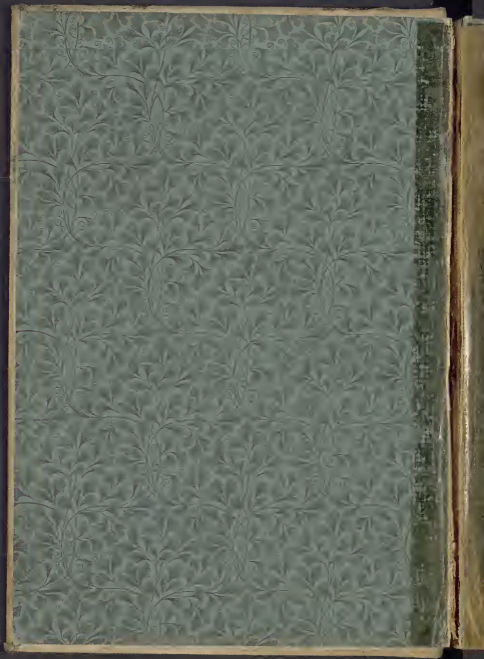




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THE
ART OF DRESS

BY
MRS. H. R. HAWEIS

AUTHOR OF
'THE ART OF BEAUTY' 'CHAUCER FOR CHILDREN' ETC.



WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS

London
CHATTO & WINDUS, PICCADILLY
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THE ART OF DRESS.

CHAPTER I.

Beauty in Dress.

6

Importance of Clothes.

- I. **C**LOTHES are our friends or our foes all the days of our life ; they control our very health, to say nothing of our worldly credit ; and they are never without some influence, pleasurable or the reverse, upon our associates ; like manners, they

are not idle, but the fruit
Of loyal nature and of noble mind.

Yet valuable (nay, indispensable) to us as they are, how few people study them intelligently : how few understand the difference between a

woman clad consistently, as a bird or a beast is, every line and hue in harmony and accord—the difference, in fact, between a *well-dressed* person and a mere clothes-prop!

Power of Beauty.

2. Many persons are curiously sensitive to colour and shapes in surroundings, certain combinations affecting them with almost physical pain. Now as no surroundings are so inevitable as people's clothes, dress must be held responsible for a certain amount of unintended pleasure or annoyance to others. Besides, one's own apparel is not without an influence on one's own mind: a new colour seems to bring a new atmosphere with it, and changes, oddly enough, the level of thought. Thus, for one's own sake, too, it deserves more than a passing glance, and should claim at least as much attention as, say the paper on the wall, or the sofas and carpets, which are all ministers to our work and play hours. Not that the adorning of the body ought to engross time which belongs to other duties, or exclude more serious studies, exercise, &c. But as we have all got to dress, it is meet

and right to do our best with that amount of time we must devote to the matter ; to consider the propriety and charm of the outward being as we all try in our several ways to consider those of our inner selves ; and with a very little study of the right and wrong in dress, the results are found to be fully worth the effort.

The love of beauty in all its forms is an instinct so universal that we feel it must be in a sense divine, and the influence of beauty, not abused, has been seen in all ages to be for good not harm. We owe to it all culture and all pleasure. Our common terms for purely mental qualities are borrowed from it, as ' a beautiful nature,' ' a pretty wit,' a ' graceful action.'

In old Greece, physical beauty was so prized, that it came to be cultivated in Athens with an almost religious enthusiasm: the mother prayed that her child might be beautiful, because that gift seemed to include all other good gifts. In mediæval Europe its value was so felt that to ' les belles courtoises dames ' much was pardoned, since their beauty was the spur to courage, courtesy, and graceful arts throughout the land.

In modern England there are bitter persons

who would admit beauty everywhere except in the human form ; but, without attaching romantic importance to physical beauty, it is right and honest to confess that 'it is very good,' and it is blind and mischievous to lay a ban upon natural instincts which only become bad when they are called so, and relegated to a sphere of impure surroundings.

What constitutes Beauty.

3. What people mean by beauty is commonly their own notion of completeness, leaving nothing to be desired ; and hence beauty seems to depend on individual capacity to enjoy. For instance, educated persons, when admiring the beauty of a hand or cheek, admire lines which do not recall what degrades limb or skin, such as disease or undue use, but which recall perfectly just and healthful equilibrium. Common persons, who might praise a 'beautiful' pudding, still refer to pleasure as they understand it, and perfection of work within their own capacity. At the root, all humanity acknowledges a need, a passion, a stream of tendency, for perfectness rounded and complete : i.e. the love of wholesome pleasure. To the question

what beauty in the abstract is, and why it is, it may be safest to give the answer of the Chinaman, which won the Wisdom-prize—'I do not know.'

We only know that art in its sundry forms is the outward imperfect expression of it, and hence we have no satisfactory definition of art, because we cannot define what we mean by abstract beauty.

Art and Fashion.

4. Wonderful things are written about art and its limits, and its 'legitimate' developments, and how far principles of beauty are to be applied in our daily life, and whether the line ought to be drawn at the tea-tray or the brodered robe. And there are art critics who ought to probe deeper, railing at a sort of mighty bogey, a wanton unreasonable fetish they call 'Fashion,' who turns a ceaseless wheel for the benefit of some millinery-master.

But 'fashion' is no phantasy of idle minds, no random despot, but a tendency worth study, and eminently instructive, rightly understood, being, with all its blunders, as direct an outcome of the love of beauty as schools of sculp-

ture and painting. It is the last expression of the underlying impulse, the dancing, changing waves which vibrate alternately between the desire to reveal and the necessity to conceal human beauty; and the fashion of Dress was certainly recognised as the legitimate province of the artist, in the days when art was most precious and most vigorous. We know that Holbein, Jan Van Eyck, and the mighty Michael Angelo designed 'fashions' while at the pinnacle of their fame.

The Culture of Beauty.

5. We have plenty of names, ugly and pretty, for that unknown impulse, such as 'a feeling for beauty,' an 'eye for colour,' 'magnetic attraction,' or the fine phrase of the Greeks, *καλὸν καὶ ἀγαθόν*, the Beautiful and the Good. Sometimes we rail at it as the 'pride of the eye,' 'vanity,' 'æstheticism.' Never mind! an appetite which we can neither define nor destroy makes it worth while to seek beauty wherever we can find it—in the body and out of the body; and it follows that dress, that tissue 'which man's soul wears as its outmost wrappage and overall, wherein his whole self lives, moves, and

has its being,' is no unimportant field for the culture of the beautiful, both for others' good and our own.

It rests with every sensible person to perceive that beauty, like all other pleasant things, may be fairly or unfairly used ; may be directed to a good or bad purpose ; may be enjoyed within due and wholesome limits, or allowed to run into enervating and evil luxury. People must judge for themselves how far the culture of pleasant things about them is compatible with more solemn duties, how far character is developed or suffers in the process : for no rule can determine what must be to the end of the chapter a question of good sense and good taste.

Rightly followed, the love of all that is beautiful is right and elevating. It is a recreation after dry hard work to look on graceful lines and harmonious colours. They bring fresh thoughts, revive sweet old memories ; they remind us of wild, untrammelled nature ; they soften our hearts, and improve our tempers.

Things are beautiful in proportion as they recall things more beautiful than themselves. The bit of enamel, or the fragment of silk which recalls the woodland moss or the April sky, is more beautiful than that which recalls darkness

and mire. Hence, the more pleasant are our surroundings, the oftener the mind is refreshed and delighted, and the more we should learn and love to learn that we were meant to enjoy what can have had no *motif* but to please.

If, then, we can agree that the beautiful is, that it may be sought, and discovered, even without being accurately defined, and that it is right, not wrong, for everybody to contribute to the common fund of social amenity and enjoyment, we may pass on to consider what is beautiful or the reverse in dress, and seek in each instance an answer to the question, Why ?





CHAPTER II.

Taste in Dress.

What is Taste?

6. **E**VERYTHING without purpose is without beauty.

And although everything that has a purpose cannot *en revanche* be called beautiful, yet appropriateness forms so large a share of beauty that everything which fulfils its own purpose well, may be said to have some claim to beauty. A very little taste will generally make it beautiful.

And what is taste?

Alas! no word has been more misused—it has been confounded with capacity, with opinion, with habit, nay, with *hobby!*

But I suppose it originally implied the faculty which the palate has of distinguishing

flavours; and the term was transferred to those subtler 'flavours' which reach the mental palate. Taste, then, is rightly the faculty of distinguishing between the agreeable and the disagreeable—one which is never found in really coarse-minded people, though it is confined to neither rank nor education—and its function is to so arrange and display what gives agreeable impressions as to suppress what gives disagreeable ones.

Want of Taste a Fault.

7. An unmeaning shape or device, an incongruous end or beginning or combination, is intolerable to a person whose taste is keen and healthy. Why? Because the associations are broken, common sense outraged, and the purpose of the thing ignored. Yet people possessing real taste often feel a thing to be wrong without being able to give a reason. True; taste is frequently so much an instinct that I suspect its root is in the heart. Why else are people who will confess to any other deficiency—even spelling—so eager to claim 'taste,' with all the cardinal virtues whose absence would be reckoned a fault of character?

'A fault in feeling induces also a fault in style,' says Ruskin somewhere, and this seems to be true in every department where taste enters.

Let us then use the word 'taste' for the faculty, natural or acquired, possessed by those whose swift sympathy with others' feelings makes it impossible for them to give or to endure 'jars,' for taste guards ever against severe friction, and is indeed cousin-german to 'tact.' Taste of course, like manners, may be cultivated; and a woman who is always well dressed (not overdressed), like one who is always well mannered, will be not only a thing of beauty, but a joy for ever.

Imbecile Ornament.

8. Natural taste will detect at once a flagrant breach of natural laws; and this is why nothing that is purposeless is in any high sense beautiful. Any part of dress, like any part of architecture, which has no *raison d'être*, and does not belong to the rest, and form part of an harmonious whole, is ungraceful and uncomfortable-looking—in fact, bad in art. How much better is the kerchief that really folds, than a bodice

trimmed to imitate a kerchief! the apron that really protects, than a garniture that looks like it in one place, but is seen in another to have no local habitation nor a name! The real thing is rich in light and shade; every wrinkle has its meaning, every line is accounted for, and the result satisfies eye and mind.

A hood that is seen to be incapable of going over the head; bows (which are nothing but strings tied together) stuck about the dress in an aimless manner, where by no possible means could two portions be fastened to each other; clasps and buckles sewn to parts which they neither unite nor support; buttons which do not button; lacings that cannot lace, and begin and end for no reason; all lines ending nowhere and nohow, as I have said, are intolerable to taste. They outrage the morality of art.

No detail ought to be admitted in a dress that is not indispensable there. When you have got the form right, you can 'clothe upon' the form with as much ornament as you like to afford; as far as possible, however, repeating by the ornament the lines of the form, or at least never denying or effacing the lines. Space being here limited, the fitness of certain kinds

of ornament for certain positions and purposes of art, is a question I shall treat at length in a future Manual on the 'Art of Decoration.' Suffice it to say, let a tunic be acknowledged as a tunic, a bodice as a thing to be got in and out of, as much as a coat. Let the fastenings be apparent, and let the human form command the clothing, and not be subservient to it.

Truth in Art.

9. In mediæval times, simplicity and honesty in art arrived at perfect taste, which we have lost by increased skill and corresponding false shame for the steps by which we rose. You will see the hinges of old doors, books, chests, not concealed as our workmen try to conceal them (as though a thing could swing without a hinge!), but acknowledged, and even accentuated. They admitted what was inevitable, and beautified it by ornament, into which they put their best work and their freshest thought. This was a more honourable spirit than that which actuates the modern artisan, who never tries to work by the light of truth. And such a spirit entered into mediæval dress, and should enter into ours: for art in dress should, above

all other domestic art, be good and noble, seeing that clothes are the indispensable and honourable accompaniment of a being which we believe was created in the highest image.

