

FASHION.

FA'SHION, or, as the French term it, *La Mode*, admits as little of exact definition as of being referred to any intelligible principle. In every age and country, there has been a recognisable costume or general style of male and female attire, along with certain niceties in the shape, colour, and texture of dress, which, fluctuating according to taste or whim, are known as the fashion—a word which etymologically signifies making in a particular form. The terms fashion and fashionable are, however, so comprehensive as to include much beyond the sphere of the toilet; as, for example, a style of speaking, living, and forming opinions; there being, to use a common phrase, 'a fashion in everything.' It is only in China and some other eastern countries that, in consequence of dress being regulated by sumptuary laws or some equally strict traditions, the fashions of attire remain from generation to generation with little or no change.

The nature of clothing, and the necessity for its use, being treated in the articles WEAVING and SANITARY SCIENCE in SUPP., what seems desirable here is to glance at the leading forms of dress and more conspicuous fashions that have prevailed in Western Europe, and more particularly in England, since the dawn of civilisation. Our modern costume has seemingly had a double origin—that of the Romans and of the Teutonic people, who in different branches invaded France and Britain. The usual Roman dress, in the latter period of the Empire, consisted of a tunic, or loose upper garment, with a dress for the lower limbs, called *braccæ*; hence the modern term *breeches*. Over all was occasionally worn by the higher classes the *toga*, or mantle. It is believed that these Roman costumes were generally copied by the greater number of British, at least among the more opulent classes. In the dress of the women, however, there was but little change. They appear in two tunics, the one reaching to the ankles, the other having short sleeves, and reaching about half-way down the thigh: in other words, they resemble a round gown, or bedgown and petticoat, though the latter, distinct from a body and sleeves, is not considered to be ancient. This tunic was called in British *gun*; hence our word *gown*, of which we still see specimens of short dimensions worn by women of the humbler classes in England, Scotland, and Wales.

The Anglo-Saxon and Danish periods of English history are marked by new peculiarities in costume. Soon after the departure of the Romans, and the arrival of the Saxons in the 5th c., fashions of apparel were introduced from Northern Germany, which continued with no material change for several centuries. The most important improvement in the ordinary dress of the people was the introduction of the *shirt*, a linen garment worn next the skin, for which we are indebted to the Saxon invaders. The common dress of the 8th c. consisted, as we find, of linen

shirts; tunics, or a kind of surcoat; cloaks fastened on the breast or shoulders with brooches; short drawers met by hose, over which were worn bands of cloth, linen, or leather, in diagonal crossings. Leathern sandals were worn by the early Anglo-Saxons; but afterwards the shoe became common: it was very simple, and well contrived for comfort, being opened down the instep, and there, by a thong passed through holes on each side of the slit, drawn tight round the feet like a purse. A felt or woollen cap, called *hæt* (hence our modern word *hat*), was worn by the higher class of Anglo-Saxons; but it is generally believed that the serfs or lower orders were without any other covering for the head than what nature had given them. The Anglo-Saxon tunic still exists in the *smock-frock*, a species of overall generally worn by the peasantry and some farmers in England. The *blouse*, worn by workmen in France and Switzerland, has an equally early origin.

The Norman Conquest introduced greater taste and splendour into British costume. Now, were introduced Gloves (q. v.), along with the fashions of chivalry. The annexed engraving represents a gentleman of the reign of Henry V.: he is dressed in a short tunic, buttoned in front, with girdle, large loose sleeves, tight hose forming pantaloons, and stockings in a single piece, peaked shoes, and head-cloth or cap. About this period, silks and velvets of divers colours came into use among the higher classes, by whom gold chains were generally worn. The dress of ladies was of the richest kind. Gowns were embroidered and bordered with furs or velvet; and the bodice, laced in front over a stomacher, now first appeared. But the greatest eccentricity was the lofty steeple head-dress, shewn in the annexed portrait; this consisted of a roll of



Gentleman of Fifteenth Century.

linen, covered with fine lawn, which hung to the ground, or was mostly tucked under the arm.

