

FASHIONABLE COSTUMES OF LONG AGO.

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ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE CRUICKSHANK, JUN.



ONDERFUL are the vagaries of fashion. From what strange sources fashions spring! A wen on a fair throat led to ruffs; the lameness of a reigning beauty to high heels; the Steinkirke ties came in after the battle of that name, when the gallants fought in such hot haste they had not time to tie their neckties. It was Henry VIII.'s swollen feet that caused the introduction of shoes six inches across the toe.



1320



1230



1350



1617



1700

1735

Shorn locks came in when Francis I. received a wound in the head, and it was when Henry IV. of France turned grey that powder was first introduced for a short time, to come in again a few years later. The famous Fontanges headdress changed the whole style of hairdressing, only because Mdle. Fontanges' hair became dishevelled when hunting with the King, and she bound it up with her embroidered garter, which caused the Sovereign at once to make bandolets à la Fontanges the rage. Wars led to many changes of fashion; the conqueror or the conquered brought in new modes, and with women of the West, dress became an art and a study, the artistic feeling of the different periods being embodied and reflected in the modes of the time.

The more civilised the country, the greater are the changes of fashion. An Eastern woman, leading the life of a recluse indoors, changes the forms of her raiment but seldom, and many are arrayed much the same as in the time of the patriarchs. Ease and splendour are their only care; soft underlinen, covered with brilliantly coloured silk and brocade loosely thrown about the figure, and confined by a sash; these have remained true to their original design for centuries. Not so with Western nations. Glance through the changes wrought by time; from those Anglo-Saxon ancestors of ours, who in kirtle, tunic and gunna (whence our word gown, though it was but a short tunic with sleeves), borrowed much of what was graceful in their attire of the Roman matrons.

In the 12th century the bodices descended to the hips, and were outlined by a girdle; even as far back as Henry I.'s time the miseries of tight-lacing had set in. The Lay of Syr Launfat speaks of damsels whose

"Kirtles were of Inde scarlet,
Y-laced small, jolyf and well."

Our illustration, date 1230, shows how the earlier form of costume had become modified, the dress having a distinct bodice and chemisette, the hooded headdress with pendant-veil or cloak, and the slashed sleeves almost hiding the hand. By-and-bye sleeves lengthened so much they trailed on the ground, and had to be knotted like the trains out of doors.

Each decade then began to be marked by increased splendour, more costly stuffs, more jewels, and more embroideries, one princess of France having golden birds on twigs of jewels, interwoven with her velvet robe.

In the 14th century the shoes are, perhaps, the most eccentric portion of the attire. The toes are so pointed, they turn up like skates. One class, the Pigacia, resembled a scorpion's tail, and the Cornado a ram's horn. A shoemaker named Poulaine brought out some shoes a yard long. You see in 1320 how pointed even the shoes worn by women were, as well as the headdress, known as the steeple or sugarloaf, still to be found in parts of Normandy. This has a fine lawn veil depending from it. The dress which accompanies it is of rich brocade, bordered with ermine, made so long it had to be tucked beneath the arm for walking. "A foul waste of stuff excessive," as some old chronicler deemed it. The bodice is cut heart shape, with revers, and held in its place by a corselet. The sugarloaf was only the commencement of high headdresses. Isabella of Bavaria, wife of Charles VI., brought in the horned headdress, which grew higher and wider until the horns were set two yards apart, and doorways had to be enlarged to admit them. They were decked with fur and jewels, and to make them the more preposterous, ornaments resembling animals' ears were sometimes appended.

The cote hardie of the women, with the names of their knights embroidered on the breast, and the armorial bearings of their own families, were not quite so *bizarre* as the parti-coloured dresses of Edward III.'s time, with stockings of different colours, or sometimes each side of the coat of distinct hues;

perhaps one sleeve short, one long; one foot with a shoe, one with a boot; a hood about the head. The very costume, in fact, in which a fool is portrayed at fancy balls.

