

for early drawing by-and-by. But those of your onions that were sown in the spring will be by this time rapidly ripening. With the back of your rake lay the stems even; this will materially assist the bulbs to swell. Should your crop be already fit for drawing, let the onions lie all about on the ground for a short time, to ripen and harden. Never harvest them, however, when at all wet, so it is well to get them all in after a few days of warm dry weather. A sowing of parsley may be made now, for there is always a constant demand for this most necessary article: plants of this that are in an advancing stage may be beneficially watered with soot-water. The dry soot is an admirable manure for it. It is well to take up now a few of your strongest parsley plants, and pot them in

rich soil, with the object of having some to fall back upon should a hard winter be in store for us, as we must not forget that the winters of 1879 and 1880 destroyed much in our garden that we had seldom formerly been at the trouble to give any protection to whatever. A main crop, too, of winter spinach should now be sown, and as it comes up it will want careful thinning out. A frequent fault is to let this grow too thickly; the plants should be nearly nine inches apart, and gathered carefully only from the outside leaves, for we must be more cautious in our winter than in our summer proceedings. There are many other matters to which we might have referred, but if gardeners attempt more than they can manage their failures are sure to be more numerous.



HOW TO DRESS RATIONALLY.

SOCIETY is much exercised at present by the different efforts made to reform the female costume. There has hardly ever been a period when greater margin or liberty existed to dress according to every one's own sweet will. People wear anything and everything, in and out of the bounds of reason, often indeed stepping widely beyond their utmost limits, though claiming to be well within any of the four very inclusive terms—taste, art, fashion, or convenience.

That great reforms are generally ushered in by great exaggerations, abuses, and excesses, is an historical fact in more matters than dress; and though the circles in which costume incessantly repeats itself are ever widening, they still remain—circles. At times during these revolutions there come periods when health is seriously menaced by the extremes attained, and then a counter-movement arises amongst those more richly endowed with physical knowledge and common sense than the thoughtless and often ignorant votaries of Fashion.

They have much to answer for who, owing to their own eyes and minds being untrained in the real lines of beauty, or untutored in what is hygienically important, create and uphold by their senseless approbation false standards of taste, that are, in their effects, fatally pernicious. Again, it must be always questionable whether reference to past ages with their very uncomfortable, ungainly exaggerations of form, can satisfactorily—whether artistically or hygienically—amend the styles of present clothing.

How gladly, indeed, should we be released from the umbrella-cover costume, that not only ties our knees, but our feet together, or the æsthetic drapery, with its quantity of loose material flapping most confusingly, if not dangerously, round our limbs! Our blooming girls would like, with all due modesty and grace, to be able to walk without shuffling, and even to run at

lawn-tennis, or to climb mountains, without fainting from breathlessness produced by severe waist compression, whilst the feet are clogged and hampered with skirts of incompatible dimensions and decoration.

No one can blame those courageous ladies who, impressed by the necessity of uncramped and healthy action, have suggested certain examples of clothing to meet these requirements consistently with form and elegance. Rational dress should be heartily welcomed, and if attractively presented will stand a good chance of finding favour with those whose judgment in such matters is most reliable and valuable.

But a serious difficulty presents itself almost at the outset. Who amongst women will ever allow that they are not already rationally dressed?

Will the so-called æsthete consent to believe that she is very far from rational in her "terrible terracotta garments," her sickly green pudding-bag cloak and crumpled cabbage head-covering? Will our tall and aristocratic "*élégantes*" with their dapper bonnets and ravishing costumes, in which colours are blended to perfection by the cunning of a Parisian *modiste*, tolerate the idea for a moment that their appearance is irreconcilable with "health, comfort, or beauty"?

Still further, how will this accusation be met by "the more resolute sisterhood of small growth, who will do anything to come out important," in spite of the painful fact that any but the simplest and plainest attire needs a proportionate presence and altitude to do it justice, and, lacking these, merely present a mon-keyfied caricature simply ridiculous?

The first object of those advocating a reform in clothing is to aim a death-blow at tight-lacing. It is quite impossible that this can be accomplished suddenly; people must be educated to see nothing but deformity in the "hour-glass waist," and well frightened at what it entails, before they will modify, much less entirely resign (as some enthusiasts in the cause demand), so useful, and, in cases of stout persons, so necessary a part of female attire as stays.

