the style of dreissng the hair absolutely forces on your attention the increasing hollowness of her cheek. I remember a young fellow who liked her very much last year, and would probably have ended by telling her so, but he could not stand her practised old-maidish ways and sayings; in short, he could not propose to a girl who would not sit still for a single moment without knitting. I have seen Emily look younger than she looks to-night; but that was one sunny day in a room whose pink blinds were drawn down to the ground.

Emily shakes hands, with fingers entangled in grey worsted, knits hard through my second sentence, and then, lest attention to me should cause her to drop a stitch, I go off to find Alice, who is the pretty one of the four. A prettier girl I have never seen than Alice —as she looks sometimes; but she makes terrible mistakes. She has what is called golden hair—that is, drab.[1]

[1] There are seven varieties of hair christened by polite colour-blindness 'golden.' Light brown (several shades), *cendré*, and flaxen; dark-red, light-red (carrot-coloured and very beautiful), 'golden' which is a variety of red, belonging to a peculiar complexion, and excessively rare: pure

She has heard that people with fair hair ought to wear blue. So she wears blue—a shade too dark, which does not impart a scrap of yellow to her hair. She has a velvet band fastened tightly across it—her head is not of a pretty shape, though she has a sweet smile—she does not know that a broad band across the hair is the most trying thing in the world—not one head in twenty can bear it. I don't discover her for some minutes; the drawing-room is a very gay one, with sky-blue doors, and white walls and ceiling. Presently I discern Alice sitting against the blue door in the usual blue dress a shade too deep. She informs me that I have passed her twice—I do not think I am to blame! Her next sister, Dora, is standing by her in white: her dress is cashmere, and though evidently new, from the angular form of the plaits and the loud crackling of the lining, it naturally looks dirty against the snowy freshness of the paper on the wall. Having just come in from the dark street, the extreme whiteness of the room dazzles me; I can't see outlines. Dora is very sallow, and unhappily carries a blue fan, which makes her look as yellow as a guinea.

Clemence 'came out' last week, and is nearly as pretty as Alice in her way. She has a dark complexion

yellow hair, almost equally rare, like the floss of the silkworm. 'Fair' or light brown hair is common to Saxon races. The reds have a totally opposite origin, being related to *black*, which under the influence of cold climates *descends into red.*

which, when she has a colour, is very clear and beautiful. She is a little coquette, and just now when she does not know I am watching her, she looks charming. I can just see her profile against a pure yellow screen which I have always hitherto hated for its raw colour, because they generally have the gaslight sharp upon it. To-night the lamp happens to be on one side, and the hue which it borrows in the half-light enhances the slight flush on Clemence's cheek. I cannot see her dress, for a large crimson chair stands between us. She knows I admire her. When she observes me she will blush, and perhaps banter me. Now she turns and comes forward. Alas! she wears a satin dress of the exact colour of her face, with flounces up to the waist. I had always fancied her tall: to-night she appears hardly four feet high: this is caused by the flounces. I am disappointed, and liked her better behind the chair. As we speak she turns her head over with what would be a pretty gesture if she had not a scar on her throat, and places against her cheek a scarlet fan—this is the finishing touch which takes away absolutely every vestige of her colour. She looks positively hideous as she stands. I will go back to Alice.

Alice has the prettiest of shoulders, and perhaps that may excuse her for adopting a fashion so ugly as a low dress. Her arms are a little too fat, and rather red

at the elbow. The hard straight line around her neck trimmed with hard X's in blue velvet, would ruin any neck but hers. Imagine Sir Thomas Lawrence painting a lady with such a pattern on her dress! She is occupied in welcoming some guests.

Who is the old young lady who has just come into the room with a lady so fat and so *décolletée* that her friends ought to shut her up? Her gloves are cutting through her wrists, her voluminous white and pink train impedes her already difficult progress. I don't know which of them is most offensive. The old young lady is terribly thin, and also alarmingly *décolletée.* There is a frightful hollow in her back; the vertebræ of her spine are like a crocodile's; but she obeys the fashion heroically. She has also lost a tooth. Probably she is one of Emily's sort—abhors what is false; her hair is very thin, so much so that it would be true to say she had none, but she would scorn a single band of false hair. My hostess's daughters are better than this; I perceive Emily's foot: it is large: she seems rather proud of its size, and protrudes it, encased in a conspicuous white kid sheath considerably too big for her, as a mark of her superiority to these considerations of form. Alice, I know, has a tiny little foot: to-night it is entirely concealed by the most enormous rosettes I have ever seen, and might be as big as a Pict's—that canny

race who made a virtue of necessity and used on sunny days their feet for umbrellas.

