

more than the figures of wood in a costumer's show-room.

The changes which constantly take place are resolved upon and made in ignorance of the commonest physiological facts, and without any reference to their influence upon the growth, health, and general well-being of the material organism, which clothing was intended to comfort and protect. Practically, indeed, the object is reversed; instead of clothing being made for the body, the body is simply made to display clothing, its other uses being wholly subordinate.

This has been so long and habitually the case, that it is now done without thought. Mothers dress their children from the time they are born, not in accordance with natural requirements, but according to the dictates of fashion. One can see how the question of dress could gradually become mixed up with what is and is not becoming in the mind of grown women; but what, in the name of all that is rational, ought fashion and caprice to have to do with infants, whose wants are uniformly the same, who have no tastes to gratify, and whose well-being depends on three essentials—warmth, cleanliness, and sustenance?

It is true that fashion has within the past fifteen years done good service in prescribing for infants sensible covering for the arms and neck, which were formerly left bare; but who or what is to blame for the folly which entailed consumption and diseases of various kinds upon a part of the race during previous years?

It is not that fashion is always in fault, but that the question is outside the domain of fashion—it is a question of life, health, strength, and growth, and in its essentials should therefore be always the same, as infants are always the same, as their embryotic state, their weakness, their incapacity, their needs are always the same.

The apparent difference, indeed, between the infants' fashions of one period and the infants' fashions of another period, is not much to a superficial observer; but it is sufficient to make the question with the majority of mothers—not, what does a newly born child need, but, what does fashion say it must have? It is sufficient to lengthen the skirts until the weight of clothing diminishes the strength of nurse and child to sustain it. It is sufficient to create fears and anxieties, not lest its outer clothing should not be sufficiently warm and protective, but lest the cloak of to-day should be unlike the cloak of yesterday, and the baby, *her* baby, wear a sleeved cloak, when a round cloak is the proper thing, and *vice versa*.

I know there are persons sensible enough to dress children according to their requirements—there are even leaders of fashion who strive earnestly to subordinate display

to the higher objects of comfort and utility; but this is only a partial benefit, so long as the principle remains the same, and fashion, subject to a thousand senseless as well as sensible caprices, is allowed to be the arbitrator in a matter literally of life and death.

Fortunately for manhood, the boy is released from the control of feminine fashion by the time he is six years old, and thenceforward is free to run and jump, dance and caper, kick up his heels or stretch out his limbs to their full length; and from this time, in nine cases out of ten, dates a new life, a fresh accession of strength, a chance for development. The puny, fretful, white-livered child becomes an active, hearty boy, destructive because of his pleasure in the conscious possession of power, and his ignorance of the use to which to put it; but with the possibilities in him of useful, healthy manhood, and with no obstacle in the way of dress to the fulfillment of this promise.

But how is it with the girl? Certainly, the proper growth and development of her body is quite as important as that of the boy. Upon this depends not only her own future health and happiness, but her fitness for the special function of her womanhood, maternity. Is this possibility considered, and its obligations respected? Is the girl trained with the special object of arriving at physical and functional perfection? Is her dress studied as it ought to be—so as not to waste her strength during the period of growth, or interfere with the process of formation and development? From the East, and the West, from the North, and the South—No, an emphatic No, must be the answer to these questions.

On the contrary, while physicians are prescribing drugs, and modern reformers are prescribing exercise with bells and balls at \$2 per hour (running and jumping in the free air not being allowed for girls), mothers are anxiously contriving ways and means for the purchase of bustles to put on their daughters' backs, of high, narrow heels to add to their daughters' shoes, and high dresses to take the place of those that were low, or low to take the place of those that were high—and all of it without thinking that it has any reference to the spine that is forming, to the young chest that is developing, to the tender lungs that are or should be strengthening.

Poor child! blind, ignorant, foolish mother!

The father long ago said to himself, "The boy *shall* have a chance." So, as soon as he was emancipated from petticoats, he taught him to ride, he taught him to row, he taught him to swim, he taught, in fine, the use of his limbs, of his own body. But again I repeat—what of the girl?

At thought of her, he shrugs his