

Anecdotes of Fashion

A VOLUME on this subject might be made very curious and entertaining, for our ancestors were not less vacillating, and perhaps more capriciously grotesque, though with infinitely less taste than the present generation. Were a philosopher and an artist, as well as an antiquary, to compose such a work, much diversified entertainment, and some curious investigation of the progress of the arts and taste, would doubtless be the result; the subject otherwise appears of trifling value; the very farthing pieces of history.

The origin of many fashions was in the endeavour to conceal some deformity of the inventor; hence the cushions, ruffs, hoops, and other monstrous devices. If a reigning beauty chanced to have an unequal hip, those who had very handsome hips would load them with that false rump which the other was compelled by the unkindness of nature to substitute. Patches were invented in England in the reign of Edward VI, by a foreign lady, who in this manner ingeniously covered a wen on her neck. Full-bottomed wigs were invented by a French barber, one Duviller, whose name they perpetuated, for the purpose of concealing an elevation in the shoulder of the Dauphin. Charles VII. of France introduced long coats to hide his ill-made legs.

ISAAC D'ISRAELI

Shoes with very long points, full two feet in length, were invented by Henry Plantagenet, Duke of Anjou, to conceal a large excrescence on one of his feet. When Francis I. was obliged to wear his hair short, owing to a wound he received in the head, it became a prevailing fashion at court. Others, on the contrary, adapted fashions to set off their peculiar beauties; as Isabella of Bavaria, remarkable for her gallantry, and the fairness of her complexion, introduced the fashion of leaving the shoulders and part of the neck uncovered.

Fashions have frequently originated from circumstances as silly as the following one. Isabella, daughter of Philip II. and wife of the Archduke Albert, vowed not to change her linen till Ostend was taken; this siege, unluckily for her comfort, lasted three years; and the supposed colour of the archduchess's linen gave rise to a fashionable colour, hence called *L'Isabeau*, or the Isabella; a kind of whitish-yellow-dingy. Sometimes they originate in some temporary event: as after the battle of Steenkirk, where the allies wore large cravats, by which the French frequently seized hold of them, a circumstance perpetuated on the medals of Louis XIV., cravats were called Steenkirks; and after the battle of Ramillies, wigs received that denomination.

CURIOSITIES OF LITERATURE

The *court* in all ages and in every country are the modellers of fashions, so that ail the ridicule, of which these are so susceptible, must fall on them, and not upon their servile imitators the *citizens*. This complaint is made even so far back as in 1586, by Jean des Caures, an old French moralist, who, in declaiming against the fashions of his day, notices one, of the ladies carrying *mirrors fixed to their waists*, which seemed to employ their eyes in perpetual activity. From this mode will result, according to honest des Caures, their eternal damnation. "Alas! (he exclaims) in what an age do we live: to see such depravity which we see, that induces them even to bring into church these *scandalous mirrors hanging about their waists!* Let all histories divine, human, and profane be consulted; never will it be found that these objects of vanity were ever thus brought into public by the most meretricious of the sex. It is true, at present none but the ladies of the court venture to wear them; but long it will not be before *every citizen's daughter*, and every *female servant*, will wear them!" Such in all times has been the rise and decline of fashion; and the absurd mimicry of the *citizens*, even of the lowest classes, to their very ruin, in straining to rival the *newest fashion*, has mortified and galled the courtier.

On this subject old Camden, in his Remains, relates a story of a trick played off on a citizen, which I give in the plainness of his own venerable style. "Sir Philip Calthrop purged John Drakes, the *shoemaker of Norwich*, in the time of King Henry VIII. of the *proud humour* which our *people have to be of the gentlemen's cut*. This knight bought on a time as much fine French tawny cloth as should make him a gown, and sent it to the taylor's to be made. John Drakes, a shoemaker of that town, coming to this said taylor's, and seeing the knight's gown cloth lying there, liking it well, caused the taylor to buy him as much of the same cloth and price to the same intent, and further bade him to *make it of the same fashion that the knight would have his made of*. Not long after, the knight coming to the taylor's to take measure of his gown, perceiving the like cloth lying there, asked of the taylor whose it was? Quoth the taylor, it is John Drakes the *shoemaker*, who will have it *made of the self-same fashion that yours is made of!* 'Well!' said the knight, 'in good time be it! I will have mine made as *full of cuts as thy shears can make it.*' 'It shall be done!' said the taylor; whereupon, because the time drew near, he made haste to finish both their garments. John Drakes had no time to go to the taylor's till Christmas day, for serving his

customers, when he hoped to have worn his gown; perceiving the same to be *full of cuts*, began to swear at the taylor, for the making his gown after that sort. 'I have done nothing,' quoth the taylor, 'but that you bid me; for as Sir Philip Calthrop's garment is, even so have I made yours!' 'By my latchet!' quoth John Drakes, '*I will never wear gentlemen's fashions again!*'"