In the 16th c., the upper part of the long hose or nether garments began to be worn loose, or slashed with pieces of different colours let in, and the arms and shoulders of the doublet or jacket were fashioned in a similar style. Boots were also worn loose on the leg, with the upper part falling down; hence the origin of the *buskin*. Ruffs or ruffles, collars, and velvet bonnets with feathers, came likewise into use, as may be seen from the paintings of Henry VIII. Hall, the



Lady of Fifteenth Century.

chronicler, describes several of Henry's superb dresses, and among them a *frocke*, or coat of velvet, embroidered all over with gold of damask, the sleeves and breast cut and lined with cloth of gold, and tied together 'with great buttons of diamonds, rubies, and orient pearls.' The cloaks and mantles were of corresponding magnificence. The shirts were

FASHION.

pinched or plaited, and embroidered with gold, silver, or silk. The term *hose* continued to be applied to the entire vestment, from the waist to the feet, throughout this century: the material is more distinctly stated, for Henry wore knit silk as well as cloth hose: the precise period of the separation of the hose into breeches and stockings, is not so clear as the derivation of the latter term from the 'stocking of hose;' that is, adding the lower part that covered the legs and feet to that which was fastened by points to the doublet, and was called the *stocks*. The shoes and buskins were of the German fashion, very broad at the toes, and of velvet and satin, slashed and puffed. The hats, caps, and bonnets were of almost endless forms and colours.

The dress of the middle ranks in the reign of Henry VIII. may be seen in prints of the time;



Man and Woman of the Sixteenth Century.

plain russet coats, and a loose kind of kersey breeches, with stockings of the same piece, were the ordinary suit; and the London apprentices wore blue cloaks in summer, and gowns of the same colour in winter, as badges of servitude; for this appears to have been the age of domestic distinctions—the relics of the feudalism of the middle ages. The women wore russet, or long woollen gowns, worsted kirtles (hereafter called *petticoats*), and white caps and aprons; and white underlinen came into general wear. The engraving shews a man and woman in the ordinary dress of this period.

The principal novelty of the reigns of Edward VI. and Mary was the flat round bonnet or cap, of plain velvet or cloth, worn on one side of the head, and decorated with a jewel and single ostrich feather. The bonnet itself is preserved in the caps worn at the present day by the boys of Christ's Hospital; and their blue coat and yellow stockings are such as were worn by the London apprentices at the date of the foundation of the hospital by the youthful Edward. See **HOSIERY**.

The male costume in Elizabeth's reign was the large trunk hose, long-waisted doublet, short cloak, hat, band, and feather, shoes with roses, and the large ruff; but the great breeches, 'stuffed with hair-like woolsacks,' after the separation of the hose into this garment and stockings, appear to have been worn throughout the reign: they were made of silk, velvet, satin, and damask. The doublets were still more costly, and quilted and stuffed, 'slashed, jagged, pinched, and laced;' and over these were worn coats and jerkins in as many varieties as there are days in the year. The cloaks were of the Spanish, French, and Dutch cuts, of cloth, silk, velvet, and taffeta of all colours, trimmed with gold, silver, and silk-lace and glass bugles, inside and outside equally superb. The stockings, shoes, slippers, and ruffs resembled those of the ladies.

Hats now began to supersede the bonnets of a former era. Those of beaver were exceedingly expensive, and they were for the most part made of felted wool, dyed. The most remarkable thing about these hats was their numerous shapes: some were steeple-crowned; others were flat and broad, like the battlements of a house; and others with round crowns, and bands of all colours, and ornamented with huge feathers and brooches, clasps, and jewels of great value. See **HAT**.

As regards female attire, the more conspicuous features in the reign of Elizabeth were the farthingale (q. v.) and ruff. The farthingale, or fardingale, consisted in an extravagant expansion of the lower garments, by means of cane or whalebone, by which the lady seemed to walk in a kind of tub. The farthingale, which is referred to by Shakspeare, Butler, and other writers, mostly in a satiric vein, was the predecessor of the hoop, which in its turn, after an interval, was succeeded by the Crinoline (q. v.) and hoop-work of steel. The widely extended ruff of fine linen, like a huge frill, is seen in the pictures of Elizabeth and her envied rival, Mary Queen of Scots, both stars of fashion in their day.

Under James I., the male costume was somewhat more Spanish, as respects the slashing and ornamenting of the doublet and breeches. Late in the reign, however, the jackets or doublets were shortened, and the breeches reduced in size, and fastened in large bows at the knees; the well-stockinged leg was admired, and the hat worn low in the crown, and with broad brim, as seen in portraits of the date 1619. Beards and whiskers had become almost universal in the reign of Elizabeth; but in that of James, the former was sometimes worn trimmed to a point, hanging down at the division of the ruff.