Freedom in Art.

10. We must therefore give intelligent attention to the chief points which go to make up our clothing. And who is so fit to consider those points as the wearer? It is no part of a milliner's business to think for us. It is not her province to consider what amount, form, or fabric best accords with our tone of mind, habits, and appearance; that is the wearer's province. And until individual opinion is admitted to be free, we can have no true, original art in England, in dress, nor anything else: for the secret of all true art is freedom, to *think for ourselves*, and *to do as we like*.

And Englishwomen will never efface their sad reputation for ill-dressing and general want of taste until they do think more for themselves, and individualise their daily garb as a part of their individual character.

But freedom were apt to lapse into licence,

and general harmony to end in hopeless discord, unless the clear perception of right and wrong (afforded in the present instance by shrewd and cultivated taste) took the helm. Taste is then, undoubtedly, a matter of principle and sympathy. Care of others' feelings and views, honesty of purpose, and a sense of propriety and fitness go a long way to render people charming.





CHAPTER III.

The Use of Dress.

The Requirements of Dress.

- II. **T**HE three great *requirements* of dress are: (1) to protect, (2) to conceal, (3) to display.

In proportion to the social condition of a nation, the three requirements of dress are observed. The first mostly satisfies primitive peoples; a little later, the second becomes felt; but a high civilisation demands all three; and in some climates, costumes fulfilling all three have been found and preserved, e.g. the Greek, Roman, Turkish, Japanese, &c.

But so many considerations enter into the question of dress that some nations have never been, and never will be, able to evolve a real

satisfactory permanent costume ; and the more complex the social state, the more complex is the fashion of dress, because the more difficult it becomes to suit all parties. When the fashion reflects a great political crisis, and seems to have a certain moral significance, it is a bad thing for the majority of wearers, who then are bound to some livery, which, however good originally, by reason of its only partial fitness, speedily falls into a grotesque decadence, and leads to a violent reaction.

Now, dress *ought* to be beautiful, useful, and comfortable (I invert the common order advisedly, out of regard for feminine obstinacy) ; but it stands to reason, that what is beautiful for one is not so for another, especially in a mixed race with diverse physical peculiarities, and what is useful to one is not so to others, especially in a society composed of a great number of classes.

In a warm climate a limited wardrobe suffices, summer and winter : in a cold one, clothing will always be subdivided into many parts, for the simple, though scientific, reason that several vestures are warmer than one, even though that one be thicker and weigh heavier than the several altogether. In a settled climate, it is possible to so arrange the various

garments as to be prepared for probabilities ; in an unsettled one, it is needful to have twice as many strings to one's bow, and to be able to add and remove at will, without total divestment. Where the lower orders are stationary and poor, the garments are usually expensive and last long, being handed down in the family ; where they are progressive, clothing is usually cheap, manifold, soon outworn, and replaced piecemeal, according to the vagaries of fashion in the upper ranks of society.

Thus we answer the oft-repeated question, Why, since Asiatic and other nations are content with a beautiful and useful dress when once evolved, the European nations are never satisfied even when they do hit on something good, and are very apt to return to something both ugly and injurious ?

Our national state is too complex, our race is too mixed, and our weather too violently uncertain for any one costume to meet all emergencies at one and the same time.

So that it is *not* wonderful that the English adhere to no fashion long in the perpetual chase after the impossible ; but this really *is* strange, that many of the longest-lived fashions in England fulfil *none* of the proper requirements ! Then enters in the principle of the unknown impulse !

Greek Dresses.

12. Some adaptation of the Greek dress, the most perfect of known costumes, has been suggested as meeting all needs. The simple chyton would be pretty enough for young and finely-moulded women, but for the many it would be too trying and too monotonous. Robust and lovely as is the pure English type, the race is too mixed, as I have said, to endure one costume; long-limbed and short-limbed, the small-waisted and the heavy-built, could not be equally set off by such a dress, any more than fair and dark can submit to one colour. The Greek pallium, sufficiently padded to brave an English winter, would be too heavy to be popular, and far too expensive for the poorer classes, who, as abovesaid, buy their subdivided garments piecemeal. The Greek chyton might be made to display and to protect; but then it could not conceal, and it would limit us to simple clinging fabrics, which would ensure revolt from those who properly see charm in glossy, slippery, and even massive velvety materials, all of which are unfit for *toga* or *tunica*; and it would tend

to depress trade by thus cutting off various branches of industry.

How utterly insufficient it is for the mixed needs of our mixed nation was proved, I think, when it was seriously attempted in 1790; and what it dwindled to, on vulgar, ill-shapen, and indifferent persons, was something too frightful



FIG. 1.

to contemplate. And yet, in its perfect state, and on its native soil, the grace and propriety of this costume surpasses all others. The small terra-cotta figures now to be seen at the British Museum, display its endless varieties of arrangement, and the unflinching nobleness and grace in all.

The Restlessness of Fashion.

13. Costume vibrates perpetually in our country between the need of being seen and the need of being covered. Now one bit of the body's beauty is displayed, and the rest is sacrificed and covered up: it is invariably felt to be an incomplete experiment, and thrown over. Another scrap of arm or shoulder has its day, and gives way to the foot, or the waist, or something else.

The real truth would seem to be, although we do not like to confess it, that the human creature, by nature not a clothed animal, but a naked animal, is ever reverting by bits to its original state. Never can it attain to it, in the temperate zone, under whatsoever revolution of feeling, health, or morals. Clothed it must be; and yet is impelled dimly to be at once clothed and unclothed.

There is no part of the frame which has not at some time been '*in fashion*.' The arm, the bust, the back, the whole outline, has in turn been fully acknowledged. The Englishwoman has indeed for many generations refused to confess to legs, but she has 'come to'; not as wisely

as the Turkish woman, but as well—too well. We shrink from no inconsistency. However cold, however clogged and impeded by ill-shapen gowns, we all go on bearing the nuisance with indomitable heroism. However comfortable in wraps of fur, or easy skirts, not long we brook 'the restless, dissatisfied longing,' and arm, foot, or shoulder shakes itself free of comfort.

Is not this a real and grave mystery, carrying the thoughtful mind to some past or future high lot wherein man no more than other animals might think evil of the body given him by the Creator?

But the result is incontestable, that, however it came to be so, here we are, and dress we must, and the nation most advanced in the race naturally gives the tone to the rest. We see, throughout the world, intellectual progress driving out the old manners and customs; the hot countries, which have had their day, being conquered and dominated by the cold countries which are having theirs, despite the unfitness of many of the new habits for the old climatic conditions. The foolish English dress is creeping into India, Egypt, Japan; and under the new civilisation they will learn to see that, with many advantages, there is one disadvantage—its national

dress can never simultaneously fulfil the three requisites—to protect, to conceal, and to display.

We should Discriminate.

14. I do not mean to depress reformers, nay, happily, fanatics are not easily depressed; and I seriously maintain that we may bear these requirements in mind far more than we do, and very much raise the general standard of taste, if we cannot lower the Protean energy of fashion. We may eschew such fashions as completely invert any of the three. Each may choose for herself a general style compatible with her individual taste and person, and within certain limits she may contrive wisely to protect, conceal, and display herself. How to do this I propose to lay down a few suggestions, acceptable, I hope, to those who see that taste is founded on good feeling and thrives only on liberty; pointing out what costumes should be rigorously rejected, what accepted with modifications, what colours are most becoming to English faces, what materials for English weather. But, first, what costumes should be rigorously rejected.



CHAPTER IV.

The Abuse of Dress.

Three Rules in Dress.

15. **C**LOTHING having thus been elevated into a fine art, and called 'Dress,' three general rules must be observed in all good dress—

1. That it shall not contradict the natural lines of the body.
2. That the proportions of dress shall obey the proportions of the body.
3. That the dress shall reasonably express the character of the wearer.

The first rule implies comfort and health, which are indispensable to beauty; the second implies a sense of what proportion means; and the third appropriateness to habits and seasons, both also indispensable to beauty.

Any costumes which impair or contradict the natural lines of the human frame are to be rejected as ugly, or injurious, or both ; for they are the abuse of dress, not its proper use—a matter not affecting our own selves merely, but affecting by tenacious, gradual results, our companions and the coming generation.

As far as our companions are concerned, we usually err *consciously*, for we can judge for ourselves the effect of our example upon them, and whether our appearance pleases, disgusts, or shocks.

Tight Lacing is Mischievous.

16. I have asserted in my book, the 'Art of Beauty,' the propriety of concealing defects which are disagreeable and sometimes mischievous to others. How, then, can we sufficiently condemn the folly of creating them? Yet many women create defects by caricaturing what in some figures is pretty—a small waist. I cannot repeat too often the warning that a bad practice, which inconveniences you a little, may harm those to come much, in ways most unexpected to those who are deaf to the teaching of science. This is where many people *uncon-*

sciously err, not knowing the secret ways whereby the 'curse may come upon them,' nor how cruel the Nemesis is. Girls especially should be taught something of what they owe to posterity as well as to themselves, for in the hands of our girls lie the health and happiness of the entire nation.¹ But they are too often reared in total ignorance of the commonest physiological facts, since foolish mothers suppose that a fine, pure young mind would be depraved by the slightest study of the simple rules of health. Hundreds of young girls injure themselves irreparably through this false doctrine, and never know it till they are wives and mothers. Late hours, cramped positions during study, over-exertion in the excitement of London seasons, or on horseback; but worst of all, acceptance of fashions which displace the bones and internal organs till the mischief has become irreparable even by the surgeon, are some of the vicious habits which are sapping the comfort of the present generation and the mental and physical wellbeing of the next one. Sickly children spring from sickly mothers almost as a matter of course; but results worse than mere physical feebleness

¹ Since writing the above, an article in the *Contemporary Review* (March, 1879), by Geo. Cowell, F.R.C.S., has drawn attention to the same subject.

and inanition may come, for the sins of the mothers are not always visited on the children in quite the same form; and as a deformed parent may create an idiot child, a reckless and worn-out mother may give her children morbid tendencies, not immediately the copy of her own constitutional defects, still the immediate result of her own folly and want of self-control. Drink-madness, weak intellect, bone disease, and many obscure horrors, may spring from such a seed as a pinched waist, a tortured head or foot, in the mother or grandmother.

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 thought that English wives were far more unfortunate, since their 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 to all who, like artists and medical men, have studied the mechanism of the frame, an over-all-ish sense of deformity!

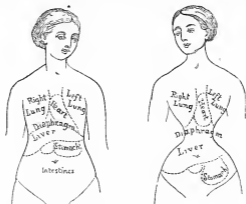


FIG. 2.—Natural position of the organs. FIG. 3.—Fashionable position of the organs.

It is a practice more culpable than the Chinese one of deforming the foot, for in this case no vital organ is interfered with; whilst in deforming the waist, almost all 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



FIG. 4.—Natural form of the waist.

FIG. 5.—Artificial form of the waist.

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 internal mischief. Who can forget 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.

We only need to recognise the real beauty of the natural line of the body, for modern stays to assume more normal proportions, combined with such support as is necessary; but meantime it is as well that the grave responsibility which health is to us, for the sake of future lives, should not be suppressed. Tight lacing in the present generation does not induce a tendency to small waists in the next; but it may cause impaired sensibilities and morbid tendencies not to be checked by any after-form of sane dressing.

Tight Lacing is Ugly.

17. The reason why a small waist is admired is because, when it is natural, it goes together with the peculiar liteness and activity of a slenderly-built frame. All the bones are small, the shoulders and arms compact and little, and the curve from armpit to hip a graceful one.