Sometimes fashions are quite reversed in their use in one age from another. Bags, when first in fashion in France, were only worn *en dishabille*; in visits of ceremony, the hair was tied by a riband and floated over the shoulders, which is exactly reversed in the present fashion. In the year 1735 the men had no hats but a little chapeau de bras; in 1745 they wore a very small hat; in 1755 they wore an enormous one, as may be seen in Jeffrey's curious "Collection of Habits in all Nations." Old Puttenham, in his very rare work, "The Art of Poesie," p. 239, on the present topic gives some curious information. "Henry VIII. caused his own head, and all his courtiers, to be *polled*, and his *beard* to be *cut short*; before that time it was thought *more decent*, both for old men and young, to be *all shaven*, and wear *long haire*, either rounded or square. Now again at this time (Elizabeth's reign,) the young gentlemen of the court have *taken up the long haire* trayling on their shoulders,

and think this more decent; for what respect I would he glad to know."

When the fair sex were accustomed to behold their lovers with beards, the sight of a shaved chin excited feelings of horror and aversion; as much indeed as, in this less heroic age, would a gallant whose luxuriant beard should

"Stream like a meteor to the troubled air."

When Louis VII., to obey the injunctions of his bishops, cropped his hair, and shaved his beard, Eleanor, his consort, found him, with this unusual appearance, very ridiculous, and soon very contemptible. She revenged herself as she thought proper, and the poor shaved king obtained a divorce. She then married the Count of Anjou, afterwards our Henry II. She had for her marriage dower the rich provinces of Poitou and Guyenne; and this was the origin of those wars, which for three hundred years ravaged France, and cost the French three millions of men. All which, probably, had never occurred, had Louis VII. not been so rash as to crop his head and shave his beard, by which he became so disgusting in the eyes of our Queen Eleanor.

We cannot perhaps sympathize with the feelings of her majesty, though at Constantinople she might not

have been considered unreasonable. There must be something more powerful in *beards* and *mustachios* than we are quite aware of; for when these were in fashion, with what enthusiasm were they not contemplated! When *mustachios* were in general use, an author, in his *Elements of Education*, published in 1640, thinks that "hairy Excrement," as Armado in "Love's Labour Lost" calls it, contributed to make men valorous. He says, "I have a favourable opinion of that young gentleman who is *curious in fine mustachios*. The time he employs in adjusting, dressing, and curling them, is no lost time; for the more he contemplates his mustachios, the more his mind will cherish, and be animated by masculine and courageous notions." The best reason that could be given for wearing the *longest and largest beard* of any Englishman was that of a worthy clergyman in Elizabeth's reign, "that no act of his life might be unworthy of the gravity of his appearance."

The grandfather of Mrs. Thomas, the Corinna of Cromwell, the literary friend of Pope, by her account, "was very nice in the mode of that age, his valet being some hours every morning in *starching his beard and curling his whiskers*; during which time he was always read to." Taylor, the water poet, humorously describes the great variety of beards in his time, which extract

may be found in Grey's *Hudibras*, Vol. I. p. 300. The *beard*, says Granger, dwindled gradually under the two Charleses, till it was reduced into *whiskers*, and became extinct in the reign of James II, as if its fatality had been connected with that of the house of Stuart.

The hair has in all ages been an endless topic for the declamation of the moralist, and the favourite object of fashion. If the *beau monde* wore their hair luxuriant, or their wig enormous, the preachers, as in Charles the Second's reign, instantly were seen in the pulpit with their hair cut shorter, and their sermon longer, in consequence; respect was however paid by the world to the size of the *wig*, in spite of the *hair-cutter* in the pulpit. Our judges, and till lately our physicians, well knew its magical effect. In the reign of Charles II. the hair-dress of the ladies was very elaborate; it was not only curled and frizzled with the nicest art, but set off with certain artificial curls, then too emphatically known by the pathetic terms of *heart-breakers* and *love-locks*. So late as William and Mary, lads, and even children, wore wigs; and if they had not wigs, they curled their hair to resemble this fashionable ornament. Women then were the hair-dressers.