With the Tudors' times came greater dignity of dress. See how, in 1550, the high ruff encircles the dainty neck, and the high, stiff bodice displays the figure to perfection, though puffed sleeves and ruffs combined hide the neck entirely. Her name is associated with jewelled stomachers, winged head-



1525



1550



1720



1787

dresses, crimped and frizzed hair (mostly false), and farthingales, the precursors of hoops. These were revived in our own time, and we had the opportunity of judging of their ungraceful ugliness in 1862, when worn with the spoon bonnets and looped skirts. Ruffs were of diverse form; the upstanding lace-edged frill, from the back of a low dress, ill-fated Marie Stuart introduced, though we see her more often depicted in the close-plaited one about the throat. All kinds of contrivances were used to make them stand up stiffly, and they were often supported by under-props.

Mrs. Plasse came over from Flanders and made a fortune by teaching the art of using, what the writers of the day, who were bitter in their satires, called "devil's liquor," viz., starch, which was sold in several colours

Very magnificent were the robes of the Italian beauties of this period, who all had fashions of their own; one of them, eccentric enough, was a stiff bodice with a background to the upper part of the figure, formed of a screen of gauze, like a peacock's tail, which opened and shut at the wearer's pleasure.

When the British Solon, James I., ascended the throne, the ladies' hair began to be cut across the forehead, the curls to float at the back. See in 1617 with what monstrous hats, ostrich feathers curling over the brim, these coiffures were crowned, though the pointed bodice, lace sleeves, and feathered fan are more in keeping with modern taste. Masks were favoured by women from the time of Francis I. to the beginning of the eighteenth century. They were very small, and appeared mostly at the theatres, as though the wearers were ashamed to be seen. These masks were kept on by a band sewn to them and held in the mouth, which must have interfered with much conversation.

With the 17th century powder came in; when Gabriel d'Estrées was the reigning beauty even the nuns adopted it. It proved an uncleanly fashion, for so intricate were the headdresses that they were not taken down for a week or more, so much time was consumed in arranging them; pads, puffs, and curls were piled one a-top of another, and sometimes, to crown the edifice, a basket appeared, or a model of a ship in full sail.

The sacque, which is the natural accompaniment to powder, is "an appendage of silk affixed to the shoulders of a lady behind, and thence

falling to the ground." It drapes gracefully, notwithstanding the hoops worn in 1720, forming so marked a contrast to the scant drapery of 1878, which borrowed ideas of costume from other periods than this, for the hat is of Tudor origin, also the ruff. The zebra braided jacket and long skirt, neither draped nor flowing, the square shoulders and tight long sleeves, mark the present century.

But to return to 1720; the hair in the figure is powdered, but not eccentrically piled up. The sacque is of brocade, the petticoat is quilted.

Patches were worn with powder and with sacques, a tiny circle of black plaister on the face being made to indicate sometimes, by the side on which it was worn, whether the wearer were a Whig or a Tory. Sometimes it became larger, took the form of sun, moon, stars, flies, beetles; and, worn across the forehead, of a coach and horses, postilion and all. What more silly vagaries of fashion could there be than this?

Poor Marie Antoinette, in the later part of her reign, introduced a total change in the prevailing modes, and when she temporarily lost her hair after an illness, large bonnets and caps came to be worn, and these survived until the eccentricities of the Republic. In 1786 the dormouse, or mushroom-hat was poised over a *bonnette d'amour* made of coloured crêpe, which, with short skirts of small dimensions, gave a top-heavy appearance to the figure. The *Chapeau Tartare*, brought out in 1787 with the *Demi-redingote*, is more dressy of aspect. It was made in apple-green silk mounted on wire. The Tyrolese crown is 9 inches high, surrounded with canary-coloured ribbons, and upstanding plumes fall downwards, meeting a ladder of bows divided by roses; the stick and striped stockings complete the costume, more suited to a Meg Merrilies than a sane woman.

No period in the history of costume is so marked by eccentricity as that of the French Revolution; every absurdity held sway, even to a revival of classic sandals and tunics, as far removed from the grace and beauty of the Greek costume as can well be imagined. Mark the graceful fold of the drapery, the easy play of limb, the elegance of the diploidon falling from the shoulders of the figure in our

first illustration, and the becoming smallness of the head-dress—one of the best models that the history of costume has produced.