But an artificial small waist is invariably ugly for the same reason that, in architecture, a

pillar or support is called *debased* in art when what is supported is too heavy for the thing supporting, or when a base is disproportionately broad and unwieldy for that which it upholds. Tight lacing destroys the law of proportion and balance—for it is never necessary except in stout persons, and in them it distorts the natural lines of the body into a coarse immoderate curve, and gives an appearance of uncertainty and unsafeness.



FIG. 6.—Good and bad curves.

Were it a question merely between one's own health and one's own beauty, I have little doubt that the majority of women would sacrifice health; but we are so organised that there is no injury to the outward which does not affect the inward, no secret wrong that does not break to the surface sooner or later in ugliness. In order to be beautiful we must be healthy; in order to be healthy we must never thwart nature: and if our folly interferes however remotely with our power of breathing, taking sufficient exercise or common precautions against cold, &c., the result will fall on our own heads sooner or later—and the later the worse—in some ugly form.

In a nation like our own, where little attention is given to the training of the body, and where good looks are seemingly held to be an accident, not to be attained by culture, and having nothing to do with sanitary laws, nature must be greatly supplied by art in dress as well as other things; and hence, how important to guide Art into the right channel, and not to help her to destroy what is already unduly neglected!

Mischievous old Fashions.

18. In past ages people were no less foolish than we are, 'but we have not their excuse of 'not knowing.' The mighty ruffs, wide enough to remind us of a decapitated head in a platter, and deep—'Marry, I have a ruff is a quarter deep, measured by the yard,' says *Collaquintida*¹—we may see them in Van der Helst's portraits, precluding any comfortable attitude; the hoop in its three pleasing forms of drum; *l'âne avec deux paniers*, and inverted basin, 1560, 1760, 1860;—the shameless exposure of the bust in the reigns of James I., Anne, and George III., when the very preachers rebuked publicly the man-

¹ *The Dumb Knight*, 1608.

ners of women ;—the reckless poverty of clothing about 1793, the 'short waist' period, when people played at being 'Greeks,' and the vile parody succeeded as well as most vile parodies:—all these ugly habits brought with them their own penalties, by fire, bronchitis, cancer, spine and heart disease, and general inconvenience and discomfort, because in England people never know how to hold fast the thing that is good.

It is curious to mark the revolutions of fashion from the earliest times: each bubble born of a reaction, swelling to bursting point, and leading to another reaction, over and over again; but every change and ripple of style connected with the preceding one by something like an organic law.

For instance, we can trace how and why the Roman mantle in early England separated itself into cloak and head-rail detached; how the head-rail, which originally shielded the 'glory' of woman alike from rude airs and ruder eyes, wriggled into every shape till, no doubt in sign of the webber's advancing skill—for fashions are to some extent a trade-chronicle—it became a translucent veil. By this time the traditional concealment of the hair had petrified into a law of etiquette; and when the veil grew thin the

hair was packed into cauls of leather, stuff, and even metal, until their unwieldiness destroyed them; and in the reign of Henry VIII. we see the younger generation revolting against the huge burdens still worn by the elder, in tiny close coifs that receded till the hair came into fashion again, and so marked a reversion to the past.



FIG. 7.—The head-rail. Anglo-Saxon lady.

The uncovered hair, simply decked, had a run through such artificial dressings as seem inseparable from Elizabeth, till it reached the extreme negligence under Charles II., which was too trying to plain and elderly women to be very long popular, though young and pretty fashionables ran about in this *negligé* for some years. Then came the reaction in buckram—kind

refuge of the ill-proportioned; and soon the entire costume was 'in curl,' from the foot to the head crested with stiffened lace and ribbons. And then, as usual, when the gown has become over-weighty with trimmings, we find the hoop, in some form, coming to its relief, and



Fig. 8.—Countess of Arundel, 1439.

hoisting aloft the burden no longer supportable by aching ankles.

After the stiff Dutch caps and lappets came the stacks of meal and false hair which disgraced our great-grandmothers, and which were allowed to 'last' from six weeks to three months without being 'opened.' And when they *were* opened the

common results of mouldy meal subjected to the action of animal heat and moisture may be better imagined than described; but we apprehend why the backscratcher and the fan were equally valuable companions of the dirty 'belle,' and why the nuisance had such a *ricochet* as its reaction in the 'imitation Greeks.'

A simple garb usually springs from simple manners, while a complex social state and a lowered *morale* fly to furbelows and 'intemperance in ornament'; but we must distinguish between real and affected simplicity such as unrobed the Lely beauties and misrobed the 'shepherdesses' that appeared in George II.'s time. The attempted revival of Greek dress that followed the French Revolution embodied a real revulsion of national feeling towards a severer and loftier mood; but the reformers, like the Puritans earlier, outran moderation and defeated their own end.

In the same order the graceful garb of the Anglo-Saxon lady became more and more surcharged with ornament till the form finally gave way, and every phantasy of clothing except one led up to the hoop of Henry VIII. This, a simple extinguisher, enlarged beneath super-added jewels and the craving for further show

till some necessity called for the new width at the hips. We may see in old State seals how outrageously the costume and caparisons of Elizabeth caricatured Mary's, though *she* wore hoop and stays ; and an interesting picture by D. Sandvoort, at Amsterdam, of 'De Familie Bas' marks the ensuing descent from extravagance to calm from the beginning to the end of the seventeenth century, wherein the successive fashions of ruff and farthingale, lie-down collar, Puritan bands, and lace kerchiefs are worn by the various members of one family simultaneously—the elder ones clinging to Elizabethan starch, the youngest launching into the freedom of Charles II.

Now all these fashions had a meaning and a certain merit when they arose ; and they all died of outgrowing their strength—*i.e.* beauty and good sense. It is always so. A moderate train adds height to the figure ; while a too long one does the very reverse, and incommodes too. The *small* hoop is a comfort in windy weather, and in climbing upstairs, as we all found when it appeared about 1850 ; but too large a one is an undeniable nuisance. The veil is the prettiest of head-coverings for all women, and it has an obvious convenience and variety of use ; yet the hair is prettier—if properly arranged. All

these facts have been in turn recognised by fashion ; in turn overdone, through the vitiation of the eye in accustoming itself to artificial ornament ; in turn discarded when, tired of the monstrosity, the old craving for the impossible which I have earlier alluded to made itself felt.

Dangers of Decay.

19. It is in their *decadence* that costumes are worst ; it is in their *decadence*. that we should beware of them, and force ourselves to conquer timidity if we see that a general bad practice is in. When the common style of dress is very ugly it will often be found to be based on a direct contradiction of nature, and this is the undeniable abuse of dress. Coarse vulgar curves, unmeaning lumps, superabundant ornament, be they concentrated on the head or dispersed about the persecuted body, are to be avoided. For most things immoderate are ugly ; most things ugly will be found bad for us in some way. So curiously does ugliness involve the element of harm, that almost all immoderate forms of dress—in which we must certainly include boots too tight, heels too high, trains dragging sensibly back from the knees, unnatu-

rally heavy masses of false hair, and, worst of all, tight stays—are injurious to health as well as beauty, because they lay an inordinate strain on certain sets of muscles which will one day rebel disagreeably in diseased and deformed joints; and some fashions which interfere with no vital organs affect the general health by inducing debility, and fatigue, and headache—this is the objection to very cumbersome clothing and much padding in the hair.





CHAPTER V.

Cheap Dress.

Real Extravagance.

20. **S**OME people set themselves against the reformers of dress, because they imagine that in order to dress well you must spend much money.

This is an error. All depends on what you consider good dress.

For my part, I do not think that expensive dress is necessarily good dress: and the converse of course holds true. People who go out a great deal wear out a great many dresses: and if the dresses they wear are all equally costly, a good deal of money gets spent; but economy may be practised in various ways, without being dependent only on so few gowns that you soon get 'known' by them, or on cheap poor stuffs.

The worst extravagance is to adopt unhealthy habits, and to invest in 'shoddy,' got up by unprincipled traders to deceive the eye. Modern black silk is chiefly shoddy loaded with dye: so is much of the calico in the market weighted with china clay. A few good things are worth a score of bad ones, even if you do get 'known' by them. But, indeed, women are over-fearful of this calamity. If valuable to society, their friends do not mind seeing them many times in the same dress, if it be a beautiful one: though doubtless a limit must be placed on monotony in these days of much visiting.

Conscious Economy.

21. I once knew a lady, whose husband was *very* moderately off, and whose friends were furious with what they called her 'wicked' extravagance in dress. This unprincipled female was scarcely ever seen (except in the mornings) in anything but the most sumptuous black velvet, trimmed with the most sumptuous antique lace. Those were the days of 'low necks' and no sleeves: but she wore no neck-lace, no bracelets, no earrings—not so much as a tiny gold chain. She had splendid white

shoulders and arms. Therefore her friends were still more furious at this, the very insolence of vanity, in a poor man's wife. People had seen as many as three magnificent black velvet gowns hanging at once in her wardrobe. Such extravagance, such self-consciousness, was odious; it was criminal; and if there could be a worse word, it was that.

Now, this Satanic creature *had* three black velvet dresses in the fifteenth year of her marriage, and she *had* a very fine bust and arms, and did not mind people knowing it. But she was excessively economical, and spent about a third of what her equals spent in dress. Her first black velvet dress was part of her *trousseau*, and cost fully 20*l.*; and the antique lace on it cost 10*l.*, and may have been worth treble. When she had worn that dress for five years on every conceivable occasion, with and without crafty appliances to make it sometimes an evening dress and sometimes an afternoon one, she unearthed five years' savings, which bought her a second: and then she enjoyed a best and second best velvet gown. When another five years had gone by, a third black velvet appeared; the first by this time having very little nap left, but still it was fit to risk on foggy winter

days ; and the second, well worn, was still a decent dinner dress. A few new scraps of antique lace she had rooted out of old pawnshops, and cleaned and re-cleaned and never tired of, and they were all set in black velvet, and she was always regally arrayed.

But, being poor, she could not afford gold chains, and locket, and earrings, and the scores of good and bad 'jewels' her companions twinkled in ; and her good taste was attributed to evil vices by those who, perhaps, felt it a reproach. And though no doubt she had the misfortune of pretty shoulders, her sense and wiliness were such that I cannot believe but that she would have worn high dresses, not concealed her defects with necklets, had she been thin or plain.

How many women in society keep their expenditure in evening dresses at five—or ten—pounds a year ? But the lady abovesaid really spent only that : though perhaps she sometimes in her heart longed for ivory satins and sky-blue silks, which would not have lasted through one season's gaities.

How to Economise.

22. Without limiting one's evening apparel to 5*l.* per annum, there are many ways of saving in dress. One is, not following the fashion, but adopting the style of some period to be studied from pictures, which is soon seen to be a 'fad' of yours, and people get tired of making fun of it if you hold out, having right on your side. The economy of this is wonderful: for your dress never goes out of fashion, having never been in it, and you are, in all educated eyes, a pleasing object. A few dresses, all in first-rate material, thus carry you over many years.

Another economy is in lace. If you buy modern, however good, you pay high, and it soon wears out. If you buy antique—which, like all articles of *vertu* has a fictitious value, and at all times *by search* may be bought below its worth—it will last for ever, re-mend, re-clean, and by being kept yellow, instead of snow white, scarcely ever shows dirt. A very little thus goes a long way, for no one wants many changes of old lace any more than they want changing suites of 'old masters' on their walls. Such

things are worth being 'known by,' and may be handed down in the family as immortal, like a Raphael or a Greuze.

People may also economise in jewellery. One or two really fine jewels are in far better taste than a quantity of mediocre ones; but many a woman imagines that her friends will have a higher opinion of her wealth and wisdom by being able to count twenty machine-made lockets and chains in her jewel-case, than if they never see her wear anything but one diamond brooch, or one really fine cameo, or one priceless ring.