It is observed by the lively Vigneul de Marville, that there are flagrant follies in fashion which must be en-

dured while they reign, and which never appear ridiculous till they are out of fashion. In the reign of Henry III. of France, they could not exist without an abundant use of comfits. All the world, the grave and the gay, carried in their pockets a *comfit-box*, as we do snuff-boxes. They used them even on the most solemn occasions: when the Duke of Guise was shot at Blois, he was found with his comfit-box in his hand.—Fashions indeed have been carried to so extravagant a length as to have become a public offence, and to have required the interference of government. Short and tight breeches were so much the rage in France, that Charles V. was compelled to banish this disgusting mode by edicts which may be found in Mezeray. An Italian author of the fifteenth century supposes an Italian traveller of nice modesty would not pass through France, that he might not be offended by seeing men whose clothes rather exposed their nakedness than hid it. It is curious that the very same fashion was the complaint in the remoter period of our Chaucer, in his Parson's Tale.

In the reign of our Elizabeth the reverse of all this took place; then the mode of enormous breeches was pushed to a most laughable excess. The beaux of that day stuffed out their breeches with rags, feathers, and other light matters, till they brought them out to a most

enormous size. They resembled woolsacks, and in a public spectacle, they were obliged to raise scaffolds for the seats of these ponderous beaux. To accord with this fantastical taste the ladies invented large hoop farthingales; two lovers aside could surely never have taken one another by the hand. In a preceding reign the fashion ran on square-toes; insomuch that a proclamation was issued that no person should wear shoes above six inches square at the toes! Then succeeded picked-pointed shoes! The nation was again, in the reign of Elizabeth, put under the royal authority. "In that time," says honest John Stowe, "he was held the greatest gallant that had the *deepest ruff and longest rapier* the offence to the eye of the one, and hurt unto the life of the subject that came by the other—this caused her Majesty to *make proclamation against them both*, and to *place selected grave citizens at every gate, to cut the ruffles and breake the rapiers points* of all passengers that exceeded a yard in length of their rapiers, and a nayle of a yard in depth of their ruffles." These "grave citizens," at every gate cutting the ruffs and breaking the rapiers, must doubtless have encountered in their ludicrous employment some stubborn opposition; but this regulation was in the spirit of that age, despotic and effectual. The late Emperor of Russia one day ordered the soldiers to stop every

passenger who wore pantaloons, and with their hangers to cut off, upon the leg, the offending part of these superfluous breeches; so that a man's legs depended greatly on the adroitness and humanity of a Russ or a Cossack: however, this war against *pantaloons* was very successful, and obtained a complete triumph in favour of the *breeches* in the course of the week.

A shameful extravagance in dress has been a most venerable folly. In the reign of Richard II. their dress was sumptuous beyond belief. Sir John Arundel had a change of no less than 52 new suits of cloth of gold tissue. The prelates indulged in all the ostentatious luxury of dress. Chaucer says they had "chaunge of clothing everie daie." Brantome records of Elizabeth, Queen of Philip II. of Spain, that she never wore a gown twice; this was told him by her majesty's own *tailleur*, who from a poor man soon became as rich as any one he knew. Our own Elizabeth left no less than three thousand different habits in her wardrobe when she died. She was possessed of the dresses of all countries.

The Catholic religion has ever considered the pomp of the clerical habit as not the slightest part of its religious ceremonies; their devotion is addressed to the eye of the people. In the reign of our Catholic Queen Mary, the dress of a priest was costly indeed; and the sarcas-

tic and good-humoured Fuller gives, in his Worthies, the will of a priest, to show the wardrobe of men of his order, and desires that the priest may not be jeered for the gallantry of his splendid apparel. He bequeaths to various parish churches and persons; "My vestment of crimson satin—my vestment of crimson velvet—my stole and fanon set with pearl—my black gown faced with taffeta, &c."