The last straw has been laid on my back, and I take my leave.

To a man who has a quick eye for the picturesque, or, let us say, the fit and proper, and there are such men, these sights in modern drawing-rooms are more than disagreeable—they are ghastly. I am saying *nothing* about indecency. That is hardly a portion of my present subject. But why, if a woman has a neck like a skeleton, must she tell the world so? Why, if fate has made her grow stouter than it is permitted to be, must she squeeze herself into the tightest of costumes because it is the fashion? Why must she draw a hard line around her shoulders, that seems to cut her in two, and wear sleeves which are mere straps to keep her gown on, without caring, without knowing, whether her arms are pleasing to see? Why must she wear trimmings of great O's and X's and vandykes on her skirt, so that at a little distance the first thing about her that strikes the eye is the trimming? Why, if very tall, must she take the arm of a very little man, and make herself and him look absurd? Why will she draw attention to her want of colour by wearing red or arsenic green? Why, with red hair, is her dress pink? Why, when in a very pale dress, does she lean against the wall which English

ignorance has papered with white? Why, with black hair, does she carry a heavy burden of jet flowers, combs, and impossibly thick plaits, till her head seems like an elephant's on an antelope's body? Why will she trust to the very moderate gifts nature has endowed her with, to fight against the most abnormal disadvantages? Why—why—but enough—these are only some of the insane mistakes that nearly all girls commit, many of them girls with artistic tastes and capacities, in every direction except dress, whose eyes you may see shine with pleasure at a sunset or a bean-flower—which, nevertheless, they steadily refuse to take a hint from?

Very few women know what style of dress suits them best, or what colours; some neglect themselves like Emily; even those who, like Clemence, study the art, study it wrongly. One may often see a woman who has the makings of a dignified goddess *se poser en coquette*, or a little creature attempt to be stately who can only be simple. The best grace is perfect naturalness. Our manners form themselves, but we must form our setting of them. Nature can do much, but not everything. Art should lend a hand.

A Garden Party.

Mrs. Fitzwouldbee has five daughters, two Invisible ones, and three Visible ones. Joanna, the eldest, has never married; she never was tempted but once, I have heard the story. Her lover went abroad just before the marriage and died of fever in the West Indies; the news was brought to Joanna only a day or two before the wedding day, when the trousseau was ready, and the house choked with wedding presents. Joanna has never really recovered her spirits since then—some ten years ago; but she is always ready to amuse and to be amused. She is no longer pretty, but after dinner chat flags without Joanna; she is no great musician, but she always has a bit of Auber ready to set the guests talking. She is no great conversationalist, but no one can harmonise incongruous elements so well as Joanna. She does not dress very gaily, but there is always a *cachet* about what she wears which stamps her as of æsthetic tastes; she is not particularly clever, but if anybody wants an idea formed, or a difficulty solved, or a tradesman directed, or the servants scolded, or crusty 'pa' coaxed, Joanna is the one, the only one who can do it. Not clever, said I? yes, she has one of the best kinds of cleverness, she has tact, penetration, sympathy,

energy, patience, and humour. For all her quiet manner and quiet dress, Joanna is one of the Visible ones. No one would ever pass her over in a room, for she is indispensable to everybody. For all her hollow cheek, and a shadow of suffering in her eyes—only seen at times when she thinks herself unseen, many a man would be glad to lead away Joanna to some more shining life, were not her heart buried in a far country.

As I enter, I find Joanna at her post receiving guests, as 'the mother' does not like standing. She wears her favourite grey and yellow drapery, and instinctively she seems to fall into right surroundings. Beside her the purple hangings lend softness to her dress, and the shaded sunlight behind her lends her brown hair a kind of nimbus—Joanna never had a feature in her face, and yet she always looks sweet and picturesque.

I find myself wondering whether she ever could be persuaded. . . Laura bumps heavily against me, and breaks the train of thought. Laura is six-and-twenty, and apologises, but she is sure to repeat the offence at any moment. Perhaps it is best she should—she has no other way of making her personality felt.