Economy in Stuffs.

23. The innumerable materials now sold, and the increased liberty in dress permitted, or (I prefer to say of Britons who pretend they 'will never be slaves') the increased liberty which women's improved education and taste now demand, admit of an easy choice between the durable and the wasteful. A very little experience shows us that all the dull rich silks wear greasy; that a *good* satin outlasts three silks and three cheap satins; that black velvet lasts longer than coloured; that India muslin is

better economy than tarletan and grenadine ; that stiff fabrics (not too stiff, but thick and well woven), such as poplin, serge, tweed, &c., which do not crumple, and yet set out when wanted to, last longer than a poor silk ; that tulle is a delusion and a snare, if your purse be not long ; and that a dress or jacket once properly made and properly fitted by a *good* dressmaker, though this costs more than one made by a novice, will look and hang well to the end, while the other will not. People who study economy will never adopt anything *outré* : for *outré* fashions never last long, because they are too conspicuous, and so very soon pall upon the eye, and get to be vulgarised by bad copies. The truest economy, if you do not go in for the antique, is to follow the broad outlines of the prevailing mode, shutting your eyes to the vagaries of its details, and not running after a new shape till you see whether it is going to last. Thus a sealskin jacket of an unobtrusive shape that will pass muster whether the leaders of fashion make themselves mummies or balloons, is an economy, though it costs a good deal. A fur-lined cloak which does not 'spot' or 'cockle' is another—indeed, a set of good fur is never any loss, as it can be cut, re-joined, dispersed, united,

worn on an evening dress or a mantle at will, without harm. One fine Indian shawl is another.

Economy in Bonnets and Hats.

24. As to head-gear, anybody pretending to common sense can see that such useless and shapeless tufts of pale tulle and crape as are some of the modern bonnets, are not desirable. Concoctions of feathers, chopped and tortured into abnormal forms, odious alike to art and nature, should be rejected with contempt. One fine black or white ostrich feather—nay, one ostrich-hen plume, undyed, retaining its natural soft drab tint—is worth a hundred false wings, tinsel butterflies and other abominations, and muslin flowers. Velvet should never be used in bonnets or hats except it be of the finest quality—all others are ruined by the first shower. A straw or chip bonnet wreathed with sage-green gauze is a simple and cheap investment, which lasts well and is very becoming to a fine face; but an insignificant face should claim rich surroundings, because a very simple style would render it even more insignificant.

Economy in Colours.

25. It is indispensable, in buying dresses, to remember what your wardrobe already contains, as two dresses can often be combined into one nowadays if the colours are happily chosen, which is a great economy. You should therefore not have all figured or all plain stuffs, but a few of each, in colours carefully considered for future wants. In the same way never buy a bonnet that will not go with *all* your dresses and jackets likely to be required while the bonnet lasts; a grey felt hat that nearly, not quite, matches a grey coat or dress will be a worry all the season; a navy blue dress, while you possess a true blue or true violet hat, will be an equal torment to you. A little forethought saves many pounds in the year, and many a pang.

High petticoat-bodices, or collars with a deep 'curtain,' will be found an economy, especially in summer, although the laundress's bill *is* a redoubtable item. Washing dresses are so little worn now by people not very well off, on account of the absurd cost to wash them, that it is hardly worth while to point out what

colours are worth buying. A dark thin stuff is infinitely cheaper than the cheapest pale cambric, though its original cost be double. An Indian muslin, for occasional wear, is no loss. Women of taste will be content with a *few* things, and those good, in lieu of a quantity of cheap finery. This is particularly true of such things as neckties, collars, and cuffs, showy and resplendent *fichus* of cotton imitation lace, and all the rubbish got up to tempt the foolish.

Economy of Old.

26. It may have often perplexed thinkers how our ancestresses, who were so much more thrifty than we are, could have afforded to wear in common such fine lace, as we know they did, on cuffs, collars, and caps. Not that they would have spent money on having it scrubbed with washing-powders, or worn it dirty. The huge muslin ruffs are another difficulty. How often did the ruff, which took two hours to arrange with poking sticks after starching, get washed? Did refined persons wear dirty ruffs?

Some people think our ancestors were very dirty people, and no doubt they had not our

notions of abnormal cleanliness : but there were then, as now, refined men and women whom one cannot connect in one's mind with dirty linen. What did they do ?

I believe the introduction of blue, yellow, and red starch was for economy—white ruffs would never last long, and were odious when soiled. The dark starches saved time and money, and the look of them was, of course, as tinted muslins now, a matter of taste.

High-born women cleaned and mended their own delicate laces, which they loved to wear at all times. But the strongest thread would not have borne the weekly or even monthly scour. A picture of Henrietta Maria by Claude Le Fevre, now (1879) in the Exhibition of Old Masters at Burlington House, shows us an ingenious bit of thriftiness. Over the rich lace is a transparent outer cuff of muslin, which could be renewed as often as was necessary, preserving the lace, though visible, from dust and grease, and thus it might have lasted a twelvemonth in daily wear. How else could these laces have survived two or three hundred years ? What fabrics of our day will survive the ill-treatment of the laundress's chemicals and wringing-machines ?

This was costly yet economical arraying. We ought to try and get hints on all sides from those wiser than ourselves, if we cannot spare time to evolve thrifty manœuvres.






CHAPTER VI.

Wasteful Dress.

A Pennyworth for a Penny.

27. XTRAVAGANCE in dress means not only spending too much money on it. There are worse forms of extravagance, which sensible women should guard against. The annual sum devoted to self-adornment depends on people's income and right feeling ; but numbers of women, with plentiful right feeling and money in their pockets, are mischievously extravagant in their dress, without perhaps being aware of it.

This is by patronising some of the foolish fashions devised simply to waste material and deceive the calculation of quantity, of which there are many. It is always annoying not to

get one's pennyworth for one's penny—if we know it; but if we do not know it, we are to blame, for it is our business to know what we do with our money, or with money entrusted to us by those who have confidence in our honesty of purpose and good sense.

Who Turns the Wheel?

28. The milliner must live, and keep up a certain show of lay figures and trade paraphernalia; therefore it is to her direct interest that customers should not be able to check the number of yards she uses. The manufacturer's mill must be kept going, therefore the fashions must change. And for such commercial reasons thousands of silly women spend 10*l.* on what is intrinsically worth 3*l.*, not of malice prepense, but through complete ignorance, or from indolent neglect to notice and calculate the value they receive for their money.

Numbers of the writhing and unmeaning 'folds,' 'revers,' 'knots,' 'flounces,' and 'kiltings,' of our present long skirts, are, in the first place, wastefully made; more silk is used in them than is at all necessary; and, in the second place, the dressmaker pretends that they take up even more material than they do. She will line a bow of satin

or velvet with satin or velvet when muslin would do as well, because the lining is not visible ; perhaps on unripping, the bow will be found to consist of a yard, or yard and a half of good silk, where half a yard ought to have sufficed ; and for a few such specimens of indifference to her customer's interest, the dressmaker will insist on seven or eight yards more than she can use, and retain a yard or two unused for herself. True skill in making up materials consists not only in fitting the dress, but in giving to every morsel of stuff its due value, and only employing costly material where it will contribute something to the look of the garment. But many a dressmaker knows that she can count on equal indifference in her customer, who is not only willing to pay for material invisible and idle in its place, adding nothing but undue weight to the incommodious tail, but willing to pay in addition for material not used at all. The dressmaker must live, of course ; but she ought to live by honest means, not dishonest, and it is her own fault if she does not.

Such fashions as waste material in aimless snippings and turnings, adding nothing to appearance, and offering temptation to dishonest *employées*, ought to be eschewed ; the more, as

the purposeless chaos of millinery is not beautiful from an artistic point of view, and probably mischievous from a sanitary one. A great weight dragging from the knees or ankles lowers the general tone of elastic health and spirits, and spoils the gait ; and, by-the-by, many of us would think it a great hardship to carry, concentrated in a basket, such a load of lead or shot as is dispersed about many modern dresses ' to keep the "fit" steady.'

Bad Art.

29. Many of these dresses, even if they do not really confine the limbs or movements, give the impression that they do so, which is almost as objectionable, and is thoroughly bad in art ; for all good art demands utility, not confusion of purpose. A rope of velvet that looks heavier than it is, coils round the knees like a bewildered petticoat that has lost its way and does not know where to go. The meaning of the original device (which *might* have been a scarf round the hips) has been forgotten, or more likely never was understood, by the witless 'artiste' who fabricates the 'burdens of fair women,' and so the fair women stumble about (apparently) like

beldames running in sacks or nooses at a village festival for the benefit of tipsy Hodge; or all the ornament and weight will be concentrated on the 'fantail,' while the remainder of the



FIG. 9.—Fantail skirts.

figure is as plain as plain can be, recalling to the ribald the mediæval story of her on whose train a crowd of devils sat and fought, her vanity unconscious of their weight, till she

raised up her train to cross a miry place, and 'it so fell out they all fell in.'



FIG. 10.—Live mummies.¹

All such costumes will be rejected by women with healthy taste and common sense; for ma-

¹ The above costumes are copied from a milliner's fashion-book.

terial, which adds nothing to beauty or to comfort, is wasted. How much more, then, the yards of it which actually detract from both?

Bad Policy.

30. I may add a few words on coloured patterns, which cause foolish waste of material—by which I mean the vast arabesques and mighty unmeaning bouquets bespattering some of our *damassés* and cut velvets. A pattern so large that half of it makes a bodice, is extravagant in more ways than one; for in order to make the branches and spots correspond, and the body appear symmetrical, yards have to be cut into where inches would do. If there was any corresponding advantage in devices of this kind (which every few years are sure to choke the shop windows), I should not take much pains to denounce them for the sake of economy; for most women will agree that beauty is more precious than gold. But, like other bad fashions, they are extremely unbecoming; the lines of the pattern often deny and deform the apparent lines of the figure; they diminish the stature, and they efface, what dress ought before all things to aim at enhancing, the features of the face.



CHAPTER VII.

Forms in Dress.

Close-fitting Costumes.

31. **S**OME persons think it *de rigueur* to find fault with the reigning fashion, whether it concurs or conflicts with good sense and good art. They think that finding fault shows a lofty superiority of opinion and fancy. But I am not one of them, and if we are wearing, as at present, a costume which (when not overdone) is really good, it is but fair to say so.

The present close-fitting dresses, defining the beautiful lines of the hips and falling in slightly at the knees, are strictly in accordance with the natural lines of the body, and far from ugly on a well-proportioned figure. In crinoline

days all the movement of the lower limbs was effaced, and the loss to the carriage was consequently great. It is said that 'paniers' on the hips are about to appear again, as they did 150 years ago, with ghastly developments of cumbersome ugliness ; and if women are stupid enough

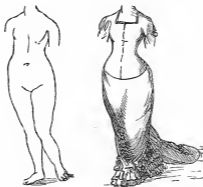


FIG. 11.—A dress that does not contradict the natural lines.

to accept a bad fashion without the excuse of a bad figure to hide, one can but pity those blind who are led by the blind.

When, however, the strings, hooks, elastics, and other evil devices are so tightened as to destroy, instead of merely guiding, really good folds, and in many cases reduce the front of the

dress to that 'single trouser' of which we have heard so much, the graceful action of the natural form with the form itself is lost with other advantages of colour and movement which belong to well-arranged folds. It pleases none; it neither conceals nor reveals. The effect is



FIG. 12.—A dress that contradicts the natural lines.

that of an elephant's leg, not a woman's, and the heavy tail dragging from it recalls painfully the cow with a clog attached to prevent its straying far.