From the beginning of the 18th century France, or, rather, Paris, has dictated fashions to the civilised world, and we owe the poke bonnet to that capital, even at the period of the first Empire and the Restoration, when it was designated the *costume à l'Anglais*.

In 1825 this bonnet was made more remarkable by the general scantiness of attire and the puffed sleeves; and we see what we are likely to arrive at if we pursue the present line of revived *modes*. They are certainly not so preposterous as those of 1851, when birds of paradise crowned the very prominent head-gear, and Englishwomen showed how ill-arranged a shawl could be. For some years these large bonnets held sway. In 1830 the so-called *négligé* bonnet was worn with a ruff about the neck, the bodice of the dress fastened at the back, a reticule hung from the long overhanging sleeves on to the untrimmed skirt which opened in front.

It is a subject of regret that national costumes



1862



1878

are so rapidly passing away. In nearly all cases they are picturesque, and admirably suited to the special countries. Their eccentricities, nevertheless, are numerous enough. How quaint and curious is the headdress of the Dutch woman, a sort of pointed skull cap of linen with depending drapery, completely hiding the hair, her bright metal buckles forming a diadem belt in front, with pendants like earrings attached to it, and not to the ears.

National costumes have the merit of being becoming; would the Swiss maiden ever look so well as in her trim, square-cut bodice bedizened with silver, or the Italian in her flat head-dress, corselet bodice, and gay apron?



THE WATCHMAN'S
CHRISTMAS
NIGHT.

It was Christmas Night. At numerous windows fir-trees were displayed, adorned with gay presents; and shining out from their branches small lighted tapers gave a cheerful look to the dwellings where the festival was about to be held. Streets and lanes were deserted; the usual busy hum of life in them was hushed; all human beings had retired to the companionship of their beloved family circle.

The clock in the old tower was striking ten, when old Adam, the night-watchman, punctually sallied forth from his lonely home, to perform his accustomed rounds. Adam was a truly upright and pious old man. Clad in a long brown coat, the fur collar of which was pulled down over his ears, a fur cap covering his head, his hands and feet well protected from the cold, he walked firmly along, bearing a huge pikenstaff; a full-sized horn was slung at his side, which he sounded at intervals to announce the hours of the night. Hansel, his faithful dog, bore him company. Adam cheered his lonely vigil by occasionally singing in an undertone a verse of a favourite Hymn, as was his wont.

There stood in his quarter of the town a magnificent mansion, wherein a wealthy manufacturer had recently established himself. As Adam passed the building, to which several underground rooms appertained, occupied by very poor families, he could not help exclaiming, "I wonder how it fares with the poor Balzars to-night. Not a single light appears in their window."

The old man approached their casement, and raised himself on tiptoe to the iron bar which crossed its diminutive panes of glass. After breathing on them, to melt the frost, and so give him a clearer view of the interior, he beheld a picture of wretchedness! No Christmas-tree gladdened the hearts of its inmates; nor was there any other indication of rejoicing, meet to celebrate the return of the solemn and cheering festival.

Balzar was a shoemaker by trade. For weeks past an attack of rheumatism had incapacitated him from getting forward with his work. While the suffering father lay stretched on a hard, wooden bench, in lieu of bed, with no warm covering to protect him from the severity of the frost, two children, pinched by hunger and cold, lay in a death-like sleep on some straw near him, with a few rags over them. Their mother sat at an old table, on which a crust of bread and a bottle of medicine had been left; a boy, twelve years of age, and two younger girls, whose aprons were thrown over their shoulders for warmth, cast pitiful glances, bearing their lot with mute endurance. Her face turned aside to hide her tears; the mother leant her head on her hand. The boy had a small lamp before him, which shed a feeble light over the book he had been reading, probably the history of the joyous advent of Jesus, the Messiah.

"What a sad and lonely Christmas Night for them!" ejaculated Adam, turning away from the casement to continue his rounds. Soon he reached the handsome, polished steps which led up to the manufacturer's lordly mansion. These he ascended, and peeping through a window which belonged to a spacious saloon opening out on the parterre, he beheld a large Christmas fir-tree, set out with diversified ornaments. From the centre of the lofty ceiling a splendid chandelier was suspended, and numerous wax candles reflected light on all around, and on the valuable presents for friends and relations, and costly toys for the children of the family—who were dancing about clapping their little hands with delight. These gifts were displayed on a long table, whilst the newly arrived guests were surveying them with joyous looks. Domestic in gala attire were handing round wine, coffee, and cakes.

