

by this disregard of his food, for Asmund had always returned from his mountain wanderings with the proverbial hunger of a hunter. Could it be that he had been mad enough to taste fairy food? if so, then indeed all hope for him was gone—that rash mortal who shared the *huldre's* fare was irrecoverably lost.

Some days later, when Asmund had returned in unusually good spirits from his mountain rambles, his mother seized the opportunity to question him as to his intercourse with the *huldre* folk, and to implore him, as he valued the peace of his soul, to admit his infatuation, and obtain counsel and aid.

"I confess, mother," he answered, with a melancholy smile, "that I am bewitched by a *huldre* as beautiful as Freya herself, from whose power no one on earth can free me; he could but tighten the bonds by which I am held, and if you knew all you would pray that I might never be released."

His mother gazed at him in amazement, and then turned away in sorrowful silence. Of what avail were words or entreaties in such a case? The spell was all too surely drawn around the willing victim. What could she do but pray that before it was too late his eyes might be opened, and he might see the fair enchantress as she really was?

And what were Asmund's thoughts and hopes busied about, and on whom were they centred? On a lovely girl, whose only claims to enchantment lay in her unusual beauty, and in the innocent charms of her sweet womanly nature.

Sigrid and Asmund had been irresistibly attracted to one another from their first meeting, and had managed to see a great deal of each other, although, on the rare occasions when Asmund was to be seen at Thor Bonde's house (which was always open to those who chose to come), he always took his place at

the lower end of the hospitable board, and was apparently unnoticed by father or daughter. Thor Bonde's great ambition was to see his daughter married to a man of high birth—rather inconsistent of this peasant-prince, who prided himself on his self-given name of "Bonde"—but not many people are quite free from a touch of contradiction in their composition, and Thor would have said it was for his child he was ambitious, not for himself. Between Sigrid's home and her lover's hut there lay the dark waters of the fjord, which had a gloomy threatening aspect, as if foreshadowing the dangerous squalls which often rose with unexpected rapidity, endangering the lives of those overtaken on its broad expanse.

It was on this fjord that the old mother had seen her son with the lovely Sigrid, whom, in her ignorant panic, she had wished at the bottom of the dark waters.

(To be continued.)

AGLAIA: THE GRACE OF DRESS.

By DORA DE BLAQUIÈRE.



THE newest departure in dress reform comes to us during the hot days of summer under a charming guise—a journal undisfigured by advertisements, and declining to draw profit from the teachings it is anxious to impart. *Aglaia* is to be published only twice a year, unhappily for us. Its main idea is to represent the possible gracefulness of dress when properly treated, and the line of thought advocated seems to be Greek, in its flowing lines, though its editors profess to gather good and graceful ideas from every source. The name of one of the three graces who presided over the beauty of life was fitly chosen for the title. Thalia, the first grace, represented the healthy bloom of youth; Euphrosyne, the second, hearteasing mirth; and the third, *Aglaia*, the adornment needful to dress in every-day life.

Aglaia is the organ of "The Healthy and Artistic Dress Union," of which we made mention at the time it was founded. It includes amongst its nine vice-presidents such authorities as Mr. Watts, R.A., Mr. Hamo Thornycroft, R.A., and Sir Spencer Wells in the scientific world, three gentlemen and six ladies, and amongst the latter we have Mrs. Jopling as a representative of women artists. A note at the end of the list informs us "that the vice-presidents support the Healthy and Artistic Dress Union on the express understanding that it aims at sound education and discourages singularity in dress." Nowadays when everyone, who wants to do something a little out of the way, joins a society and becomes a member, an associate, a sister or even a "Haleluiah lass" to give them the needful courage and supply a backbone, I should have thought a union for the encouragement of singularity was more wanted. It seems a comical contradiction that, while endeavouring to alter the bad conditions of dress as at present worn and replace them by others, they should also "discourage singularity in dress!" What is really meant is probably that if a Mrs. Bloomer, or a Dr. Mary Walker arose amongst the members of the Union, they would be sternly shown the door, or the whole worthy nine "Vices" would resign instantly in a solid phalanx. So far as I can see the whole world of women discourages singularity in dress, and follows the changing outer fashions with blind unquestioning confidence.

It is nearly half a century since Mrs. Bloomer's day, and since then, both in England and America, we have passed through many phases of the reform movement. Here we had Mrs. Pfeiffer's Greek revival, and the æsthetic craze, and at least three societies have been founded. In America, the series of lectures delivered in 1875 at Boston by the four most experienced women physicians, and afterwards gathered together as a book called *Dress Reform*, embodied the best-educated and wisest female opinion, and has been of great value; most of the manuals on this subject that have appeared since have probably owed their origin to this exhaustive work. Mrs. Jeuness Miller's reform-movement seems the embodiment of sense, and when she visited England, three or four years ago, her dresses and ideas were fully illustrated and described in the pages of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER. The foundation which she advocates for all our gowns is of princess shape, and on it can be arranged all the changes entailed by the fleeting fashions, while it is so well-shaped, and so admirably cut, that no corsets are needed with it. Mrs. Jeuness Miller has lectured throughout America and Canada, and will visit England shortly, it is said, for the same purpose. She has an excellent system of under-clothing also, and one that can be easily carried out for daily wear.