In the female costume, there was little change. The farthingale continued to be worn by ladies of quality; a strong passion for foreign lace was introduced; pearls were the favourite jewels; and the ruff maintained its sway, so as to be anathematised from the pulpit; and the fancies of female costume were glanced at in a sermon preached before the king at Whitehall in 1607—1608, as 'her French, her Spanish, and her foolish fashions.'

The fashion of dress in the reign of Charles I. became still more decidedly Spanish and picturesque. There were now worn collars of rich point-lace, large and hanging down on the shoulders, held by a cord and tassel at the neck, and now called *Vandyke*, from its being the most striking part of the dress in which Vandyke at that time painted portraits.

The principal habits were vests and cloaks of velvet, or silk damask, short-trousered breeches terminating in stuffed rolls, and fringes and points, and very rich boots, with large projecting lace tops. A dress of Charles is thus described: A falling band, green doublet (from the armpits to the shoulders wide and loose), zigzag turned-up ruffles, long green breeches (like a Dutchman's), tied below the knee with yellow ribbons, red stockings, green shoe-roses, and a short red cloak lined with blue, with a star on the shoulder; the king sometimes wore a large cravat, and at other times a long falling band with tassels. The dress of the gay courtiers or cavaliers consisted of a doublet of velvet, silk, or satin, with large loose sleeves, slashed, and embroidered; Vandyke collar and band, and short embroidered cloak, worn on one shoulder; the long breeches, fringed and pointed, met the ruffled tops of the boots; the embroidered sword-belt was worn over the right shoulder, and in it was hung a Spanish rapier, and in the flapping beaver-hat was worn a plume of feathers confined by a jewel. A buff coat or jerkin



Citizen in the time of Charles I.

FASHION.

was often worn, as a better defence than the doublet, which is sometimes covered. The engraving represents a citizen of this period more plainly attired.

The female costume of this period was rather elegant than splendid. Gowns with close bodies and tight sleeves were worn, though the farthingale was retained, with a gorget ruff standing up about the neck like a fan. French hoods were still worn, though with little distinction as to rank. The hair was worn in small curls, and the hoods, of all colours, fastened under the chin with curious effect. Earrings, necklaces, and bracelets were much worn; but the Puritans forbade the females to wear lace, jewels, or even braided hair; and they retained the close hood and high-crowned hat.

Towards the close of the reign of Charles I., the cumbersome farthingale disappeared, with the yellow starched ruff and band. These tasteless fashions being dismissed, the female dress became very elegant, with its rich full skirt and sleeves, and falling collar edged with rich lace, and the hair worn in graceful ringlets; but these vanities were condemned by the Puritan party.

With the restoration of Charles II. came certain tasteless innovations upon the elegant Vandyke costume of the time of Charles I., which were the first resemblance to the coats and waistcoats of the present day. Thus our most picturesque attire lasted little more than a quarter of a century. Its decline was gradual; its chivalric character soon degenerated into grotesqueness, which in its turn changed to stark meanness. Early in the reign of Charles II., the doublet was much shortened, and worn open in front, where, and at the waistband, the rich shirt was shewn; and the loose sleeves and breeches were decked with ribbons and points, and from the knee-bands hung long lace ruffles. At the wrists, too, ruffles were worn; but the lace-collar was shorn of its points. The cloak was retained upon the left shoulder, and the high-crowned and plumed hat remained for a short time; but the crown of the hat was soon lowered.

The petticoat breeches were another absurdity; although ornamented with ribbons at the sides, the lining strangely appeared below the breeches, and was tied at the knees; to match which, the sleeves of the doublet only reached to the elbows, and from under them bulged the ruffled sleeves of the shirt, both being ornamented with ribbons. Meanwhile the skirt of the doublet had been lengthened from above the waist nearly to the knees, and had buttons and button-holes in its entire length, thus becoming a coat, and so named in an inventory of 1679; wherein also are the items of *waistcoat, breeches, pantaloons, drawers, and trousers*, being the earliest mention of these articles. Stockings of various kinds were common; and 'the lower ends of stockings' are understood as socks. Instead of the lace-collar was worn the long square-ended cravat, of the same material, from Brussels and Flanders.

Passing to the reigns of James II. and William III., we find the male attire gradually fashioned according to the artificial costume of the court of Louis XIV. Every article of dress was now more prim and exact. The petticoat breeches were exchanged for the close-fitting garments tied below the knee, and therefore called *knee-breeches*; the broad-brimmed hats were turned up on two sides, and edged with feathers or ribbons; we began to see the rich long lace cravat and embroidered waistcoat; and the band was now narrowed, so as to resemble that worn at the present time by clergymen. Wigs, which had been some time in use, were worn still longer than hitherto, hanging down in front, or flowing upon the shoulders, though the colour was altered from black to suit the complexion.