A dress properly cut ought to fall into position without tying back; but in any case the tying should never be tight enough to defeat

its own 'end. But a thoroughly good 'cut' or 'pattern' is so hard to attain by any but first-rate dressmakers, and not often even by them, that uncomfortable devices soon creep in to cover hurried or incorrect work, and this is how *decadence* of good fashions begins.

Bad and Good Patterns.

32. It is extremely difficult for customers to secure good patterns, one of the reasons being the aforementioned partiality to wasting material for private ends on the part of unprincipled milliners; and as the cutting out of a garment seldom falls to the share of the wearer, she has little or no control over it. But in thoroughly good patterns every fragment of stuff cut away has its use and place in some other position, and every line and corner is filled up and accounted for. The old pattern of a man's shirt is an instance. Each morsel taken off is needed elsewhere, in gusset or welt, and none of the linen is thrown away. The old sackback (fig. 3) is another instance. The pieces removed from the back to make the bodice set close were needed for gores in the skirt; that which was shaven from the bottom of the gores came in for the



fig. 1.

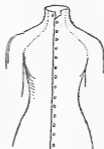


fig. 2



fig. 3.



fig. 4



fig. 5



fig. 6



fig. 7

FIG. 13

broad band which formed the square neck, crossing the shoulder just at that point where a milkmaid carries her pails, and which is the proper point for the 'pull' of a bodice, not just



FIG. 13A.

upon the joint as in modern sleeves, with their low seams (fig. 8), in which it is next to impossible to lift the arms freely.

The less waste it admits of the better the pattern is—the fewer are the seams, and generally the more natural and comfortable is the garment.

Some of the modern bodices, with as many as seventeen seams in them, are mere corset-cases, not 'bodies' at all, and they reach so far upon the hips that in sitting they wrinkle up and look very bad (see fig. 8). Now a mummy, or a chrysalis,

is proper enough for a coffin, but it is incompatible with life and action, and a room peopled with chrysalids on end presents a spectacle simply abnormal—and when the busts and arms are *décolletés*, as though the butterfly—alas! a poor callow insect—were in act of wriggling out, the effect is ugly, because unnatural and inappropriate; impertinent, our forefathers would have said.

One important rule is, that the idea suggested in one place should be accounted for or 'carried out' in another. A full bodice is inconsistent with a tight gored skirt; the skirt must carry out the notion of a loose garment folded in and compressed by the belt. In the same way the numerous seams of a close cuirass should be carried at least half-way down the skirt, but not fitted so closely as to recall ideas of death and torpor. Let us, for Heaven's sake, look alive while we may.

Low Bodices.

33. Here I may be allowed a word on the subject of 'low' bodices. It is not generally admitted, but a few experiments suffice to convince, that the low bodice is not only an ugly and un-

meaning form, but it invariably detracts from the height. Most persons who attend the Queen's Drawing-rooms must have noticed how short the ladies look, in consequence of the horizontal lines overpowering the perpendicular ones, in court dress. The hard line around the bust, and small sleeves or none, seem to cut the body in pieces, and there is no bodice which confines the arms so miserably.

With the question of indelicacy I do not pretend to deal. That must be left to feminine good feeling; I am chiefly concerned with beauty. If a woman has very beautiful shoulders, it is of course a pity to hide them; but that objection would apply to any charms which are out of fashion. One cannot hope to display one's whole fortune at once, and, as something must be kept back, it is better to sacrifice breadth than height.

A low bodice with short sleeves has many faults—its poverty of design, its uninteresting bareness, its incongruity with a large mass of material below, the difficulties of trimming it without spoiling the figure, should be sufficient to taboo it. When made in a dark material and seen against a dark background, the effect is as seen in fig. 15—Temple Bar stuck with

ghastly limbs of malefactors was only a little worse—and against a light background the bust



FIG. 14.



FIG. 15.

and arms disappear altogether, and the dress seems to hang empty in the air (fig. 14).

Sleeves.

34. I have not space to enlarge upon the many beautiful sleeves, good in an art sense, which may be found in old pictures—the early full sleeve in delicate colours preserved by an outer straight sleeve, hooked or tied to the shoulder, seen in many of Raphael's pictures (fig. 6, p. 71); the sleeve of Charles I.'s time (fig. 9, p. 72), having a kind of cuff upturned and fastened by ribands to

the upper part—the proper comprehension of slashes, their *raison d'être*, their advantages when put in the right place wherever roominess (as at a joint, see fig. 5, p. 71) is wanted, but not when they are cut in the middle of the arm and mean nothing. Nothing is so good a lesson as a stroll through the National or other Gallery of old pictures, or through an old Cathedral still decked by early bas-reliefs, for intelligence can reproduce with a little trouble everything that past ages produced. But one very beautiful and useful form of sleeve I may refer to—the plain fourteenth century one, which fitted the wrist closely, but spread at the hand, so as to guard a delicate skin from cold or sun, or, turned up, to form a cuff. Such a form occurs in fig. 5. Lined with an opposing colour, the sleeve is a very pretty ornament to any dress for day or evening wear. It may be cut with one seam, or two; the latter is easiest.

A sleeve, a glove, or a boot, is always better when it does not end just at the wrist-bone or ankle-bone, but is carried a few inches beyond. The necks of dresses are much prettier also carried an inch or two up the throat, as with a little thought to spare, not to say stuff (fig. 2); and, by the same token, a bodice should not end

at the waist unless a sash be worn. It is always better to carry it on, into a jacket, basque, or whatever the Shibboleth may be.

The sleeve ought always to be put into the armhole with fulness, which neither denies nor exaggerates the functions of the shoulder-joint. This is the best, perhaps only, way of ensuring freedom of the arm, and it usually improves the 'hang' of the sleeve. The next best way is to have the seam carried to the throat, as in fig. 2, a pattern fashionable many years ago, which pleased people who like their shoulders to appear very sloping. When the armhole is at the shoulder, the line of the neck should echo it as in fig. 1, which recalls the *fichu*, or crossing bodice.

The muslin sleeve (fig. 7), from one of Sir Joshua Reynolds's portraits, is a perfectly natural and good form; the gathered puffs account for the frill at the elbow. Fig. 10 presents an equally consistent and picturesque sleeve; the upper piece is bound down by a ribbon or cord and tassels.



CHAPTER VIII.

Jewellery in Dress.

Popularity of Ornaments.¹

35. **U**T 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 we are told results in the survival of the fittest, is at

¹ I have here used material which will be found worked up at greater length in the 'Art of Beauty,' chapter on Ornaments.

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.

No Artist, No Art.

36. In the old days, the then celebrated artists, the Holbeins, the Dürers, the Clouets, the Cellinis, and many more, were not above designing

women's ornaments, with plate, vases, dagger-hilts, and other things, which modern taste consigns to inferior hands ; but now, when our chief artists¹ do disdain so to employ themselves, the jewellers act in the best and wisest spirit when they reconstruct after the ancient models. 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. Still, if buyers were better able to discriminate between bad and really good modern work, both mechanical and artistic, they would gradually force the designing of personal ornaments into fitter hands. Art in England would receive a genuine impetus, and the standard of popular taste would rise.

Wasting Stones.

37. It may not be out of place here to say a word against the English jeweller's waste of good materials. He often wastes the precious metal by using far more than is necessary in solid gold or silver ornaments. He treats it as though it were brass or iron, of no value, and

¹ Mr. Walter Crane, and a very few others, are shining exceptions.

hopes by this means to make up in weight what he ought to provide in work and skill. But, as before hinted, the customer is not able to discriminate; he does not sufficiently appreciate the difficulties, or understand the difference between good and bad work. But customers might restrain the culpable practice—one peculiar to our state of Art inanition—of paring down valuable stones and wasting them, in order to provide exactly-matched 'sets,' in themselves ugly in proportion to their accuracy. It is marvellous to see the diamond-cutter at Amsterdam placing a fine diamond on the wheel, which grinds on a paste of diamond-dust facet after facet, and then going away to dinner or a chat, leaving the grindstone to its own well-calculated devices. One slip of a cog, one instant's delay in his return, and the great diamond is spoilt. Such accidents must happen at times: and after all, why these hours of grinding away the weight, when an *approximate* similarity in a row of pendants would be so much more interesting and picturesque?

Uncut gems are often extremely beautiful, and if more worn would be more appreciated. I commend to the attention of the wealthy public Her Majesty's wise example of sometimes wearing uncut jewels.

Oriental and Ancient Ornaments.

38. 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.



FIG. 16.—Indian pendants.

In fig. 16 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 recklessly-paired sets of stones. No two pendants are alike, however, but this does not strike obnoxiously on the eye ;



FIG. 17.—Irish brooch. From Walker's 'Hist. of the Irish Bards.'

it requires a second glance to observe it. An English stone-cutter would have ground every one of the stones to one pattern, sacrificing weight and grace together. Fig. 17 is a fibula of ancient Irish work, very rich and involved in pattern, and the form is one worthy to revive.

Figs. 18 and 19 are Keltic patterns, very simple instances of the Keltic love of interlaced ribbons,



FIG. 18.—Keltic ornament.



FIG. 19.—Keltic ornament.



FIG. 20.—Old Italian earring

which I suggest for buttons, clasps, brooches, watch-backs, &c.

It is singular to observe how the old tra-

ditions linger in some countries—the simple and honest form of the Italian earring (fig. 20), 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.

Antique Simplicity.

39. 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. 21 (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



FIG. 21.—Greek earring,
Russ. Coll.



FIG. 22.—Greek earring,
Russ. Coll.

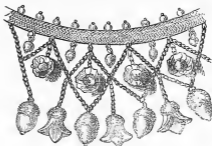


FIG. 23.—Etruscan necklace, Brit. Mus.



FIG. 24.—Greek necklace, Brit. Mus.



FIG. 25.—Etruscan necklace, Brit. Mus.

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.

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 (from the Russian collection), fig. 22, is one of the most graceful I have seen in such early work.

I have included two designs (figs. 27 and 28) for brooches, from Holbein's sketches—fanciful and pretty, but he made many more intricate and ambitious. Naturalistic and conventional treatment of personal ornaments is a subject for future examination.

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



FIG. 26. Modern aigrette.
Design by Birckenhultz

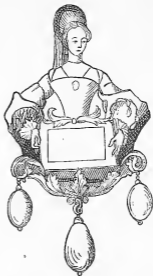


FIG. 27.—Pendant. Holbein



FIG. 28.—Button (?) Design by Holbein, Brit. Mus.

comparatively modern design for an aigrette by Paul Birckenhultz (fig. 26), 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.





CHAPTER IX.

Children's Dress.

Nursery 'Vanity.'

40. **T**HE subject of children's dress lies a little outside the province of the present work, but a few words may be of service to mothers. I have before spoken of children's sensitiveness to colour, their love of bright and pretty clothing—so natural to them, so proverbial, so removed from any guilty self-consciousness that Shakspeare himself speaks of

an impatient child, that hath new clothes
And may not wear them,

with lenient laughter; and, I think, far from discouraging the instinct in them, it may be turned to more harmless account as reward or punishment than the more important functions

of eating and exercise. If you can rule a child by means which do not interfere with healthful recreation or healthful appetite, it is reasonable to try; whilst reducing its meals, forbidding play, or even speech, or shutting it in a dark room (all which punishments are held wise) *may* injure the child. A smart dress for a treat—a jacket inside-out for penalty! Does that swell the mighty bugbear of 'vanity'—a term as exclusively belonging to excess as that of 'gluttony'—any more than Goody Two-Shoes' own well-covered feet? No; the babe in arms loves a mirror and a bright colour: the child, wisely taught, may regard its mirror as its monitor—no flatterer; and if we say too much to these little vigilant spies about the wrongness of attaching importance to dress, they will one day pose us by asking 'Why mother has best and common gowns, dinner dresses and ball dresses?'