Chaucer has minutely detailed, in "The Person's Tale" the grotesque and the costly fashions of his day; and the simplicity of the venerable satirist will interest the antiquary and the philosopher. Much, and curiously, have his caustic severity or lenient humour descanted on the "moche supefluitee," and "wast of cloth in vanitee," as well as "the disordinate scantnesse." In the spirit of the good old times he calculates "the coste of the embrouding or embroidering; endenting or barring; ounding or wavy; paling or imitating pales; and winding or bending; the costlewe furring in the gounes; so much pounsouing of chesel to maken holes (that is punched with a bodkin); so moche dagging of sheres (cutting into slips); with the superfluitee in length of the gounes trailing in the dong and in the myre, on horse and eke on foot, as wel of man as of woman—that all thilke trailing," he verily believes, which wastes,

consumes, wears threadbare, and is rotten with dung, are all to the damage of “the poor folk,” who might be clothed only out of the flounces and draggle-tails of these children of vanity. But then his Parson is not less bitter against “the horrible disordnat scantnesse of clothing,” and very copiously he describes, though perhaps in terms, and with a humour too coarse for me to transcribe, the consequences of these very tight dresses. Of these persons, among other offensive matters, he sees “the buttockes behind as if they were the hinder part of a sheape in the ful of the mone.” He notices one of the most grotesque of all modes; the one they then had of wearing a parti-coloured dress: one stocking, part white and part red; so that they looked as if they had been flayed; or white and blue; or white and black; or black and red; that this variety of colours seems as if their members had been corrupted by St. Anthony’s fire, or by cancer, or other mischance!

The modes of dress during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were so various and ridiculous, that they afforded perpetual food for the eager satirist.

The conquests of Edward III, introduced the French fashions into England; and the Scotch adopted them, by their alliance with the French court, and close intercourse with that nation.

Walsingham dates the introduction of French fashions among us from the taking of Calais in 1347; but we appear to have possessed such a rage for imitation in dress, that an English beau was actually a fantastical compound of all the fashions in Europe, and even Asia, in the reign of Elizabeth. In Chaucer’s time the prevalence of French fashions was a common topic with our satirist; and he notices the affectation of our female citizens in speaking the French language: a stroke of satire which, after more than four centuries, is not yet obsolete. A superior education, and a residence at the west end of the town, begin, however, to give another character to the daughters of our citizens. In the prologue to the *Prioressse*, Chaucer has these humorous lines:—

Entwened in her voice full seemly,
And French she spake full feteously;
After the Scole of Stratford at Bowe,
The *French of Paris* was to her unknowe.

A beau of the reign of Henry IV. has been made out by the laborious Henry. I shall only observe, that they wore then long-pointed shoes to such an immoderate length, that they could not walk till they were fastened to their knees with chains. Luxury improving on this ridiculous mode, these chains the English beau of the fourteenth century had made of gold and silver; but

the grotesque fashion did not finish here, for the tops of their shoes were carved in the manner of a church window. The ladies of that period were not less fantastical.

The wild variety of dresses worn in the reign of Henry VIII. is alluded to in a print of a naked Englishman holding a piece of cloth hanging on his right arm, and a pair of shears in his left hand. It was invented by Andrew Borde, a facetious wit of those days. The print bears the following inscription:

I am an Englishman, and naked I stand here,
 Musing in my mind, what rayment I shall were;
 For now I will were this, and now I will were that,
 And now I will were, what I cannot tell what.

At a lower period, about the reign of Elizabeth, we are presented with a curious picture of a man of fashion. I make this extract from Puttenham's very scarce work on *The Arte of Poetry*, p. 250. This author was a travelled courtier, and has interspersed his curious work with many lively anecdotes, and correct pictures of the times.—This is his fantastical beau in the reign of Elizabeth. “May it not seeme enough for a courtier to know how to *weare a feather* and *set his cappe* aflaunt; his *chain en echarpe*; a straight *buskin, al Inglese*; a loose *à la Turquesque*; the cape *alla Spaniola*; the breech *à la*

Françoise, and by twentie maner of new-fashioned garments, to disguise his body and his face with as many countenances, whereof it seems there be many that make a very arte and studie, who can shew himselfe most fine, I will not say most foolish or ridiculous.” So that a beau of those times wore in the same dress a grotesque mixture of all the fashions in the world. About the same period the *ton* ran in a different course in France.—There, fashion consisted in an affected negligence of dress; for Montaigne honestly laments in Book i. Cap. 25.—“I have never yet been apt to imitate the *negligent garb* which is yet observable among the *young men* of our time; to wear my *cloak on one shoulder*, my *bonnet on one side*, and *one stocking* in something *more disorder than the other*, meant to express a manly disdain of such exotic ornaments, and a contempt of art.”

