

and useless. She makes people visit when they would rather be at home, eat when they are not hungry, and drink when they are not thirsty. She invades our pleasure and interrupts our business. She compels people to dress gayly—whether upon their own property or that of others. She ruins health and produces sickness—destroys life and occasions premature death. She makes foolish parents, invalids of children, and servants of us all. She is a tormentor of conscience, despoiler of morality, an enemy to religion, and no one can be her companion and enjoy either. She is a despot of the highest grade, full of intrigue and cunning—and yet husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, and servants, all strive to see who shall be most obsequious. Fashion obtains in all countries—there being ever some Beau Brummells at hand to issue her mandates and illustrate her Protean shapes and endless metamorphoses.

"Oh, Fashion! it were vain indeed to try your wondrous flights to follow:

Onward at such a pace you speed, beating the *Belle Assemblée* hollow.

One moment hovering in our coats to change the cutting of the skirts:

Then, with rude grasp you seize our throats, altering the collars of our shirts;

Now trimming up with ribbons gay, and flowers as well, a lady's bonnet;

Then with rash hand tearing away each bit of finery upon it.

Shrouding one day the arm from sight, in sleeve so large that six might share it;

And making it next month so tight 'tis scarcely possible to bear it.

Upon a lady's dress again, with arbitrary hand it pounces,

Making it one day meanly plain, then idly loading it with flounces."

There are few things that have not been done, and few things that have not been worn, under the sanction of fashion. What could exhibit a more fantastical appearance than an English beau of the fourteenth century? He wore long, pointed shoes, fastened to his knee by gold or silver chains; hose of one colour on one leg, and another colour on the other; a coat, the one-half white, and the other black or blue; a long silk hood, buttoned under his chin, embroidered with grotesque figures of animals,

dancing men, &c. This dress was the height of the mode in the reign of Edward III. In view of such facts, shall we upbraid woman for her vanity and love of finery?

Leigh Hunt informs us that fashions have a short life or a long one, according as it suits the makers to startle us with a variety, or save themselves observation of a defect. Hence fashions set by young or handsome people are fugitive, and such are usually those that bring custom to the milliner.

The *Edinburgh Review* observes: "Peculiarities of dress, even amounting to foppery, so common among eminent men, are carried off from ridicule by ease in some, or stateliness in others. We may smile at Chatham, scrupulously crowned in his best wig, if intending to speak; at Erskine, drawing on his bright yellow gloves before he rose to plead; at Horace Walpole, in a cravat of Gibbon's carvings; at Raleigh, loading his shoes with jewels so heavy that he could scarcely walk; at Petrarch, pinching his feet till he crippled them; at the rings which covered the philosophical fingers of Aristotle; at the bare throat of Byron; the Armenian dress of Rousseau; the scarlet and gold coat of Voltaire: or the prudent carefulness with which Cæsar scratched his head, so as not to disturb the locks arranged over the bald place. But most of these men, we apprehend, found it easy to enforce respect and curb impertinence.

A recent writer says he likes "flounces when they wave and flow, as in a very light material—muslin, or gauze, or *barège*—when a lady has no outline and no mass, but looks like a receding angel or a 'dissolving view;' but he does not like them in a rich material, where they flop, or in a stiff one where they bristle; and where they break the flowing lines of the petticoat, and throw light and shade where you do not expect them to exist."

"The amply-folding robe, cast round the harmonious form; the modest clasp and zone on the bosom; the braided hair, or the veiled head—these were the fashions alike of the wife of a Phocion and the mistress of an Alcibiades. A chastened taste ruled at their toilettes; and from that hour to this, the forms and modes of Greece have been those of the poet, the sculptor, and the painter. The flowing robe, the easy shape, the soft, unfettered hair, gave place