Laura was pretty five or six years ago, and was as vain a little minx as ever tormented the sex. No man but was fish for her net—no man was good enough for

more than a passing 'quip and crank.' Laura 'went off' rather suddenly—so much so that she saw it herself, and being still unattached, a kind of revulsion seized her. From the most extravagant style of dressing and constant debts to her sisters, Laura suddenly began to save. She left off high heels and bustles, and became flat on both sides, like a skate—which, by the bye, *has* a face. Where she used to 'go in' she 'came out,' and where she used to 'stick out,' she 'sank in.' Her shape became reversed, as though her head were accidentally put on the wrong way. Her hands dilated in wash-leather and knitted gloves, usually imperfect, and her fingers were kept extended and flabby to display their size—never too small.

To-day she is like a bundle of rags. A tumbled blue flounced affair enwraps her form. A mauve ribbon is twisted roughly round her neck. A conspicuous spot of grease adorns one end. If there is a mixture of colour Laura would *once* have eschewed, it is blue and lilac.

I ask her whether many guests are expected to-day, Laura practises a form of deafness peculiarly annoying in a woman, she says loudly, 'What did you say?' as though I had whispered something impertinent, and on my repeating the question, replies, 'Oh lor! *I* don't know. Goodness knows. Parties bore *me*. All the people come one least wants to see.' At this broad

hint I gladly sidle onwards, though quite aware it is only 'Loo's way,' and no special insult is meant.

As I pass behind her, I cannot help seeing a long string hanging from her skirt which cannot possibly be intended for show (also recalling the skate), and half mischievously I step upon it as a *quid pro quo.* Laura, of course, bumps off presently in her favourite ungainly fashion, and the string gives way and 'gathers' with it. Terrified at what I have done I make every apology. 'Oh lor!' says Loo, 'it doesn't signify,' and she pokes the broken gathers into her belt without a change of countenance, and turning on her heel, she reveals a foot clad in a carpet slipper (papa's surely?), and shuffles off. Ex-flirt of only twenty-six! what a change is here! Bump as you may against each and all, you are not noticeable, even for your slovenliness. Your draggled gown only serves to trip up your sisters, your studied indifference begets indifference to you, no one cares to encounter you—none but the bumped perceive the fair —and Joanna herself has left off remonstrating.

Cissy is another invisible one. I can't see her just now—I never can unless she happens to creep up with her *sotto voce* 'Sandwich . . . ices . . . day . . .' something. 'I beg pardon!' No one can ever hear what Cissy says except Joanna, whose ear is cultivated to the drone.

'I only said "very hot day!"' she says with a weak shout, after some efforts. Poor thing! this lamentable shyness is partly Laura's fault, she used to snub her so as a child. Cissy glides off—her chronic state is gliding off on tiny silent feet that never peep out, and her really neat little figure held in the shape of the new moon, in her instinct to escape, without pointing out definitely *where* the ices and sandwiches are to be found.

It is impossible to describe Cissy's face: scarcely anyone has seen it fronting. Cis will never marry: she is so utterly insignificant. Her mind is a vacuum, her appearance just average—she will never make any impression anywhen or anyhow. If her father died she would be utterly unfit for a governess; she could not support herself in any single way, and it is scarcely likely that on that account alone a man would volunteer to incur the expense of her: why should he? As to her attire, it has been said that for a lady to be well dressed one should never notice what she has on. If that be true, Cissy is well dressed.

But there goes Nell! that incorrigible romp of sixteen, racing off with her brothers and a bevy of their schoolmates, to the lawn-tennis. I am not sure that I should like a wife who was so *very* far from serious—however, she has time.

Nell is the plainest of the sisters, and the youngest —spoilt as far as she can be, but unspoilable in many ways, for *elle a du caractère.* Her perfectly circular face with its whitey-brown complexion, is only redeemed by a pair of mocking blue eyes; her hair is as untidy as Loo's, but not, like hers, from affectation; her dress is always in tatters, but it is not put on in that state, it is only her gambols that rend her garments; and when papa or mama expostulates, with frowns, Nell's eyes are full of such genuine contrition for her carelessness that no one but a brute could stand by and not take her part; and then the fun comes back to them, and a little merry word to her tongue. Yonder she flies—hey, presto! the lofty little heels played her false, and Nell is on the ground. All the boys are hauling her up, and with what a comic *moue* she peeps round to see if papa were near, who so hates to see her slipping about. No — none but myself saw the mishap, and of course I lend a hand and a handkerchief. She is consoled, and turns on me with such a funny little air, 'After all, I'm better than Humpty Dumpty, for I do bear picking up,' she says, as she tries to whisk off a grass stain from her white dress—and the next minute her circumspect walk becomes a run again.