The fashions of the Elizabethan age have been chronicled by honest John Stowe. Stowe was originally a *tailor*; and when he laid down the shears, and took up the pen, the taste and curiosity for *dress* was still retained. He is the grave chronicler of matters not grave. The chronology of ruffs, and tufted taffetas; the revolution of steel poking-sticks, instead of bone or wood used by the laundresses; the invasion of shoe-buckles, and the total rout of shoe-roses; that grand adventure of a certain

Flemish lady, who introduced the art of starching the ruffs with a yellow tinge into Britain: while Mrs. Montague emulated her in the royal favour, by presenting her highness the queen with a pair of black silk stockings, instead of her cloth hose, which her majesty now for ever rejected; the heroic achievements of the Right Honourable Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, who first brought from Italy the whole mystery and craft of perfumery, and costly washes; and among other pleasant things besides, a perfumed jerkin, a pair of perfumed gloves trimmed with roses, in which the queen took such delight, that she was actually pictured with those gloves on her royal hands, and for many years after, the scent was called the Earl of Oxford's Perfume. These, and occurrences as memorable, receive a pleasant kind of historical pomp in the important, and not incurious, narrative of the antiquary and the tailor. The toilet of Elizabeth was indeed an altar of devotion, of which she was the idol, and all her ministers were her votaries: it was the reign of coquetry, and the golden age of millinery! But of grace and elegance they had not the slightest feeling! There is a print by Vertue, of Queen Elizabeth going in a procession to Lord Hunsdon. This procession is led by Lady Hunsdon, who no doubt was the leader likewise of the fashion; but it is impossible,

with our ideas of grace and comfort, not to commiserate this unfortunate lady, whose standing-up wire ruff, rising above head; whose stays, or bodice, so long waisted as to reach to her knees, and the circumference of her large hoop farthingale, which seems to enclose her in a capacious tub, mark her out as one of the most pitiable martyrs of ancient modes. The amorous Sir Walter Raleigh must have found some of the maids of honour the most impregnable fortification his gallant spirit ever assailed: a *coup de main* was impossible.

I shall transcribe from old Stowe a few extracts, which may amuse the reader:—

“In the second yeere of Queen Elizabeth 1560, her *silke woman*, Mistris Montague, presented her majestie for a new yeere's gift, a *paire of black knit silk stockings*, the which, after a few days wearing, pleased her highness so well, that she sent for Mistris Montague, and asked her where she had them, and if she could help her to any more; who answered, saying, ‘I made them very carefully of purpose only for your majestie, and seeing these please you so well, I will presently set more in hand.’ ‘Do so, (quoth the queene), for indeed *I like silk stockings so well, because they are pleasant, fine and delicate, that henceforth I will wear no more CLOTH STOCKINGS*’—and from that time unto her death the

queene never wore any more *cloth hose*, but only silke stockings; for you shall understand that King Henry the Eight did weare onely cloath hose, or hose cut out of ell-broade taffaty, or that by great chance there came a pair of *Spanish silk stockings* from Spain. King Edward the Sixt had a *payre of long Spanish silke stockings* sent him for a *great present*.—Dukes' daughters then wore gownes of satten of Bridges (Bruges) upon solemn dayes. Cushens, and window pillows of welvet and damaske, formerly only princely furniture, now be very plenteous in most citizens' houses."

"Milloners or haberdashers had not then any *gloves imbroydered*, or trimmed with gold, or silke; neither gold nor imbroydered girdles and hangers, neither could they *make any costly wash* or *perfume*, until about the fifteenth yeere of the queene, the Right Honourable Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, came from Italy, and brought with him gloves, sweete bagges, a perfumed leather jerkin, and other *pleasant things*; and that yeere the queene had a *pair of perfumed gloves* trimmed only with four tuffes, or *roses of coloured silk*. The queene tooke such pleasure in those gloves, that she was pictured with those gloves upon her handes, and for many years after it was called '*The Earl of Oxford's perfume*.'"

In such a chronology of fashions, an event not less important surely was the origin of *starching*; and here we find it treated with the utmost historical dignity.