True, every ceremony of social life claims its appropriate robes; because lines, colours, textures, bear a certain affinity to human moods—they have neither speech nor language, yet their voices are heard among them—sombre hues for autumn days; light, bright sparkles for smiling spring. Rest for the old; for the

young a rainbow! Children are not self-conscious, although they love finery; unless we prevent them, they forget their 'fine feathers' and themselves.

Nursery Hygiene.

41. Dress for children should be light and warm in texture, gay in colour, washable, never so expensive that a soil on it costs mother or child a spasm of the heart, and in form it should be regulated by common-sense.

That rare faculty did not determine children's dress twenty years ago. Poor little imps! How one remembers the full short skirt, the low neck—the incessant hitching up the weight, first on one shoulder, then the other—the long waist below the hips—the whole hapless body unprotected, except about six inches of the ribs, which were overheated. Often the waist-pinching began at a very early age; it helped to keep their clothes on. The ugly thin arms of growing girls, red with cold, vexed one's eyes in the school-room. In crinoline time, the exercise of children—jumping, running, tumbling down—was either ugly or forbidden.

Now, on the other hand, the world is made

for children. Their comfort is considered, their tastes are studied, they are allowed to feel warm in winter, they wear waistless dresses suited to their waistless bodies, dapper, smart, and easy. (By the bye, have children grown worse since their costumes have grown better?) Girls and boys may enjoy the gymnasium together; their whole life is more healthy and happy. Still, absurd 'novelties' are sometimes admitted by milliners and mothers: the dress may be seen as tight as a strait-waistcoat; the starched frills and countless buttons may be so placed as to be more than inconvenient; the lower limbs may be still shelterless; and the sash, well devised as a half-negligent ornament about the hips, may be found about the knees, and either restrain, or look as if it restrained, free motion.

Children should from babyhood be covered to the throat and wrists. The whole body should be protected by light flannel, not so thick as to heat and tire; there should be no stays, but the petticoats may be buttoned to a sufficiently warm bodice; and the ears should be shielded out of doors. Children are liable to ear-ache, often due to their useless hats. Why are hoods so seldom worn?

There is no greater mistake than over-

clothing. It heats the child, who is then apt to take a chill in the slightest draught. Nurses are so fond of 'well wrapping up' the young victims, and yet marvelling why they catch cold. Dismiss, too, the superstition that 'wraps' are to be begun and cast off at stated seasons. The thermometer outside the nursery window must regulate the wraps. If a hot day come in January, throw off the thick petticoat and hood, and directly the wind shifts put them on again. On some bleak August day, allow the child its sealskin, despite the month's name; to-morrow, no cloak at all may be needed. Many years' experience assures me that no other plan can be wise in such a climate as ours; and while rashness is blamable, over-prudence may be quite as mischievous. Children are made delicate by coddling.

Nursery Art.

42. Antique fashions, 'adapted to the young,' are frequently delicious. Pictures by Velasquez, Vandyke, and earlier masters, offer fruitful hints: the little old aprons, poke bonnets, quaint sleeves, sacques and caps, gaberdines, &c., may be daintily reproduced, and prove economical. Children

ought to be surrounded by grace on all sides ; the nursery habits form their tastes and guide their eye—why not have æsthetics from the first? It is marvellous how early they distinguish Chinese or other ornament, and this quickness of perception may teach us a lesson.

¶ The public galleries, old collections of prints, and Missals help our efforts in the direction of the beautiful. For babies too young for costumes, over-alls of muslin over silk, of Tussore, Corah Indian silk, trimmed with good lace, are prettier, cheaper, and more fit for the friction of tiny arms than starched Nainsook—a misery consecrated to span-long babes, because unbearable by older flesh.

As to colours for children's wear, the rules which apply to other persons apply to them ; but perhaps more emphatically. Children's complexions are so clear, they can bear very bright tints ; but it is woful to see them destroyed and effaced by harsh aniline dyes.

Nursery Economy.

43. The most economical pinafore for London or seaside wear (and its associations are all pleasant, clean, and dapper) is the blue-checked

linen worn by all French and Swiss middle-class children. It is a fine strong web, I think unattainable in England ; it lasts for years, with the roughest usage ; it does not easily soil, nor stain with salt water, like brown holland. For outdoors, the 'bashlyk,' or Russian hood, is easily made, easily washed, being perfectly straight. It is worn over a small hat of fur or velvet ; crosses under the chin, and ties or hooks behind ; or, crossed under the arms, it may form hood and mantle in one. A capital hat is made by a mere circular piece of cricketing flannel, or marcella, about three fingers in diameter, with a string run in a welt all round it, about two inches from the edge, and drawn up. So simple a contrivance, to make, to fit, to wash, is a boon to nurses ; five minutes suffice to tack in the little cap, and it never gets out of shape, or teases the tender head. The leavings from a home-made pelisse generally make such a hat ; and it may be lined with Corah silk.

For girls, as for boys, avoid stays however slight. The attitudes of children are too precious to be spoiled by stiff impediments, and how much more precious are their health and comfort !



CHAPTER X.

Art-Protestants in Dress.

Præ-Raphaelitism.

44. **T**HOSE who are not sufficiently well satisfied with the reigning fashion to care to follow it, even in its broad outlines, and such women as have much difficulty in finding any fashion that 'suits' them, may be glad to know more of the artistic revival which is called, though very incorrectly, Præ-Raphaelitism; for whatever objections may be made to the forms adopted by the artistic *coteries*, no just ones can be offered against the soft and harmonious colours they confine themselves to. No one of decent taste can prefer the harsh mixtures of fifteen years ago which passed for pretty, and which no com-

plexion, however brilliant, could stand against. There is a certain justice in the objection to be conspicuous, even by merit, since independence of thought and action have been scourged from the beginning of the world. At the same time no reform can ever be carried save through a storm of abuse and misinterpretation; and right principles (even in art) are worth fighting for, and, in the long run, always win.

In the first place, what is meant by 'Præ-Raphaelitism' in Dress?¹ If one were required to furnish an exact definition of that term it would be very hard; for everybody who catches it up means a different thing. But we may say, in a general way, that the present movement in dress under the above name is gradually spreading; first among art circles who have discovered, then among æsthetic circles who appreciate the laws which govern beauty; and it represents the common reaction that follows any bad system carried on long. Fashions, as we have seen, generally begin well, fall into hideous extravagance, then a reaction against the extravagance comes, and so on *ad infinitum*.

But this loose term 'Præ-Raphaelite' is extremely misleading. 'Art-Protestant' were a

¹ Reprinted, by permission, from the *Queen*.

better word. Præ-Raphaelite might fairly mean anything that was in vogue before Raphael's day, from Eve's simple attire or the blue tattooing of the earliest Briton, up to the many preposterous head-edifices which decayed with the houses of York and Lancaster. Some people think it only means the knack of standing in impossible attitudes and keeping on garments apparently pitchforked at one, like pictured saints, before their votaries had discovered perspective. Others suppose it means the most painful combinations of coarse colours, arrayed without any regard to the fitness of things—green hair, blue grass, &c.

But the term, one of the nicknames that invariably attach to every reaction in its early days, properly applies to the forms of dress—simple without bareness, complex without confusion—and the colours, harmonious however varied, which mark, roughly speaking, the period of Edward III.'s reign, from 1327 to 1377.

About this time, after the follies of fashion, *temp.* William Rufus and his immediate successors, were forgotten, and the equal vagaries of Richard II.'s reign not yet thought of, the modes in dress were for the most part graceful, natural, and moderate. That is why 'Art-Protestant' is

a better term for the present reaction than Præ-Raphaelite, as it implies the study of beauty rather than the worship of the grotesque, and limits beauty to no one brief period.

In order to describe with any method the fourteenth-century costumes applicable to the present day, I will divide my chapter into three heads, under which I will consider—I. Shape, indoor and outdoor, for both dresses and head-gear; II. Colours and Materials; III. Hair-dressing, and other details.

Shape.

45. The first rule in a beautiful dress is, as I have observed, that it shall not contradict the natural form of the human frame; and the second rule, growing out of the first, is, that the proportions of the dress shall obey the proportions of the body. Nor must the third rule, that the dress shall be consistent with the character and habits of the wearer, be forgotten. By this I do not mean to enjoin necessarily the acknowledgment of the whole body. Too much candour is as bad, in its way, as falsehood, and even more disagreeable. But angles, such as elbows, should be retained as angles, and not changed into

mighty puddings ; rounded lines, such as those of the hips and shoulders, should never be angularised, as in Queen Elizabeth's drum farthingale and high-peaked sleeves. A woman who studies artistic dress will first study the human figure. If her particular figure be over fat or over thin, she will select from among the dresses which do not deny the natural form those which least exaggerate her own defects. A very perfect figure may bear a dress closely fitting : thin arms belonging to a stout bust may be thickened by puffed sleeves : thick short arms ought never to be exaggerated in thickness and shortness by slashes or any outstanding ornament.

One of the most important features in a graceful figure—hence one of the most conspicuous and valuable innovations of the 'Præ-Raphaelite' school—is the waist. The first aim is to have an 'antique' waist, which a vulgar mind would pronounce horribly thick—thick, like the Venus de Medicis—thick, like that far nobler Venus of Milo. And why ? Because the proportion of the figure, the grace of action and carriage, depend so much on the waist being of the right size, that it is impossible to preach too strongly against the folly and ugliness of tight

lacing. The coarse, abrupt curve which is formed by a small waist and broad hips is very far removed from Hogarth's 'true line of beauty,' which is a curve extremely gradual (see fig. 6, p. 39). What is gained by an ugly angular waist, like a V? Nothing but a long list of hideous maladies which sap the health and spoil the complexion. What is gained by a somewhat large 'antique' waist? Good proportion in an artist's eye, ease and grace of movement, often a really statuesque carriage, impossible to the slaves of *la mode*, with their hard, bony cuirasses on.

The waist of a 'Præ-Raphaelite' is rather short, where a waist ought to be, in fact, between the hips and the last rib. Her skirt is cut full or scanty, as she chooses, but is never tied to her legs with strings and elastics. She can, therefore, stoop without gasping or cracking her corset-bone, and can sit down or walk upstairs at will, unlike some votaries of present fashions.

Her sleeves are cut extraordinarily high on the shoulder, sometimes a little fulled to fit the shoulder-bone, for it is *de rigueur* that a Præ-Raphaelite should be capable of moving her arms when dressed as freely as when undressed. You may see very elegant square-necked dresses, high or low, with soft chemisettes frilled around

the throat (even for evening wear), or decked with *négligés* of old point lace. The Præ-Raphaelite eschews as a rule starch, which is certainly no beautifier, and is destructive of folds with their thousand charms of light and shade; and, without going in for dirt, certainly prefers a soft cream-colour to the harsh white which is obtained by chloride of lime and washing-powders.

In sleeves there are so many forms that are artistic, comfortable, and becoming to the figure, that it is surprising to notice how bare of novelty are the fashion-books; year after year the coat-sleeve, variously modified, is all we get from them. But sleeves puffed all the way down,—sleeves slashed,—sleeves with a small puff at shoulder and elbow,—long sleeves hanging to the ground,—open, with small under-sleeves of an opposite hue,—and even a wide bishop's sleeve, clasped at the elbow with a ribbon,—how elegant may these be, and how execrable in the eyes of the one idea'd dressmaker! To shock the dressmaker may indeed be held almost a test of beauty; she is so ignorant and *bornée*! Many very rich and complicated sleeves may be adopted from old pictures by Rubens, Rembrandt, and others. In these days of loan col-

lections we have every advantage for studying ancient fashions. Nothing is so ugly, or so spoils the appearance of a dress, as a poor, weak sleeve. The arm, being almost always conspicuous, demands at least as much attention as the face.