From the 17th to the end of the 18th c. was the era of *Hair-powder* (q. v.), *Wigs* (q. v.), and cocked-hats; in these as in other matters there being an excessive artificiality in the tastes of the higher classes. In the annexed cut, we offer a

representation of a gentleman of 1750, with his flowing coat and ample cuffs, frills at the wrist, deep waistcoat hanging over the legs, long white hose drawn over the knees, his cocked-hat folded under his arm, and in his hand the open Snuff-box (q. v.). Such was the appearance of what is traditionally known as the 'old English gentleman.' The coats of the 18th c. were of velvet, silk, or satin, as well as broad-cloth, and their colours very fanciful. Hogarth's favourite colour was sky-blue; Reynolds's, deep crimson and violet; and Goldsmith rejoiced



Gentleman of 1750.

in plum-colour. About 1790, cloth became the general wear; the waistcoat being of the costlier materials, and embroidered, and sometimes the breeches. Buckles were worn at the knees and in the shoes till the close of the century; and the large square plaited buckle was the *ton* until 1791, when shoe-strings became general. Among the artificialities of dress during the greater part of the 18th c., none was more odious than that of Hoops (q. v.), worn by ladies, who, by these means of expansion, were made to appear as if standing in an inverted tub. In the reigns of George I. and II., a loose kind of drapery at the back of the dress, called a *sacque*, and hooded silk-cloaks, were worn, also a very small muff, such as have been lately revived. In the 18th c., after the disuse of towering head-dresses, Veils (q. v.) of an elegant fabric were introduced, and the Fan (q. v.) was an important article for ornament and flirtation.

The formalities of the 18th c. received a severe blow at the French Revolution; and in the ten years from 1790 to 1800 a more complete change was effected in dress, by the spontaneous action of the people, than had taken place at any previous period in a century. The change began in France, partly to mark a contempt for old court usages, and partly in imitation of certain classes of persons in England, whose costume the French mistook for that of the nation generally. This new French dress was introduced by the party who were styled the *Sans Culottes*. It consisted of a round hat, a short coat, a light waistcoat, and pantaloons; a handkerchief was tied loosely round the neck, with the ends long and hanging down, and shewing the shirt-collar above; the hair was cut short, without powder, *à la Titus*, and the shoes were tied with strings.

The comparatively simple form of dress of the *Sans Culottes* found many admirers in England, and soon became common among young men; the change from antique fashions was also greatly helped by the imposition of a tax on the use of hair-powder, which was henceforth generally abandoned. Pantaloons, which fitted closely to the leg, remained in very common use by those persons who had adopted them till about the year 1814, when the wearing of trousers, already introduced into the army, became fashionable. It is proper, however, to mention that trousers had, for the previous fifteen or twenty years, been used by boys, and were perhaps from them adopted by the army. Previous to the French Revolution, the dress of boys was almost the same as that of men. Although trousers—called by the

FASHION.

Americans *pants*—were generally worn after 1815, many elderly persons still held out in knee-breeches against all innovations, and to the present day an aged gentleman may occasionally be seen clinging to this 18th c. piece of dress. The general use of white neckcloths continued, notwithstanding the introduction of the standing collar, till the reign of George IV., when this monarch's taste for wearing a black silk kerchief or stock, and also the use of black stocks in the army, caused a remarkably quick abandonment of white neckcloths, and the adoption of black instead. The year 1825, or thereabouts, was the era of this signal improvement in costume.

While these leading changes were effecting, other alterations of a less conspicuous nature were from time to time taking place. The disbanding of the army after the peace of 1815 led to various transformations besides those we have mentioned. While pantaloons were the fashionable dress, it became customary to wear Hessian boots; these, which had originated among the Hessian troops, were without tops, and were worn with small silk tassels dangling from a cut in front; being drawn over the lower part of the pantaloons, they had a neat appearance; but the keeping of them clean formed a torment that prevented their universal use. See *Boots*. When trousers were introduced from the practice of the army, the use of Wellington boots to go beneath them also became common. Referring to the era of 1815 to 1825 as that in which trousers, Wellington boots, and black neckcloths or stocks came into vogue, we may place the introduction of the surtout in the same period of history. From the time when the collarless and broad-skirted coat had disappeared about the commencement of the century, the fashion of coats had changed in various ways till the above-named era, when the loose frock-coat or surtout was added to the list of garments.