Nell would be a sunbeam in any house wherein there was not too much breakable property. She is a Visible

girl, through her April moods and her faculty for banishing dull care, and thus is popular wherever she goes.

Dorothea, a year older than Nell, comes up. Dorothea has always men around her, but she is not a flirt, as Laura was a few years ago. She is a very sweet woman, full of interest when you can get her to talk, which is not always easy. She was a quiet child, who made the most of her school years, and is not without considerable capacities for winning affection and keeping it. She is more like Joanna than any of the rest, with the addition of that early freshness which poor Joanna has lost.

And what a face! pathetic in repose, and mischievous when she smiles; there is something *piquante* in the sudden change. I would carry off Dorothea if I could—but I know I haven't a chance. Girls with brains and looks too are seldom to be had; they are snapped up out of the very school-room. Dorothea is already engaged, and a good wife and mother she will make. She moves away like a delicate flower, in her flower-like garb, which makes one cool only to see; it is a garb that reminds one of cream and ice under a shady tree—and, by the bye, there *are* ices somewhere, I had better pursue them.

I find the ices, and the clean and tidy Loo being endured by a young man, who very properly thinks he

ought to take his turn with all the daughters of the house.

Laura is still not unattractive, when she is not trying to make herself revolting. In spite of her sloppiness, she has a good figure. Unconscious of herself for a minute, I see she still might be made a thing of beauty —but there! directly she finds herself observed, she lolls on the table in a jelly-fish attitude, with one carpet slipper proudly extended, whilst her two hands, never either too white or too small, are spread like a lobster's on the white cloth, whilst she performs a 'devil's tattoo' to hurry her partner. I say to her, *faute de mieux* (one never knows how she will take a remark), 'These ices are very good.' 'Are they?' says Loo, with studied glumness; and a dead pause ensues during which I cannot tear my eyes from the contrast of colour between the lobster hands and the cloth. 'Why do you never wear rings?' I ask, also *faute de mieux.* 'Eh? why don't I wear rings?—Oh, because my hands are so large and red'—answers the high-minded one, exhibiting them.

Well—vanity may be a sin—but that was unwomanly!

Laura's crony, a mannish young lady—a sort of hybrid between masculine and feminine—joins her at this juncture, and as I move aft under the trees, I see her

assuming her favourite attitude, I know the creature —'strong-minded,' not cultured. It goes in for intellect—and, as usual, when intellect has to be 'gone in' for, there is not much of the real thing *in situ.* Many are her 'ologies'—and were she a woman of extraordinary ability one might find excuse for her elbows and knees. But I happen to have discovered that Dorothea knows much more on any subject, though she does not straddle across the paths, nor try to ape a man.

FIG. 87.—Strong-minded young lady.

Ah, Dorothea! with your sweet face and a little red in your hair, your strange-hued garb and gracious presence—old age will rob you of scarcely any charm; like Joanna you may fade, but like her you will be always sweet and pleasant; the glory of the flesh may pass away, but the glory of the heart and mind will ripen and remain.

Home Tyranny.

Shrewd reader, you have probably recognised and tabulated all these young ladies. You have seen that to

be a Visible one need not be an obtrusive girl, and to be Invisible implies necessarily neither plainness, stupidity, nor want of education. You may be Invisible on account of these things; you may also be Visible in spite of them. You may be pretty and clever and yet Invisible, from want of mental force to display yourself as you are; you may be plain, of no great talents, and yet your tact, your usefulness, your lovableness, may unmistakably class you with the Visible ones.

It must never be forgotten too that many an Invisible girl has the makings of a Visible one in her, if she would make an effort to improve, or if someone would take the trouble to develop her. Every girl has her points, but they must be found. Abnormal causes, and the swiftness and variety of life go to make an Invisible, as the speed of the wheel degrades all the naturally vivid colours to one dull whitish hue.

It is certain that one of the most offensive forms of Invisible girls arises not from inherent badness of disposition but from discouragement, sometimes being the reaction from an opposite mood, as in Laura, sometimes, as in Cissy, springing from being shy and family-ridden.

