

man ideal and expression of female beauty that the world has ever known—the Venus de Milo—is not thin or lanky, neither has she a small waist; she is simply perfectly proportioned, and that is the secret of her beauty. Rubens, we admit, erred on the side of stoutness, and one can hardly imagine his women being in the least intellectual; nevertheless his ideals are better than the thin, scraggy type at the other extreme of the picture. Also, as we freely admit, the fleshy women of the Georgian painters' ideals were too fat and decidedly vulgar; but the pendulum has swung too far the other way, and now even Mr. Gilbert's "plump and pleasing person" would be generally voted ungraceful and verging on the vulgar. Stout persons must, of course, dress with more care than those of medium figures, but thin persons it is impossible to dress with any pretense of affording pleasure to the beholder.

Thinness, moreover, is not only ungraceful; it is a possible source of danger. The majority of healthy children are fat. Animals in "good condition" are generally plump. Fat itself is nature's provision either against cold or famine. When from scarcity of food, lack of appetite, or sickness the individual is deprived of food, the body is nourished by the hitherto superfluous tissue. Fat is a protective to the muscles and organs lying underneath—one never knew a fat consumptive person. Of course, we know that rich or well-to-do people in England need never fear the cold or famine. Nevertheless the principle is the same, and a proper fatness is not only beautiful, but a natural protection against various dangers. Fat is an aid to beauty, for without it the human body would lose much of its grace. Without it there would be no fulness, no flowing lines, no pleasing contour, no soft undulations, no beauty, but only utility. To prove this one has but to look at the anatomical model. In this the skeleton is symmetrical, the muscles anatomically perfect, but without the fat and skin the figure is unpleasing, crude, harsh, and, artistically speaking, hideous. Let but the framework of bone and muscle be clothed with a natural proportion of fat, and perfect beauty is the result. It was through ignoring this fact, by studying and reproducing the muscular frame alone, that another set of artists produced the most unpleasing, though anatomically correct, school of drawing that reproduced the human figure as though intended mainly for medical students or the devotees of the modern mania for muscular development.

But if thinness be bad, the means employed to procure it are generally worse; in some cases they are positively harm-