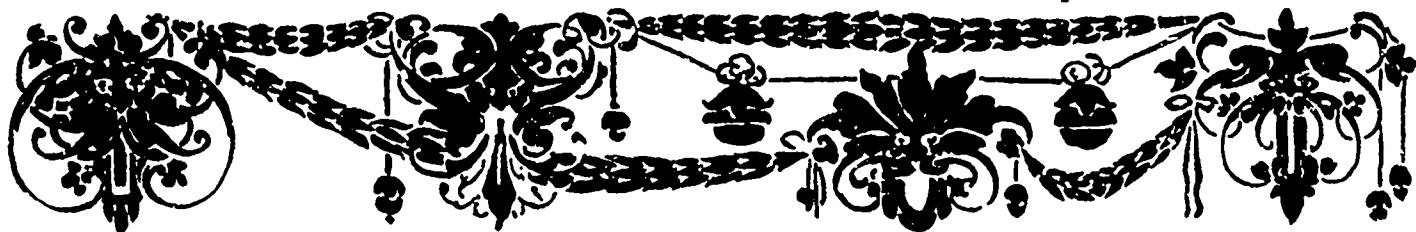


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FASHIONS.

THE CHANGES IN MEN'S AND WOMEN'S COSTUMES DURING THE PAST FEW CENTURIES; WITH A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF HOW THEY HAVE BEEN EVOLVED FROM THE ORIGINAL MODES.

Specially written and illustrated for THE DRY GOODS REVIEW.

FASHION'S CHANGES—the bane and the boon of the dry goods merchant—are not peculiar to the present era, but have existed ever since our Mother Eve adorned herself with the leaves of the fig tree, and discarded this costume for a more pretentious one of skins and furs.

THE differences between one style and those preceding and following it were more pronounced than they are in to-day's fashions; but changes in dress came at far greater intervals—sometimes years apart—and not tumbling over each other as at present. In England, from the Norman Conquest till well on into the 15th century, the long flowing robe of the women suffered very little change. A few minor alterations in the girdling of the dress cover it nearly all.

COMMERCIAL and social intercourse with foreign nations, however, was destined to create a change in this. Trade with Oriental nations brought into the more civilized countries the jewels and rich materials of clothing and furnishing used by the great potentates of the East. The French court, characterized from its earliest times by a love of display, adopted many new ideas of dress, and used newer and richer materials for them. England, which, until very recently, invariably modeled her fashions after those of Paris, soon followed, and, in the reign of Henry IV., we find the simple caul of gold net that adorned the heads of the ladies of the higher class in Britain giving place to an enormous head-dress introduced into the country from France. This, in the reign of Edward IV., became the tall steeple-like cap we have so often seen in prints of this period. Toward the close of the 15th century a number of innovations started the onward march of fashion, which has arrived by gradual, sometimes almost imperceptible, development to the present dress of nearly all civilized peoples.

DURING this period the merchants had not the vast variety of materials and colors to show their customers that can be seen now on our dry goods counters.

ALTHOUGH the court ladies and gentlemen wore more brilliant colors than at present, the materials were mostly of

woollen cloth and coarsely woven, except in the case of the sovereign or some very wealthy noble. Indeed, the laws permitted none but the King and nobles to wear rich materials. Goods brought from foreign countries could not be worn by the "common people," who were also compelled to buy cloth costing not more than two-pence a yard. Purple, in this period, became a mark of royalty, Edward IV. passing laws to that effect. About 1470, the tall head-dress went out of fashion and a sort of velvet cowl took its place, which, in turn, became the small black velvet cap of the Tudor period.

THERE were many widely different male costumes, the only part common to all being the long hose of cloth, ending in shoes of the same material. An undergarment of finer cloth, covered by a doublet or jacket, with sleeves sometimes reaching nearly to the ground, composed the most common dress of the gentlemen of this time. Long hose and boots reaching to the knee enclosed his limbs. The large sleeves of this costume a little later we find disappear, and in their stead a cape, fastened to the sleeves of the coat at the shoulder and elbow, is used. The practice of slitting the doublet at the elbow so as to show the undergarment began at the close of the 15th century, and this gave rise to the fashion of slashing the whole suit in almost every direction which became so much the rage in the Tudor period.

IN the reign of Henry VII. the great variety of fashions would render verbal description almost impossible. The one great innovation, which later became so important a

part of the dress of a lady of quality, was the laced corsage. From the earliest Norman times the loose robe of the ladies was girdled around the waist with a heavy sash, or, in a few cases, by a small, leathern belt. This was abandoned and the dress, instead of being composed of one piece of cloth, was divided into a skirt and waist, the latter of which was at first



BRITISH DRESS IN 1450.