A train (not so long as the court train, of course) is almost always an improvement to the figure. The long lines of the folds should sway and swathe as they like, unconfined by unmeaning bunches and gatherings behind, as in the modern 'fan-tail' skirts. A long dress should be capable of being easily caught up under the arm in walking, and adds height and an undulating movement to the figure; moreover, it helps to conceal a faulty foot.

The close-fitting long dress, with a belt around the hips and long lappets from the sleeve, such as that shown on the tomb of Edward III. at Westminster Abbey (fig. 30), is one of the most simple and beautiful ever worn. It buttons down the front, and is perfectly suitable to all materials and all occasions. The celebrated sideless gown, however, worn by the noble women of that period, which I have seen attempted by would-be artistic ladies, is not a success. In its original form it was first merely

a useful wrap; and later, when it strove to be 'becoming,' it was somewhat fantastic; and it always requires the wealth of ermine and



FIG. 29.

FIG. 30.

jewelled seams which belong to it, to render it beautiful. In poor materials, such as I have seen it made in, and worn by very young ladies neither stately nor dignified, and with a

modern small waist, it looks very like a pinafore, and by no means becoming. There are some things intolerable in a bad copy, which are fine enough in themselves.

The dress previously mentioned looks very pretty in any of the rich brocades or cut-velvets now made, and admits of embroidery, but not frills, furbelows, or any of the common devices of trade to waste stuff and increase expense.

The edges of sleeves may be cut into Vandykes, or more elaborate leaf-shaped little tabs, which are very pretty when neatly done, and peculiar to that period. They are not unmeaning, as they are an idealisation of what would be disagreeable *au naturel*, an edge worn into tatters. Here we have the exact reversal of the sentiment enunciated above. Some things are intolerable in the original which may be idealised into something beautiful. The success of such experiments depends on the skill which deals with them.

As to walking dresses, the Præ-Raphaelite is very wise, and very independent of public opinion. She selects good, sensible forms, and keeps to them. The circular cloak, the straight scarf (for summer wear), and the long close jacket now fashionable, are all good forms, and

much affected by the artistic world. In bonnets, she only asks for a definite shape—and then the shape is generally decent. No one ever saw an art-student in one of those nameless tufts of fluff, wire, and flowers which have been long loved by the milliner. She knows that an outdoor head-dress has a purpose in it, and so she has brought in the Gainsborough hat, the dainty 'Mother Hubbard' bonnet, the Russian 'bashlyk,' the gipsy hat, which are neither meaningless nor unbecoming, but very much the reverse.

The Præ-Raphaelite defies fashion whenever it is bad, but she goes along with it if it mends its ways and becomes good. She will wear a long veil drooping over her hat or bonnet, whether anyone else does so or not, because it is pretty; she never binds her nose flat, nor destroys her eyelashes by means of that useless mask of cheap net which is miscalled by shopmen a 'lace fall.'

In wet weather she may be seen with a long waterproof cloak of some pretty colour, and a cloth hat *en suite*: or an ulster, one of the most sensible inventions of the day, and pretty when not too masculine in material and cut, with a hood or 'bashlyk,' warm and impervious to the rain. She affects neat and well-made boots,

none the less pretty for being, as all boots should be, 'rights and lefts,' to follow the natural shape of the foot; some day she will make a still greater stride, forwards or backwards, and bring in a 'patten.'

Colours and Materials.

46. As to the colours for dress, how far easier it is for us to dress well to-day than it was ten or fifteen years ago! The so-called 'Præ-Raphaelites' whom I have before shown to be not the worshippers of one period, but the humble seekers after the laws of Beauty in Art, have so far influenced public opinion, and hence trade, that an immense number of beautiful colours have become purchasable and even fashionable of late years. 'No colour harmony,' said Ruskin many years ago, 'is of a high order unless it involve indescribable tints': and such indescribable tints of nearly every colour have been (alas! among many bad ones, and oft-times ill combined) a delight to cultivated eyes since about 1870. It is a woman's own fault to-day if she cannot dress well. It is a woman's own fault if she looks ugly. Every means is

given her, through the efforts of artistic circles, to be a thing of beauty; and these circles are sufficiently large already to do away with the fear of being disagreeably conspicuous by following their example in dress.

The enormous power of colour in modifying appearance can scarcely be overrated. Lay your hand upon some masses of brilliant colour, and notice the effect on the complexion of your hand. On bright blue paper your hand will suddenly present a jaundiced aspect—you may thus judge of what your cheeks look like, surrounded by a bright blue bonnet. On white paper the whitest hand looks brown, a reddish hand quite beefy. Does not this warn us not to envelope ourselves in snow-white garments, and explain why a bride usually looks her worst on her wedding-day? Yellow will have a tendency to make the skin look fair; many reds will lend it a positively greenish hue; mauve turns it to a ghastly orange, arsenic green to a deathly pallor.

Now the moral of this is *not*, that, as every colour forces the skin to assume a tinge of its complementary, black is the sole refuge for the destitute. No: without depreciating its value in giving brilliancy to other colours, black is most unbecoming in masses, except to those

whom nothing can spoil, and those whose taste out of mourning is so vile that their friends feel thankful when they are in it. The moral is, every colour is bad, when it is too bright ; but every colour may be made beautiful by selection of tint and by clever combination with other hues.

The best rule for selection is, shut your eyes when you see a staring colour—dazzling blue, pink, violet, green, scarlet, what not. But when you see a colour which is moderately dull in tone, and so far indescribable that you question whether it is blue or green, green or brown, red or yellow, grapple it to your soul with hooks of steel : it is an artistic colour, and will mix with almost any other artistic colour. No artistic colours are unduly bright ; they are all more or less dull—'toned down' is the technicality—but usually very pretty, harmonious, and becoming to the face.

At the same time, though artistic colours are dull, all dull colours are not artistic. There are dull colours which are eminently unbecoming, actually unpleasant when unrelieved, such as the grey formed by indigo and white, and certain 'dirty' browns and drabs, which must be treated craftily amidst other tints in order to look well. And I must not be

understood to taboo collectively all *primary* or pure bright colours always—and to insist upon none but softened *secondaries* or *tertiaries*.¹ One morsel of brilliant colour may have a capital effect, well placed in a mass of negative tint; but the difficulty of managing such 'spots' by beginners in the science of colour-harmony is such, that, like keen poisons, they are safest away, until eye and hand 'according well, may make one music,' fearless of a false note. In a mass of white or black, for instance, one touch

¹ Those who do not understand these technical terms, may be glad to know that the mixture of the primary colours makes

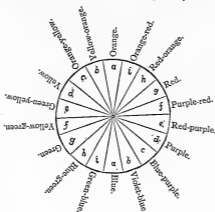


FIG. 31.—Diagram of Colour.

of orange like a flame may burn, or a touch of deep red amid dove-colour or clay-colour, or scarlet against grey, or brilliant green against white. But even then the scarlet, the green, the crimson, or blue, or orange must not recall Judson's dyes—they must, though brilliant, be soft—though boldly handled, with sure knowledge—then the poison may cure, but if it does not, it will kill.

Those persons who are not sufficiently certain of their 'eye' for colour in selecting among an immense number of colours, and who are apt to

the secondary colours; the mixture of the secondaries forms the tertiary hues.

Thus—

Red	}	Primary
Blue		
Yellow		
Red	}	Purple
Blue		
Blue	}	Green
Yellow		
Yellow	}	Orange
Red		
Green	}	Citrine
Orange		
Orange	}	Russet
Purple		
Purple	}	Olive
Green		

Complementary Colours,
as seen on diagram,
p. III.

a—a
b—b
c—c
&c.

get confused and mistake bad ones for good ones (common enough even to persons of really good taste), would do well to adhere to the one or two tradesmen in London who 'go in' for artistic materials and colours only, and be guided by them. Of course, it is best to walk alone, if one can ; but confusion of the eye is a calamity that may happen to anyone who is not a professional artist.

There are a few London firms which make a speciality of artistic shades. These materials are generally costly to purchase ; but the serges and cashmeres, exceedingly fine in colour, have, as far as my own experience goes, the nearly extinct quality of wearing remarkably well.

A very useful common dress may be made of grey tweed or carmelite (when I say grey, I mean the tint made by equal portions of black and white), made either all in one or short waisted, and having a square or V-shaped front, edged with somewhat coarse antique lace, which wears well ; or with a cream-coloured muslin frill. The sleeves may be close, with a small puff at the shoulder. A dozen rows of Venetian beads will be pretty with the grey stuff. Drab and dull blue mix well in merino : not navy blue, which is too gloomy, but the artistic blue,

which has a hint of green in it. Blue and green of certain shades look lovely together—so do certain shades of red and green ; but the last two, though complementaries, are difficult to combine well, and when ill combined no mixture can be more coarse or distressing. Who does not suffer from the inevitable scarlet opera-cloak, and pea-green or grass-green bow in the hair, which dot every concert-room? One wonders who the people are who cannot feel that such a mixture in their dress is a social crime ; they are, of course, the victims who have been told by the milliner that ‘ red and green always go together like blue and yellow,’ and blindly obey. But the milliner has never told them *what shades* of blue and yellow, what shades of red and green, are alone tolerable together, for she does not know herself. She has never had an art-education, and is paid by her employer for the activity of her fingers, not for her faculty for harmonising tints, which is a rare gift of nature, not always supplied even by an art-education.

The ordinary milliner gets a pattern dress or bonnet from some firm in Paris which has copied some Parisian *élégante*, who may possibly possess an eye for colour. The *élégante* invents a com-

bination ; the trade-houses catch it up more or less exactly ; they transmit it to England, and generally the second and third editions show signs of having suffered a decided change. At last some horrible mixture is shown as 'the fashion,' which the original *élégante* would burst out laughing at and indignantly disown.

The fine combination of deep plum-colour and turquoise which appeared some years ago—how soon was that vulgarised in England to a mixture absolutely painful ! All the shops jumped to the conclusion, after a cursory glance, that it was 'violet and light blue,' or 'navy blue and Alexandra blue,' or 'maroon and sky blue !' And did not we have enough of those vile mixtures ? and were they anything like the original ? Alas ! my countrywomen, the colour-art is not to be learnt in a day !

The secret of harmonising two different colours, complementaries or not, is, roughly speaking, this : one of the two, at least, must be dull and not too pure. If each can partake to some degree of the other, so much the better, as long as contrast is not lost. Thus red and green are only agreeable when the shades are deep red and dull pale green, such as crimson and *réséda*, or sage-green and a pale apricot or

salmon-colour. Blue and yellow, when the one is navy blue and the other amber (both dull, the one having a tint of red, the other of brown); or, orange and the palest blue that can be made. Blue and green, when the blue is greenish and the green bluish.

As regards materials good in themselves, suitable for certain colours and suitable to each other, I have not space to say much here, but may refer my readers to my book—the ‘Art of Beauty.’ Stiff materials are less manageable and graceful than soft ones. One dull stuff and one glossy stuff unite better than two glossy or two dull stuffs; but it is not difficult to mingle materials when there are so many good ones in the market. Many damasks are very beautiful and manageable.

Near the face the utmost care must be used to keep the colours soft and indescribable; for a brilliant colour destroys the finest complexion, and the aim of dress is to enhance, not to destroy. A woman who will be well dressed and look her best will concentrate her efforts on tints few and good: none of them *too pure*, none of them *too bright*, and none of them in too small a quantity.