Long did old Adam gaze on the brilliant scene, till at length he ejaculated, "What a difference between up here and down there! I should like to know amongst all the crowd in that gay, drawing-room, how many have remembered their God on this anniversary of His mercy to us, when He sent His only Son for our salvation. It is right, if they possess feeling hearts, that they should be awakened to consider the poor around them, and that they should employ some part at all events of their riches in doing good." Thereupon raising his horn to his lips, he blew a strong blast; another still, and another, perhaps more strongly than usual, from the vehemence of his feeling; and then chanted with a loud voice, "*Ten of the clock hath struck.*"

Upon hearing the hour announced so near the window, the gay assemblage were startled, and the expression of their countenance changed. Scarcely had the last word been uttered, when Adam, in a sonorous, earnest tone, began to sing the melody, "*Now calmly sleep the woods:—Der Heiland ist gekommen.*"

The words so feelingly expressed in the stillness of night made a deep impression on the company, who were now listening attentively. One of the ladies was evidently engaged in earnest, secret meditation, when the children, observing her, became serious too, and their loud manifestations of joy were hushed. Well pleased when he noticed the effect that his pious song had produced, old Adam began to hope that this change of mind might yield good fruit should it suggest to them a thought of their poorer brethren. He distinctly heard the master of the house significantly remark to his wife, "*The old watchman is right.*"

The guests, approaching each other, seemed engaged in conversation, remarking no doubt on the words just heard. Heartily pleased at the impression his homily had made, the old man turned to descend the steps, when suddenly a window was thrown open, and the

master called out, "Watchman! Watchman! come here."

Old Adam approached the window. "Take this trifle for your song," said the gentleman; "your hymn of praise was a fit conclusion to our Christmas festivities." So saying, a bottle of wine, a large piece of cake, with a shining thaler, were placed in the watchman's hand.

"Thank you, sir, thank you; this delights me much, for I can now dispense some portion of joy to others."

"What!" said the donor, a little surprised, "do you mean to give away what you have just received?"

"Yes, and that immediately," replied Adam. "Oh, what gladness shall I cause when I bestow your kind gifts on the poor family close by."

"Where is this family?" asked the master.

"Within your own mansion," replied Adam. "In one of those underground rooms lives the shoemaker Balzar, in the greatest want, suffering, and wretchedness. If it were not so late I would request you, sir, to come and judge for yourself."

"Can the misery you describe exist so near me—under my own roof?" said the master. "It is not yet so late but that you can conduct me to them."

Thereupon, closing the window, and accompanied by several of his friends, he went out to the watchman, who at once led them up to the little casement of Balzar's room. After satisfying himself by this inspection that the report was not exaggerated, the master, turning to Adam, promised that these struggling people, who unknown to him had borne so much misery, should be assisted. "Here, take this thaler," he said, "in addition. Keep what I before gave you for yourself; you are a worthy old man." With these words he departed, followed by his companions, while Adam proceeded on his rounds.

A few days after, Adam found that the rich man had been as good as his word. Balzar had been lodged in a larger room at the back of the mansion, where he and his family were daily supplied with abundance of wholesome food from an ample kitchen, and all that was needed to keep them warm had been provided. He had also secured for them the attendance of a doctor at his own cost. New life had been infused into their hearts. Hunger, cold, sickness, tears and grief, had given place to gladness, rejoicing, and gratitude.

On the arrival of spring Balzar had recovered his health, and was able to resume his work and to enjoy the satisfaction of making some provision for his family; they seemed to be surrounded with comforts in comparison with their former state. The manufacturer, too, was delighted to behold such an improvement in their condition; he was grateful to God for being permitted to be the instrument by which that happy amelioration was effected.

Reader, see if there is no neighbour poorer than yourself whom you can help or cheer in this Christmas season.