I hope you deduce that discouragement is *always* mischievous, and that many a fine character, many a sweet temper, is spoilt by being cramped and hampered

in expanding, by adverse criticism, sneering, and general rough usage in the family circle. A yielding spirit does not easily rise after crushing even in fun, and a very humble one sometimes never recovers a blow levelled at its self-esteem.

What is stigmatised as 'vanity' is sometimes only a little cloud of self-comfort thrown out by extreme self-depreciation, to defend itself from being utterly trampled upon—as some plants gather an invisible vapour of damp about them for sustenance of their too fragile fibres. Never try to destroy that 'vanity.' A woman may be not vain enough as well as too vain, and, indeed, without vanity of a kind, all proper pride and self-respect would be apt to disappear.

One word to mothers. If there be one who seems to recognise in one of these pictures a daughter of her own, let her conceal it from that daughter. Most mothers would instinctively do so out of the deep affection which belongs to them—but there are mothers who dare to brand their girls with nicknames in the family circle, which cut deep and cling long, and (though thoughtlessness rather than ill feeling may prompt them to it) are never forgotten by the girl, who knows that to her mother before all she ought to owe all encouragement and comfort, and never one bitter word or the shadow of a taunt. Such a name as Plain, Nonentity, Discou-

raged, Stupid, or Useless-mouth once flung even in derision at a sensitive child, may embitter and distort and clog the child's mind for years, though she make no sign, and fling no answer back.

Any mother who permits herself to use a taunt like this, is unworthy of her name.

It is the mother who can best cover the child's deficiencies, take her part, help her to shine in some way or other, encourage her to make the best of herself, and dress her well—or, better, let her dress herself after the impulse of her own character.

It is the mother who can make herself the companion and friend of a girl, with tender and ready counsel and sympathy, and no one but the mother can so naturally and surely lead a daughter from the choked ranks of the *Invisible Girls* to her proper place among the *Visible.*

En Fin.

Meanwhile, how is a girl to be beautiful? Unless she be a Helen or a Cleopatra, what is she to do to be a joy for ever?

Nay, it is easier to say what she is *not* to do.

If you are stout, do not lean back in little chairs, with your hands folded on your stomach, especially whilst the present fashion lasts. If you are thin, do

not go in for 'nature unadorned' being 'adorned the most,' or carry yourself in the attitude of the new moon, stumping along on your heels—do not wear very flimsy materials, very tightly tied around you, so that people cannot help noticing that you have a bad figure.

FIG. 88.—Fashion's slave.

If you have come to the conclusion late in the day that there are many others

FIG. 89.—Seemly or slatternly?

more beautiful than you, do not, therefore, give up all

attempt to be cheerful and look pretty, for, after all, you may be for someone yet the most beautiful of women.

If you be ever so fair to see, don't forget that even a pretty woman may look absurd—do not throw yourself into unpicturesque positions. Englishwomen are singu-

FIG. 90.—Grace.

larly unconscious or reckless of the way in which they bear themselves—but it is just as well to try and see oneself as others see one.

It is perhaps hardly fair to close with what I wish I could feel to be a libel upon our sex, and I have therefore been moved by this sad spectacle of un-grace to relieve the reader's eye by providing a little antidote in the shape of grace.

Let my readers cast a parting look upon this picture and upon that—upon grace and un-grace. The proprieties of dress and *entourage*, the gentle courtesies which cause the wheels of life to run smoothly, are the source of one, whilst indifference to both feeling and effect lies at the root of the other. Not self-conscious-

FIG. 91.—Un-grace.

ness, but consciousness of others' feelings should be developed with a deepened sense of the importance of individual thought and action—in dress and manner as in everything else.

Although the subject may have its ridiculous side, and it is far from useless or unwise to laugh at what

deserves to be laughed at, still my aim in these observations upon women and their dress has been from first to last a serious one. The waste of force, the loss of opportunities, the failure of sweetness and grace visible around us, due ofttimes to right instincts wrongly applied, or sound principles caricatured—all this is melancholy enough.

If I have been able to rouse the careless or the discouraged to mark the value of beauty everywhere, and the importance of its culture as a refining influence and a means of legitimate enjoyment—if I have convinced one parent or guardian that the æsthetic element ought to be fostered in children, and a reasonable amount of pride in their good looks permitted to girls—and if, lastly, I have induced anyone to resist the tendency of polite society to run in a groove and wear a livery, I shall not regret having written and printed this small homage to the neglected Art of Beauty.

THE END.

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