Besides the risk to health and the disfigurements of complexion that accompany tight-lacing, the distorted squarely-strained position of the shoulders cannot be overlooked, giving as it does the impression of a constant desire to rise out of the pressure below. The natural lines and beautiful contour for which the shoulders of most Englishwomen are justly noted, are entirely lost—the neck looks stunted, and never moves with the free grace of untrammelled action, and the arms have that fastened-on appearance peculiar to wooden dolls. And when some decidedly practical and useful thing is suggested, *why* does the world look coldly askance upon it? These are enigmas whose only solution can be found in a widespread want of common-sense education—and I might almost add, refinement.

Rational dress must be hygienic, and hygienic dress must be rational and attractive. To insure complete success the reforms of both must be brought about as quietly and undemonstratively as possible. Certain old superstitions will have to be exploded, such as—that warmth is only secured by repeated layers of clothes, without any regard to their heat-retaining powers, or that very loose or very tight coverings increase the temperature; that the exposure of one part of the body is compensated for by the addition of extra clothing on another, particularly when the parts exposed are often the most vital, where consumption first begins; that because it is urgently recommended to renounce tight-lacing, and unequal pressure anywhere, human pillows tied in the middle must inevitably be the result; that when it is suggested to change or divide the under-skirt in such a way as to secure freer action in walking, women should be instantly accused of launching into masculine attire.

With regard to the supreme evil of tight-lacing, it is a very certain fact, though much forgotten, that the delicate machinery of which the human frame is constituted *must* have due space allotted to work in, and that an undue compression of the organs of the body cannot but result in discomfort and danger.

Clothing, to be sanitary, should never be heavy: warmth is not necessarily secured by weight; lightness, on the contrary, being quite compatible with it. In fact, heavy clothes, especially when hung from the waist or shoulders, are *most* injurious to delicate girls and women, for the braces, which are used by some to keep up the skirts in the absence of stays, obstruct respiration and free growth. No mass of thick folds should be permitted round the waist, but set into what are known as deep shaped-bands, so as to hang from below the hips.

It is an equal mistake to suppose that extremely loose clothing is healthy. *Le juste milieu* is best in costume, as in most other things.

Young growing girls need for warmth but a simple bodice of a material that will not stretch but (with the addition of a few whalebones) keep its shape, thus obviating the necessity of continual tightening, to be *fitted* to their figures, and merely reaching at the sides

to the hips. Tightness must be absolutely avoided, as likely to produce congestion by impeding the circulation of the blood. I commend this suggestion to my lady readers, to develop in their own way, always avoiding pressure. Mothers who are careful for their daughters' growth will do well to remember that no dress is hygienically made in which the arms cannot be raised to the head.

Seeing that already many close-fitting garments, intended to replace the numerous petticoats of former days, have been willingly accepted and worn by our modern ladies, there can be no reasonable objection to the division of the under-skirt, if it insures, as it certainly does, greater facility and comfort in walking without in the least attracting attention. I think that, rationally and hygienically speaking, even if undivided the skirt might for winter wear, when muddy weather is the rule rather than the exception, be shortened with great advantage, so as not to cover the ankles. I have always advocated the short, black leather leggings (not gaiters) for lady pedestrians in muddy country walking—why should they not be as becomingly adopted in town? With a neat boot they give a smart dapper appearance, only attainable by boots similarly high, and nothing is more repulsive than low boots, and stockings bespattered with mud.

Under-clothes should always be made of porous materials, even in the case of extremely delicate people; evaporation is so necessary that, though often recommended, wash-leather next the skin can hardly be healthy. The use of woollen under-clothing is therefore particularly advisable, as, by its capillary properties, it slightly stimulates the action of the skin, thus becoming a preventive to cold. Many object to flannel and woollen fabrics next the skin on the score of the tickling sensation they produce when new, but that is a very passing grievance, and seldom lasts longer than a day or two. If worn at night, it is better outside the calico or cambric night-dress, as its action, combined with the added heat of the bed-coverings, would be too violent. It is as well to mention, also, that on no account must flannel or woollen under-clothes worn during the day be retained at night, but quite separate ones provided, and that both must be changed at least once a week, to insure health. Persons who suffer much from heat should always have a liberal supply of under-clothing; it is far better to expend a little extra on the laundress's bill than to adorn the exterior at the sacrifice of the interior's sanitary condition, and no error is greater than to suppose it is possible to be too clean. I even wish that a weekly change of stays might be made as much the rule as the change of under-clothing.

In conclusion, whilst preserving a certain originality in the method of adapting any form or change to your own particular style, eschew that eccentricity which is no more originality than notoriety is fame, though many small-minded people think so. Eccentricity so often degenerates into vulgarity, pure and simple, and vulgarity goes hand in hand with tight-lacing.

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