Through the kindness of Mr. Henry Holiday we have been permitted to make use of some of the beautiful designs given in *Aglaia*. They are called by him the "Working Dress," and seem a glorified revival of what was known, and worn by people about seventy years ago under the name of a "bed-gown." It is a loose dressing-gown, gathered at the neck, with full sleeves, and is girt at the waist by a wide band with two loops, which are used to raise the dress when needed, the dress at the sides being pulled through them, and falling in graceful folds on each side, the gown being open in the front over a petticoat. It may be worn either long or short as required, but it looks as if it would be more graceful when short; and now that our skirts are of a more sensible length, it would not look *outré* if it were always worn in that manner, and it would be more useful for all purposes.

No dress reform movement would be complete without an attack on the corset. This



is of course our fundamental error in dress, and one that it seems almost hopeless to fight against. Dr. W. Wilberforce Smith supplies an excellent article "on the medical side of the attack," and contrives to add several terrors to those that already surround the practice. He says that, in certain bodily conditions common to both sexes, there are some in which women are at a remarkable disadvantage, accounted for by no natural cause. These, the doctor thinks, can be shown to be attributable wholly, or in part to corset wearing. They are lateral curvature of the spine, failure of the supporting muscles of the spine without curvature, of breathing capacity (measured by the spirometer), of abdominal respiratory movements, loss of singing voice as life advances, gallstones, deformities, and displacements of the liver, perforating ulcer of the stomach, floating kidney, etc. This is a dreadful list, and seems to demand attention from everyone who reads it, and who even wears the most moderately tight stays in no way laced tight, not more than enough to keep up the petticoats.

In America I found that there were plenty of excellent bodices to be purchased, made of various materials; well-fitting, but without bones, and at a moderate price. The only plan to displace the corset will be in finding some sort of well-fitting bodice to replace it; at present there seems nothing in the ordinary shops in England. One reason, I think, for women's dislike to going without stays, is the extreme ugliness of the waist at the back when no stays are worn. This seems apparent to everyone, and there is no help for it, and as one girl said to me, "It may be the right thing, but it is dreadfully ugly and clumsy." The other reason is the tendency amongst women to get stout, and the ungainly appearance without stays when they do so. If we could get short waists back again, such as were worn as late as 1838 even, then I think the trouble about tight-lacing would cease.

A new phase of dress reform is mentioned at some length in the American fashion papers, and this is an effort also in the right direction, both as regards corsets and increased economy in dress-making; for by its adoption all dresses could be made at home

in a very short time, and their manufacture would need no special skill. The name of the new reformer is Mrs. Mary Pury King, and she has just been exhibiting them and illustrating her theories before the pupils of the teacher's college, where she has accepted a position as lecturer on the subject.

One of her principles is to have all her gowns unlined, which entails in consequence a series of what she calls "slips" under them, these slips being really a high-necked princess petticoat. They are all made of washing materials such as lawn, muslin, cambric, washing silk, pougee, tussore, flannelette, or flannel. Some of them are high and some low-necked; those made high-necked much resemble a night-gown, it is said; but the embroidery is let in about the neck, and there are frills of lace about it, being intended to wear under gowns cut square, V-shaped, or round at the neck, a most graceful fashion, as we may judge from the picturesque examples of dress in olden days. The low-necked slips are for wear under high-necked transparent gowns, and are trimmed with lace and have a lace-trimmed flounce at the bottom. The lace-trimmed neck of the high slips takes the place of the collar, which Mrs. Pury considers a sham only. This princess petticoat is the only one, the other garment being a combination of silk, cotton thread, or wool according to the season. Mrs. Pury has a corset which can be worn or not as preferred. It is only about six inches long, does not come quite to the waist line, and has shoulder straps. It has no bones, and seems more intended to support the stockings, and also to button on to it an extra skirt, if one should be needed at any time. It is worn under the slip and over the combination.

I have left the consideration of the gown to the last, for Mrs. Pury claims that she will do away with dressmaker's bills by its means. It is in one piece from head to foot, and it has as few seams as possible; the sleeves are straight pieces of material gathered up the seam on the inner side, which can be let out for washing, so as to make it into a straight piece of material again. This gown can be made up in a few hours, and can be trimmed in any manner preferred, the inventor having generally sets of large collars and cuffs for wear on

ordinary occasions. Mrs. King considers that directly you destroy the shape of the waist, you must divert the eye from the alteration, by putting an extra amount of trimming on the shoulders and chest. She makes great use of the small Senorita jacket, and considers it a very excellent garment. This newest plan seems one of the most practicable and decorative yet brought forward.

Some of the contents of our new contemporary are rather behind-hand and out of date, especially the chapter on practical suggestions, which would hardly have been true five years ago, for the well-dressed and sensibly clad woman wears none of these things, neither chemise, vest, drawers, nor flannel petticoat, nor does she wear several skirts. The combination has become the garment, and the original suggestion of wearing knickerbockers given some years ago in *THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER*, has been adopted in all parts of the world as well as in England, and this renders the flannel petticoat quite unnecessary and useless. In this paper we have always acted on the idea that the evils of women's dress must be attacked inwardly, namely by substituting good models in underclothing for the bad ones usually worn, and the event has proved we were right.

