

her quite as handsome things for the return-party. Fickle Fashion, which, twenty years before, had favored severity in all such matters, now, in her inscrutable way, made jewellery quite *chic*. Solomon erred. He only catalogued four mysteries: the way of an eagle in the air (which Prof. Langley has told us all about), the way of a serpent on a rock (which any photographic artist can now-a-days explain), the way of a ship in the midst of the sea (which is now plain-sailing), and the way of a man with a maid. If he had added, the way of Fashion in Society, he would, at least, have had one riddle unsolved still.

It was a *commencement de siècle* time—a period of revulsion from the stern, hard-fighting days when the lithe Numidians and the wily Carthaginians were looking for the weak points in the Roman defences—a time for sudden whims, unrest, change. The old order was giving way. Among the women, this hysteria did not take the shape of bloomers or bicycles, but of popular agitation for the repeal of the Act to limit the possessions of Females. They formed primary conventions in each ward or precinct. They organized committees; delegates came in from towns and townships. They button-holed tribunes and senators (or would have done so if they had had buttons). They championed women's rights as briskly as emancipated women do to-day. They crusaded in the streets, held public assemblies in the squares, and lobbied in the senate-chamber peristyles. It must have been hard to resist the tears of Volumnia or the seductive graces of Cornelia, but there were antagonists of the movement—the Cause, (with a capital C, Mr. Printer, if you please)—and after a dress-coat debate in the senate (though, of course, nobody wore dress-coats, but only togas), the whole question was remitted to the people.

The methods of reference were very like our own. They had two consuls;

we have a single mayor. Their council was hereditary; ours is elected; but they had four tribunes of the people, who could call for plebiscites on all manner of subjects, almost at their own sweet will. Two of these tribunes were persuaded—we might perhaps say, cajoled—to demand that this question of repealing the Oppian law be submitted to the popular vote.

The law, in truth, was pretty stiff. "No woman to have more than a semiuncia of gold, or to use clothing of several colors, or to ride in carriages in or within a mile of the city or towns, except for necessary attendance on religious rites." Yet, two of the tribunes favored its continuance, and so did the consuls, especially M. Porcius Cato.

These Catos were a dour lot. They were the Bourbons of their time, forgiving nothing, forgetting nothing, and learning nothing. Naught outside their narrow circle was right. Greek luxury, indeed!—wear homespun. Cabs and coupés!—walk, the exercise is good. Honors, Fulvius, for you! True enough, you beat the Ætolians: but your tastes are literary, and you had poets in your camp! Severity like this was in the blood, and persisted in until this first great Cato's great-grandson attacked Cæsar for entertaining progressive views, and was forced to commit suicide by falling upon his sword, when, at Pharsalia and Thapsus, his party was utterly crushed. Bitter in speech, too, was the whole brood of them. "Censorious" is a word we get from the time this man was finding fault with everybody and everything in his capacity of Supervisor of manners. If ever two persons were disagreeable to excess, Cato and Socrates were that brace! Yet, all the Catos were just, and honest to the last bawbee. We have men in politics to-day quite like them,—especially one whose name has the same initial—fertile in epithet, forcible in speech, but how vitriolic in utterance, how charged with strychnine his every word!