"In the year 1564, Mistris Dinghen Van den Plasse, borne at Tænen in Flaunders, daughter to a worshipfull knight of that province, with her husband came to London for their better safeties, and there professed herselfe a *starcher*, wherein she excelled, unto whom her owne nation presently repaired, and payed her very liberally for her worke. Some very few of the best and most curious wives of that time, observing the *neatnesse and delicacy of the Dutch for whitenesse and fine wearing of linen*, made them cambricke ruffs, and sent them to Mistris Dinghen to *starch*, and after awhile they made them *ruffes of lawn*, which was at that time a stuff most strange, and wonderfull, and thereupon rose a *general scoffe* or *by-word*, that shortly they would make *ruffes of a spider's web*; and then they began to send their daughters and nearest kinswomen to Mistris Dinghen to *learne how to starche*; her usuall price was at that time, foure or five pound, to teach them how to *starch*, and twenty shillings how to *seeth starch*."

Thus Italy, Holland, and France supplied us with fashions and refinements. But in those days they were,

as I have shown from Puttenham, as *extravagant dressers* as any of their present supposed degenerate descendants. Stowe affords us another curious extract. "Divers noble personages made them *ruffles*, a full quarter of a year *deepe*, and two lengthe in one ruffe. This *fashion* in London was called the *French fashion*; but when Englishmen came to *Paris*, the *French* knew it not, and in derision called it *the English monster*." An exact parallel this of many of our own Parisian modes in the present day; and a circumstance which shows the same rivalry in fashion in the reign of Elizabeth, as in that of George IV.

This was the golden period of cosmetics. The beaux of that day, it is evident, used the abominable art of painting their faces as well as the women. Our old comedies abound with perpetual allusions to oils, tinctures, quintessences, pomatums, perfumes, paint white and red, &c. One of their prime cosmetics was a frequent use of the *bath*, and the application of *wine*. Strutt quotes from an old ms. a recipe to make the face of a beautiful red colour. The person was to be in a bath that he might perspire, and afterwards wash his face with wine, and "so should be both faire and roddy." In Mr. Lodge's "Illustrations of British History," I observe a letter from

the Earl of Shrewsbury, who had the keeping of the unfortunate Queen of Scots. The earl notices that the queen *bathed in wine*, and complains of the expense, and requires a further allowance. A learned Scotch professor informed me, on my pointing out this passage, that *white wine* was used for these purposes. They also made a bath of *milk*. Elder beauties *bathed in wine*, to get rid of their wrinkles; and perhaps not without reason, wine being a great astringent. Unwrinkled beauties *bathed in milk*, to preserve the softness and sleekness of the skin. Our venerable beauties of the Elizabethan age were initiated coquettes; and the mysteries of their toilette might be worth unveiling.

The reign of Charles II. was the dominion of French fashions. In some respects the taste was a little lighter, but the moral effect of dress, and which no doubt it has, was much worse. The dress of our French queen was very inflammatory; and the nudity of the beauties of the portrait-painter, Sir Peter Lely, has been observed. The queen of Charles II. exposed her breast and shoulders without even the glass of the lightest gauze; and the tucker, instead of standing up on her bosom, is with licentious boldness turned down, and lies upon her stays. This custom of baring the bosom was much

exclaimed against by the authors of that age. That honest divine, Richard Baxter, wrote a preface to a book, entitled "A just and seasonable reprehension of *naked breasts and shoulders*." In 1672 a book was published, entitled "New instructions unto youth for their behaviour, and also a discourse upon some innovations of habits and dressing; *against powdering of hair, naked breasts, black spots* (or patches), and other unseemly customs." A whimsical fashion now prevailed among the ladies, of strangely ornamenting their faces with abundance of black patches cut into grotesque forms, such as a coach and horses, owls, rings, suns, moons, crowns, cross and crosslets. The author has prefixed *two ladies' heads*; the one representing *Virtue*, and the other *Vice*. *Virtue* is a lady modestly habited, with a black velvet hood, and a plain white kerchief on her neck, with a border. *Vice* wears no handkerchief; her stays cut low, so that they display great part of the breasts; and a variety of fantastical patches on her face.

