thing else. A volume has lately come into our hands. in which the fashions of ladies' dresses some fifty years ago and more are depicted. It is quite amusing to see them. To our eyes they have rather a grotesque appearance; but not so grotesque as they would have seemed two or three years ago, because, in some respects, we are approximating to some of them, especially to those of the "Empire."

We can imagine it to be a very perplexing thing to know how to keep pace with the changes which each year, and, we might almost say, every season of the year, bring in. At one time the dresses are as full as they are scanty at another. The changes are propitious to dressmakers and milliners and haberdashers, but not to anyone else, excepting so far as one fashion happens to be more becoming than another.

We have before now railed against the introduction of the crinoline, and the annoyances to which it led. Though it was said that it would be laid aside, we ventured to doubt the assertion, and presumed to say that it had taken too firm a hold upon the public for it to be easily discarded. The origin of the crinoline was singular enough. It was said to have originated at a time when the Empress of the French was expected to give birth to the Prince Imperial. Is it not singular that a fashion so univer-

sally adopted by women of all ages and condition, married and single, should have had such an origin? Surely one would have predicted of it beforehand that it would have been rejected with disgust and scorn. Instead of which it has been welcomed, is universally adopted, and tenaciously retained, in spite of the remonstrances, jeers, sneers, and dislike which it has continually provoked, and notwithstanding the attempts made from time to time to lay it aside or bring it into disrepute. Our eyes have become so accustomed to it that, when we meet with any of those limp, straightdown figures which are the result of its disuse, we are startled and shocked, as if some of the "corps de ballet" were walking abroad in the noonday. We are disposed to exclaim against them as an infringement of the laws of decency. We are indeed strange mortals, to be so much the creatures of habit that, if our eyes are accustomed to one state of things we are intolerant of any other, without any particular regard to the fitness, and propriety, and decorum of that to which we have suffered ourselves to become habituated. In time we might get used to any costume, however short and scanty. It is a dangerous state of things, and we think that modern society shows that it is so.

The Saturday Review has, with powerful pen and caustic tongue, taken upon itself the unenviable office of censor morum. We had been longing to enter the lists against the prevalence of certain fashions which had crept into the best society, but we were restrained from doing so, partly from a hope that society itself would indignantly reject the attempt to introduce a laxity of dress which cannot fail to have a demoralizing effect upon the public mind, and partly from a fear of directing attention to the style which we consider to be so much to be reprehended. But those apprehensions have no longer any force. The attempt has been made, and has not been protested against, except by Every Saturday, which has also directed the public mind to certain peculiarities in the dress of the present day, which might almost be called scandals without any great straining of the refer was by no means exhaustive; but it is perhaps impossible that it should be so, as the freaks of unlicensed faucy which gave rise to the remarks are almost without limit.

It was but a year ago that complaints were loud against the amplitude of ladies' dresses. The extent of ground they covered was almost fabulous, and the consequent cost of a gown was a serious item of expenditure, and alarmed young men and old. The young feared an entanglement which might lead to matrimony, when a lady's dress was so costly and their means were not great; and their elders looked with apprehension upon a state of things which, if it should find its way into their homes, would paralyze all their energies and exhaust their resources. But now the complaint is that, while the dresses are plain, almost to indelicacy, in front, they have such immense trains that they actuinterfere with the enjoyment of public. A lady who walks in the Park with a long train trailing behind her in the dust and dirt, occupies so much space that no one dares to follow within three or four yards of her. Imagine, then, what the inconvenience must be in large assemblies within doors, where space is not illimitable, and where the trains are even longer than those for morning wear. The inconvenience has been felt to such a degree that it has given rise to a different kind of costume for those who care for walking exercise, and dislike equally to bold up their dress, and to suffer it to sweep the ground. Their costume consists of a petticoat, a short dress which shows the petticoat, and a kind of cloak or mantle to match. When this costume is worn, it has the effect of three tiers of dresses, and has a most peculiar look, though we do not doubt that it possesses great advantages.

In order to make the modern fashion of plaitless gowns applicable to all, it is found necessary to shorten the waists of the dresses; and as all persons are not made alike, and some are thin and others stout, modern ingenuity has hit upon an invention by which whatever is defective may be supplied. We have been assured that, in order that all may seem to possess a certain rotundity of form, it has been found advisable to invent something which shall supply what fashion requires. So now fictitious appearances are to be kept up, although they are, it is true, of a different and more objectionable kind. The principle, however, of supplementing nature is the same in all cases.

