

it is at least so to only a limited extent. Others, again, believe that these changes spring from the toiling brains of *modistes* and milliners of both genders, and point in proof of their assertion to the despotic influence wielded by the famous masculine designer of feminine attire, Worth, of Paris. There is probably a larger share of truth in this supposition than in either of the others, though it does not comprise the whole truth. Especially is it incomplete if it be affirmed in connection therewith that the *artistes* of Paris or any other city have a controlling or predominating influence in these matters. The time has been when the fair city upon the Seine did exercise such a power, but that is the case no longer. France takes quite as much of its fashions from England as the latter does from France, and much more in matters affecting masculine attire. But we need not inquire into the causes of this change, suffice it at present to note the fact. What is termed fashion, in its totality, is the outcome of a medley of conflicting and harmonizing forces, whose separate influence it would be difficult if not impossible to estimate.

The fact which has led to these remarks, namely, the transfer of public favor from worsted to soft woolled fabrics, cannot be directly described as a vagary of the fickle goddess Fashion. It is much more; its springs are far more deeply seated, and their force will be more persistent and enduring. It is a complete revolution in the sartorial conditions of feminine life; and its origin must be sought much farther back and in other causes than those which give rise to the ordinary changes that occur in the realms of fashion. To those whose memory can carry them backwards twenty, thirty, or forty years, it will be easy to recall the dowdy figures men and women, especially the latter, made of themselves; clad in mauds, plaids, shawls, burnouses, and long cloaks. The eastern origin of many of these articles is obvious, but their adoption in western and northern regions, where climatic conditions are radically different, was a great mistake from an æsthetic point of view. Warm clothing is essential in most of the regions of western civilization. This required, and does so still, such an abundance of clothing to be worn under such loose, flowing, upper garments mentioned above, that every line of grace and beauty, both in rest and motion, was completely obliterated. With the increase of intelligence, and the growth of taste, this has been recognized, and its perception is the bottom fact of the sartorial revolution which is the subject of these remarks. But other things for a time were wanting; it had hitherto been impossible, had necessity required, to have procured the requisite amount of skilled labor that the new departure would have needed: but at the appointed moment, as often before, the mechanician stepped in and solved the problem. By the invention of the sewing machine and its subsequent development, the costumier was enabled to meet the growing requirements of the time, which was displaying, by slow steps, the great transition that was taking place from the slovenly, untidy garbs of the time spoken of, to the close-fitting graceful costumes of to-day. The flowing lines of grace and beauty, which develop new charms with every movement, that are peculiarly abundant in the female form, are now attractively displayed. Women no longer walk about like inflated wind-bags, or sweep the dirty streets with their dresses, or carry their superabundant drapery on their

arm. The last abomination of fashion in which the said drapery was slung behind, suspended from a miniature cable, has also disappeared. Woman has ceased to be a walking clothes-horse, and now stands forth in her native grace and beauty. Of course, some few eccentricities still survive, and we shall doubtless witness the development of others. To expect that the fair sex will forever walk within the straight lines of the path of common sense and propriety, would be to ask them to forego one of the dearest of feminine privileges, that of following the promptings of a sometimes wayward disposition.

If the foregoing propositions are correct, or even approximately so, they are sufficient to prove that for a long time to come, at least, the mode now in vogue will prevail, subject to minor variations only. That this truth is being slowly recognized in Bradford and other places is evident from the fact that extensive changes are being made in the machinery in the district in order to enable manufacturers to comply with the requirements of fashion, and produce fabrics soft and pliable, that will fit easily and drape gracefully upon the feminine figure. It would be invidious to name these firms, but it may be stated that already, even during the early stages of the transition from one class to another, most gratifying results have been attained, giving promise of greater excellence in the future. The strenuous efforts that are being made in Yorkshire are bound to eventuate in success, and we therefore look forward with confidence to see these persistent endeavors crowned with perfect success at an early day. This victory will be the re-conquest of the home market by the British manufacturer of fabrics for feminine uses. When success is achieved and the home market won, it will imply much more than might be apparent from such a statement; those fabrics, which can command the English market, open to all comers, will be of such excellence as to enable them to force their way against all opposing forces in other countries, such as protective tariffs, and misrepresentation. That there is nothing unduly sanguine in such anticipations is shown by the present condition of English calico printing, which is now far ahead of anything produced in any other country, either in Europe or America. In France, English styles of prints are the rage, and so far as Paris is yet the arbiter of fashion, it is doing all it can to ensure their extensive adoption. The French calico printer is now as often an imitator as a leader. Indisputably, English prints are now far ahead of all rivalry both in style and quality. And so it will be in fabrics of wool, to which the same energy, the same wealth, the same experience, and the same persistence of purpose are being devoted. The moment is also opportune for victory. The selfishness of the French nation, evidenced in the Commercial Treaty negotiations and the result attending them, has done much to alienate public favor from anything of a foreign origin. Previously, it was only necessary to state that an article was "French" to insure it a preference, but the conditions are now quite reversed; the draper is often as anxious to conceal the origin of French fabrics as he was previously to declare it, and when endeavoring to push off his stock of such goods, has frequently to replace them on the shelf, and at the request of his customer has to submit fabrics of home production. This is already showing a satisfactory result in the Bradford districts, business at the present moment being more active and the outlook more hopeful than for many years past.