The innovations of fashions in the reign of Charles II. were watched with a jealous eye by the remains of those strict puritans, who now could only pour out their bile in such solemn admonitions. They affected all possible plainness and sanctity, When courtiers wore monstrous

wigs, they cut their hair short; when they adopted hats, with broad plumes, they clapped on round black caps, and screwed up their pale religious faces; and when shoe-buckles were revived, they wore strings. The sublime Milton, perhaps, exulted in his intrepidity of still wearing lachets! The Tatler ridicules Sir William Whitlocke for his singularity in still affecting them. "Thou dear *Will Shoestring*, how shall I draw thee? Thou dear outside, wilt thou be *combing your wig*, playing with your *box*, or picking your teeth, &c." *Wigs* and *snuff-boxes* were then the rage. Steele's own wig, it is recorded, made at one time a considerable part of his annual expenditure. His large black periwig, cost him, even at that day, no less than forty guineas!—We wear nothing at present in this degree of extravagance. But such a wig was the idol of fashion, and they were performing perpetually their worship with infinite self-complacency; combing their wigs in public was then the very spirit of gallantry and rank. The hero of Richardson, youthful and elegant as he wished him to be, is represented waiting at an assignation, and describing his sufferings in bad weather by lamenting that "his *wig* and his linen were dripping with the hoar frost dissolving on them." Even Betty, Clarissa's lady's maid, is described as "tapping

on her *snuff-box*," and frequently taking *snuff*. At this time nothing was so monstrous as the head-dresses of the ladies in Queen Anne's reign: they formed a kind of edifice of three stories high; and a fashionable lady of that day much resembles the mythological figure of Cybele, the mother of the gods, with three towers on her head.

It is not worth noticing the changes in fashion, unless to ridicule them. However, there are some who find amusement in these records of luxurious idleness; these thousand and one follies! Modern fashions till very lately a purer taste has obtained among our females, were generally mere copies of obsolete ones, and rarely originally fantastical. The dress of *some* of our *beaux* will only be known in a few years hence by their *caricatures*. In 1751, the dress of a *dandy* is described in the Inspector. A *black* velvet coat, a *green* and silver waistcoat, *yellow* velvet breeches, and *blue* stockings. This too was the æra of *black silk breeches*; an extraordinary novelty, against which "some frowsy people attempted to raise up *worsted* in emulation." A satirical writer has described a buck about forty years ago; one could hardly have suspected such a gentleman to have been one of our contemporaries. "A coat of light green,

with sleeves too small for the arms, and buttons too big for the sleeves; a pair of Manchester fine stuff breeches, without money in the pockets; clouded silk stockings, but no legs; a club of hair behind larger than the head that carries it; a hat of the size of six-pence on a block not worth a farthing."

As this article may probably arrest the volatile eyes of my fair readers, let me be permitted to felicitate them on their improvement in elegance in the forms of their dress; and the taste and knowledge of art which they frequently exhibit. But let me remind them that there are universal principles of beauty in dress independent of all fashions. Tacitus remarks of Poppea, the consort of Nero, that she concealed *a part of her face*; to the end that, the imagination having fuller play by irritating curiosity, they might think higher of her beauty than if the whole of her face had been exposed. The sentiment is beautifully expressed by Tasso, and it will not be difficult to remember it:—

"Non copre sue bellezze, e non l'èpose."

I conclude by preserving a poem, written in my youth, not only because the great poet of this age has honoured it by placing it in "The English Minstrelsy,"

but as a memorial of some fashions which have become extinct in my own days.

STANZAS,

ADDRESSED TO LAURA, ENTREATING HER NOT TO
PAINT, TO POWDER, OR TO GAME, BUT TO
RETREAT INTO THE COUNTRY.

Ah, LAURA! quit the noisy town,
And FASHION's persecuting reign:
Health wanders on the breezy down,
And Science on the silent plain.

How long from Art's reflected hues
Shalt thou a mimic charm receive?
Believe, my fair! the faithful muse,
They spoil the blush they cannot give.

Must ruthless art, with torturous steel,
Thy artless locks of gold deface,
In serpent folds their charms conceal,
And spoil, at every touch, a grace?

Too sweet thy youth's enchanting bloom
To waste on midnight's sordid crews:
Let wrinkled age the night consume:
For age has but its hoards to lose!

Sacred to love and sweet repose,
Behold that trellis'd bower is nigh!
That bower the lilac walls enclose,
Safe from pursuing Scandal's eye.

There, as in every lock of gold
Some flower of pleasing hue I weave,
A goddess shall the muse behold,
And many a votive sigh shall heave.

So the rude Tartar's holy rite
A feeble MORTAL once array'd;
Then trembled in the mortal's sight,
And own'd DIVINE the power he MADE.*

* The *Lama*, or God of the Tartars, is composed of such frail materials as mere mortality; contrived, however, by the power of priestcraft, to appear immortal; the *succession of Lamas* never failing!