When you have found a really fine colour, or combination of colours, keep them as much

as possible in masses. Englishwomen do not understand the merit of a large mass of colour. They snip, and twist, and confuse even good tints when they have got them. It is a sin to torture a fine material or colour into the unmeaning lumps, false *revers*, gathers, gaugings, that may be seen on the foolish 'fantails'; and the result is not nearly so restful to others' minds nor so expressive of your own form, as a simpler treatment. It is not fancy free, and soaring into realms of beauty, but fancy writhing on the ground in convulsions. Some dresses tire the eye as much as a wriggling kaleidoscope.

Hairdressing, &c.

47. The hair is a source of torment to most of us—both our own, and other people's. The trouble of arranging it in an elaborate form (as worn a few years ago) drove many ladies to the expedient of cutting off their own 'glory' and wearing a wig: this always seemed to me a tristful holocaust to the Moloch of Fashion. But the grievance of other people's hair we have always with us. The slovens, who perpetually have 'rats' tails' falling—the people who gum and

grease their hair—the people who have bald patches and expose them—the people who never study the shape of their heads and faces before adopting a prevalent fashion—how terribly they vex us, though unconsciously! and none the less because advice on personal appearance is more impossible, because more resented, than anything else in social life.

Too few persons recognise the responsibility which belongs to everyone who enters society at all—that of not becoming a nuisance to the rest, in looks as well as in speech and in deed. Certain rules for speech and bearing have been found absolutely necessary for the machinery of life to go on smoothly, and they are called courtesy. Dirty nails would be probably held as much a sign of ill-breeding as improper behaviour or the habit of flat contradiction. Is not an uncared-for head as discourteous to others as an uncared-for hand? May it not be even more distressing? for one cannot put one's head into a glove.

There is no ornament so pretty as good hair well arranged. Hair should be disposed in such a position that to touch it shall not soil the fingers nor dislodge its folds and curls. Hair is meant to touch. One should be able to run

one's fingers through it, and shake it into form again. I knew a girl with a wealth of hair, who disposed it in an apparently complex style, but fastened it with nothing but one hairpin. She could take it down and fold it all up again at a moment's notice, and in a minute's space. This is as it should be: she needed no maid, no gum, no wig, no forest of pins and pads and ties, and was always tidy and always beautiful; her one hairpin should have been of gold with a diamond head.

Still, everyone has not a wealth of hair, and everyone has not invented so beautiful a style of arranging it. Many have scanty locks—for them, far from forbidding borrowed ones, I enjoin them. Many have hair so heavy that it really needs elaborate fastenings. Some have bald patches, caused by the dragging of too much false hair, or by injudicious tying: to these I recommend some dainty head-gear for disguise's sake—and how few know the improvement that some form of ornament is to the hair! A little cap of antique lace, or a gracefully managed ribbon of good colour, or a thick gold chain twisted among the plaits, will give height and importance to the figure, by drawing the eye, through colour, to the top of the head.

The majority of Englishwomen have hair neither dark enough nor light enough to be conspicuous *per se*. To all of these some head-dress is a great improvement.

One of the prettiest methods of doing up the hair is that affected greatly by the artistic world. The hair is cut in a fringe over the forehead ; or the fringe is simulated by the ends



FIG. 32.

of the hair brought over the head to the front, and bound to the head by narrow straps of ribbon, gold, or black velvet. Between these straps the hair is loosened and raised, which gives an undulating line. This is a revival of the mediæval fashion, properly 'Præ-Raphaelite'—the straps or ribbons are the old 'bends'

which have puzzled many commentators. Shakspeare alludes to them in 'Antony and Cleopatra,'

' Her gentlewomen like the nereids,
So many mermaids, tended her i' th' eyes,
And made their bends adornings.'

The fashion seems to me to suit best red hair, I hardly know why ; perhaps because one is most accustomed to it in ancient pictures.

The practice lately in vogue of wearing the hair in two very long plaits ending in a bow of ribbon, is also the revival of an early English one ; but personally I dislike it in the street, and within doors it seems to me to need the ornaments that were always worn with the plaits—a veil, a garland of natural flowers, or a silken twist forming a small turban. Without something of the sort, the hair has a poor, barren look ; the whole shape of the skull, not always fine, unfortunately, is exposed, and it just looks as though the tails had been forgotten to be rolled up.

The fashion was introduced by the Normans (11th century), and it lasted a long time. The plaits, if scanty, were lengthened by being bound with ribbons or carried into silken cases ending

in tassels. Chaucer (fourteenth century) gives us his sweet picture of fair Emelye :

‘ Her yolwe heer was browdid in a tresse,
Behind hyr bak, a yerde long, I gesse.’

And there are many other hints of the prevalence of these plaits.

The classic arrangement of the hair, such as we see in statues of both male and female deities, the heavy knot of hair above the brow and the heavier knot behind the neck—is singularly elegant and becoming to most faces : but it properly requires a great deal of rich wavy hair. This also is simulated sometimes by ‘Præ-Raphaelite’ ladies nowadays. It should be done by a ribbon, not pins. The ribbon confines the upper knot, and runs down the side of the head to the lower one. The side hair may be either flat under the knot, or rolled back over it. But association renders such a manner of hairdressing incongruous with a modern squeezed waist, or a modern dress full of seams and false lines.

I have not space here to dwell on the many graceful modes of arranging the hair, and the modes suitable to certain persons, which I have described in ‘The Art of Beauty,’ but one or two hints may suffice. It is absolutely necessary

to study yourself, before you dress your hair : your height, your build, the shape of your head and face, must be considered if you aim at being pleasant to the artistic eye. If the forehead is narrow, while your cheeks are rather wide, roll the hair over pads at the temples, or frizz it out : if your forehead be too large for your face, any form of fringe may be cultivated. If you lack height, dress the hair high, brushed off the brow, and wear a flower or jewel as high as possible. Should the head be depressed or flat at top, plaits across diadem-wise will be a great addition ; or the hair may be brushed over a cushion.

Vulgarity is Excess.

48. One word against the vulgarity of overdoing any fashion. I have no prejudice, none need have, against false hair used in moderation and *when necessary*, any more than one need have against cosmetics and paint, used in moderation and *when necessary*. But the enormous masses of hair which load fair heads now, like the masses of red and white which smeared fair faces nearly 100 years ago, are purely ugly and ridiculous. When a plait is palpably

bigger than one human head can supply, it ceases to be an ornament, and becomes a burden and annoyance. The *décadence* of the once beautiful Watteau style was equally atrocious. The heap of tow and false hair, greasy bird's nests and glass gewgaws in the very worst taste, brought the dire Nemesis which awaits every dust-heap: but while waiting for the inevitable Nemesis, we are offending well-cultivated eyes and well-regulated minds. Who can afford to do that? Whilst our want of perception is making us a spectacle to men and angels, 'Old Time is still a-flying.' And by the time that Fashion's nod releases us or shifts the form of tyranny, age may have come upon us: we have wasted years in making mistakes, and it is we who in the long run are the losers.

Beautiful Old Age.

49. I have been speaking much about Youth, but let not Age suppose that the lovers of the beautiful have left her out in the cold. There are so many dignified adaptations of old dresses, such sweet mob-caps, such dainty lace kerchiefs, such delicate aprons lying over folds of black velvet—many an old lady, long past the 'threescore

and ten,' once supposed to represent a great age, is now far handsomer than any of her grandchildren. Youth may be ugly, youth may make a thousand mistakes: age can make but one, to ape the young. White hair is so becoming to the face that many women are never pretty till they are old: the long reign of hair-powder, which lasted through a century, is an immortal tribute to the beauty of old age.

The Beautiful and the Good.

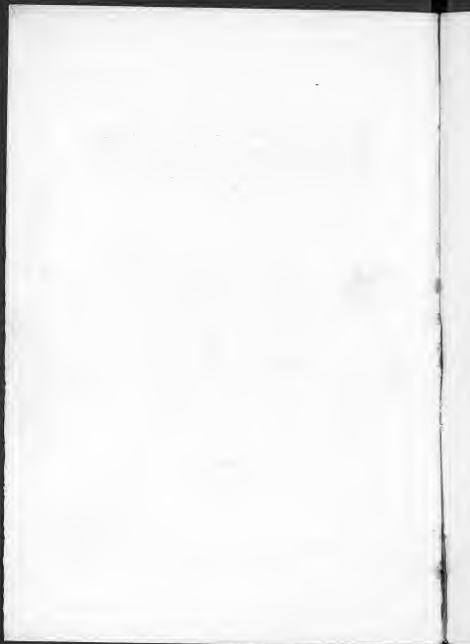
50. I hope the day will soon come when it will no longer be a slur on a good woman, old or young, to say 'She thinks a great deal of dress; she attaches enormous importance to æsthetics.' Whilst it remains a good motive to give others pleasure and spare them disagreeable shocks, the rule must hold good in every department of life. I hope the day will soon come when it shall be a recognised duty to conceal what is offensive—when slight deformities of limb and skin shall be avowedly disguised by art, and great and startling deformities shall cease to disgrace our public streets and, alas! to repeat themselves, through the nervous shock to delicate persons. It is one of the duties of life

to grease the wheels on which we drive, as far as ever that is consistent with other duties, and most people must judge for themselves how far that is.

To those who find that attention to the outward adorning withdraws their minds from higher aspirations, these directions for adorning life through the details of life are not applicable, and not addressed. I love beauty. I have written much to prove that it is of no mean value as a refining influence as well as a wholesome pleasure: but my aim has ever been to show that the culture of beauty need never interfere with that of goodness and usefulness to others. It is as easy to dress well as ill, since dress we must: and absolute unconsciousness as to how she looks is impossible to any woman, since every eye tells her unbidden; therefore, indifference to appearance is falsely inculcated. It is natural to wish to please in all ways—by kindness and a pleasant manner, and a pleasant face—or at least not to displease. How delicately Goldsmith distinguishes his two types of innocent and admirable womanhood! Differently lovely, 'Olivia was often affected, from too great a desire to please. Sophia even repressed excellence, from her fears to offend'—

'one vanquished by a single blow, the other by efforts successively repeated.'

Very beautiful women are seldom vain : they are so used to their own beauty that they do not think much about it, any more than a man thinks much about his rank or profession when not engaged in his duties. *The vain woman is she who has been unfairly disparaged.* Undue self-consciousness is the revolt against injustice, and like all revolt, is disagreeable, but, we hope, a step to some better state of things. Were all women acknowledged to have each her 'points,' personal as well as mental, and allowed to cultivate them in a sensible and simple spirit, there would be less envy and malice, less 'vanity' and wasted time, and more innocent pleasure throughout life. But a pretty woman who leaves uncultivated her mind and heart for the sake of her body—that is the illustration of the 'jewel of gold in a swine's snout.'



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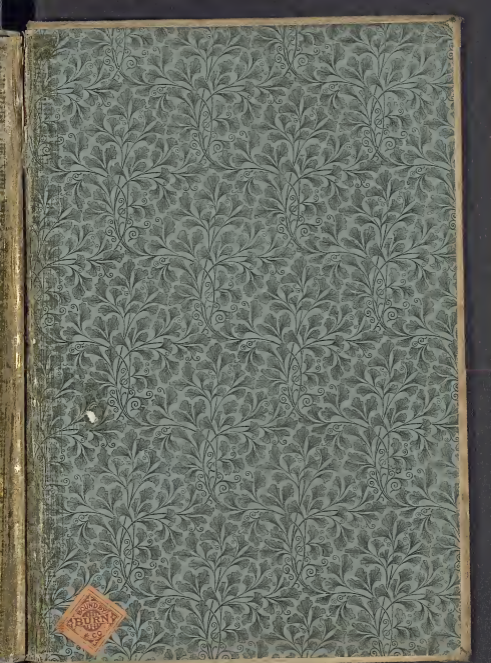
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