Such is a general account of the progress of fashions in England until nearly the present day. In these fashions, the Welsh, Irish, and Scotch have participated, and there is now little to distinguish the inhabitants of one part of the United Kingdom from another. What differences exist in particular localities—as, for instance, the round hats of the women in Wales, the checked gray *plaid* of the Lowland Scottish peasantry, and the *tartan* of the Highlanders—will receive some notice under their appropriate heads.

The general simplifying of dress subsequent to 1815, was not unaccompanied by an expiring effort to sustain a high style of fashion. The *macaroni*, or highly dressed beau of the 18th c., was now succeeded by the *dandy*, who, with mincing, affected manners, prided himself on his starched collars, his trouser-straps, and the flashy bunch of seals which dangled from his watch-chain. The Regency was the era of this kind of supreme dandyism, but it continued till later times, and characterised a number of leading public personages, of whom notices occur in Raikes's *Reminiscences*, from 1831 to 1851. In the present day, may be noted a kind of breakdown of everything like formality in gentlemen's walking costume. Plain cloths, of divers hues, called *Tweeds* (q. v.), have almost superseded materials of a superior quality; cloth caps, or soft felted hats, called *wide-awakes* (see *HAT*), cover the head; and the feet are provided with short ankle-boots instead of Wellingtons. In evening or dinner costume, however, the old etiquette of dress-coats and white neckcloths is still maintained. Among the changes that are taking place in the morning or walking dress, none is so remarkable as the growing fashion of wearing *knickerbockers*. These are wide loose trousers to below the knee, leaving the lower part of the leg only stockinged or covered with

leggings. This fashion, which has been copied more immediately from the French *Zouaves* (q. v.), and partly perhaps from the common practice of stuffing the lower parts of the trousers roughly into boots in the western regions of the United States, is very much a resumption of the costumes seen in old Dutch prints. Should it become general, leg-gaiters or boots will come again into use, and the present generation may live to see the fashion of male attire work once more round to the knee-breeches of the 18th century. In female as well as in male costume, fashion seems to have a tendency to work in a circle; of this, the late, but now obsolete, resumption of the farthingale, or hoop, under the name of crinoline, offers a sufficient example, besides affording a ludicrous instance of the unreasoning manner in which extravagances in dress are usually followed. It is to be observed, however, that Englishwomen, chargeable as they are with this absurdity, set a most creditable example to their sex all over the world, in allowing no fantastic change of fashion to prevent them from taking out-door exercise in all weathers, which the introduction of india-rubber *Goloshes* (q. v.) has materially aided.

As to the moral view that may be taken of the whimsicalities of female fashions, we might refer to the numerous papers of Steele in the *Tatler* and *Spectator*, and also the writings of other 18th c. essayists; passing these over, it is enough to quote the words of Hazlitt, a more recent essayist. 'Fashion,' he says, 'constantly begins and ends in two things it abhors most—singularity and vulgarity. It is the perpetual setting up and then disowning a certain standard of taste, elegance, and refinement, which has no other formation or authority than that it is the prevailing distraction of the moment; which was yesterday ridiculous from its being new, and to-morrow will be odious from its being common. It is one of the most slight and insignificant of all things. It cannot be lasting, for it depends on the constant change and shifting of its own harlequin disguises; it cannot be sterling, for, if it were, it could not depend on the breath of caprice; it must be superficial, to produce its immediate effect on the gaping crowd; and frivolous, to admit of its being assumed at pleasure by the number of those who affect to be in the fashion, to be distinguished from the rest of the world. It is not anything in itself, nor the sign of anything, but the folly and vanity of those who rely upon it as their greatest pride and ornament. It takes the firmest hold of weak, flimsy, and narrow minds, of those whose emptiness conceives of nothing excellent but what is thought so by others. That which is good for anything is the better for being widely diffused. But fashion is the abortive issue of vain ostentation and exclusive egotism: it is haughty, trifling, affected, servile, despotic, mean and ambitious, precise and fantastical, all in a breath—tied to no rule, and bound to conform to every rule of the minute.' For a large variety of amusing particulars concerning fashions, 'stars of fashion,' &c., during the past two centuries, we refer to Mrs Stone's *Chronicles of Fashion* (Lond. 2 vols. 1845). w. c.