

insignificant backwater of these big changes?

CLOTHES, FOR INSTANCE

Three clothing shops are in the throes of shutting up, in a small town near by, and the times are phenomenally prosperous.

I am wearing pre-war clothes; my wife is temporarily in the "dyeing" and remaking business: the family is in overalls.

Does anyone grasp what it means when the women of a small town cease to vie with New York in matters of dress? Sit down, please, and think!

Talk of the emancipation of womanhood!

The things which truly enslave us never let us know. When we *hear* the rattle of chains we are free.

Emanating from the secret depths of an industrial sanctuary, untrod- den by any but its own high priests, there issued heretofore a subtle divinity called *Fashion*. In his seasonal perambulations, unobserved he cast a spell over womankind, and clothed her in fabrics of his art—yea, forced her to untold sacrifice to himself. Comfort and health, decency and beauty, wealth and comeliness from season to season were sacrificed . . . High heels, tight lacing, skimp-skirt, cut-skirt, and little-skirt-at-all: colors that howled, lines that burlesqued! What tho'—!

It pleased the high God Fashion—hitherto. It brought wealth to the sanctuary. It necessitated the constant discarding of good and expensive clothing. If shoes this season are pink, next they must be green—and manufacturers will be kept busy. If skirts this season are full, next they must be short—it was good business!

It was good business when we pro-

duced solely for profit: it is bad business now we produce for use.

Yet women protesting against the laws, fighting for the vote, struggling against masculine enslavement, submitted humbly to this appalling god of waste who caricatured their figures, injured their health and emptied their purses!

It's true, isn't it?

H. G. Wells says so; he generally knows.

There is a true art in dress. Clothes are emblematical, as Carlyle once taught us in one of the greatest of modern (unread) books. But dress, like architecture and churches, had become commercialized. No one attempted to dress himself—still less herself. The "mode" came from on high, and had no connection with character and figure. We are not belittling the high art of dressing the God-made human body beautifully. We are rejoicing in the steps that are being made in the re-discovery of the art. Here is the first step:

Says H. G. Wells: "British women have begun to go dowdy. The mass of women in Great Britain are wearing the clothes of 1914.

"In 1913 every girl and woman one saw in the streets of London had an air of doing her best to keep in the fashion. Now they are for the most part as carelessly dressed as a busy business man or a clever young student might have been. They are none the less pretty for that, and far more beautiful. But the fashions have floated away to absurdity. Every now and then through the austere bustle of London in war-time drifts a last practitioner of the 'eternal feminine'—with the air of a foreign visitor, with the air of devotion to a peculiar cult."

I cannot omit his description of