It is also further asserted that as every-thing, even modesty itself, is to be sacrificed to dress, and that as the sole object in life is the set and fashion of a gown, art has other inventious to supply other defects. There are the seins-palpitants and the ears, all made of gutta-percha. It seems incredible; but we again repeat that there is no humiliation to which some people will not submit that they may be of that exclusive number who call themselves the "fashionable world." Imagine a woman possessed of any modesty submitting to such indignities, consent-ing to go forth as an impostor; her form rounded by art; her bosom heaving, not

Boulevard. What an impostor! Who knows but what she may be painted too? for it is said that cosmetics are in favor by which false

tints are given to the skin and to the hair. Not long since it was the fashion to dye the hair red and gold, and make the skin white with paint, the cheeks pink with rouge, and the eyelids stained; but now this capricious goddess, whom fine ladies worship with such devotion, prefers dark hair and olive complexions, and the rage is now for brown washes as it used to be for white. The blueblack hair and dark skin of the gipsy have become the envy of the ladies of fashion, and they hope, by means of washes and dyes, to make themselves "beautiful forever."

These freaks of fancy make us burn with shame for our countrywomen. They savor too much of the demi-monde, and are suggestive of all that is coarse and sensual, and of those enticements and tricks which ought to be unknown amongst gentlewomen. A predilection for these false lights on the part of ladies of fashion, and their submissive subservience to their dressmakers, has introduced a habit of low dressing which ought to be protested against by all who have wives and children. It has become quite a habit with even young girls to have their gowns out so low that they ositively offend against decenoy. It is, however, very much the fashion for all ladies to wear their dresses too low-to be too decolletee, as the French term it.

Modesty is the greatest ornament a woman can have, and the demoralizing effect of the present style of dress is that it destroys that modesty. We have heard it said by some women, in excuse for themselves, that they dress in this objectionable manner in order to please their husbands. It sounds incredible and if it be so, we can only say that husbands richly deserve whatever reprobation may be in store for them, if they are so ready to expose the persons of their wives to the public gaze. Men are very apt to be hard upon wemen who err, to pass severe judg-ments upon them, and to allow no locus penitentice. But if they are so foolish as to encourage them in immodest dressing, they should be the last persons to quarrel with them for following out their precepts to their natural conclusion.

If we were called upon to say what is the distinctive characteristic of the age in which we live, we should be inclined to designate an age of shams. as Unreality ereeps into everything. The gravest matters are tainted with it. Even in religion, where unrealities should find no place, there is contention about externals which are devoid of any real meaning. Bishops and clergy contend for pastoral staffs and vestments when they no longer have the things they symbolize. Language is made to conceal the truth, and exaggeration distorts it. Professions of friendship are hollow, and treachery undermines the closest ties. In the political world we hear it forever stated that parties are betrayed by their chiefs, and that principle is at a discount. And in the smaller details of life we find that, instead of the instincts of nature rebelling against anything that is unreal, there is an appetite for it; that shams are in favor, and that every one is attracted by them rather than otherwise. In the matter now before us we find

this to be especially the case. False

hair, false color, false ears, etc. etc., etc., are used without compunction where they are considered to be needed. The consequence is that woman has become an imposture, and men have learned to fear that what they most admire may be but a successful art. Old women have long since done all in their power to repair the ravages of time. Wigs and fronts, teeth, paint, and rouge, always been made use of by those who know not how to grow old. But they have not been able to deceive the world, which takes them at their real value, and can see behind the screen of unrealities to which they have fled for refuge from the print of years. We cannot resist quoting a passage from a well-known writer on this subject, in which she has described the appearance of an old woman who scandals without any great straining of the is not ashamed of and has no wish to hide meaning of the word. The article to which we her age. "See the plaited border, or the full ruche of the cap, white as snow, circling close round the face, as if jealous to preserve the oval that age has lost; the hair peeping from beneath, finer and more silken than ever. but white as that border, or grey as the shadow thrown by it; the complexion withered and faded, yet, being relieved, as nature has appointed it to be, by the still more faded tints of the hair, in a certain degree delicate and resh; the eyes with most of their former fire extinguished, still surrounded only with the chastened hues of age, brighter than anything else in the face; the face itself, lined with deep wrinkles, but not one that the painter would spare; the full handkerchief, or rich bustling laces scrupulously covering neck and throat, reminding us that the modesty of her youth has survived, though not its charms; some deep sober shawl or scarf which the French righly call le drapeau de vieille femme, carefully concealing the outline of the figure, though not its general feminine proportions—all brilliant contrasts, as all violent passions, banished from the picture, and replaced by a harmony which is worth them all."

The same writer, who has so admirably depicted an old woman whom every one must venerate and love, goes on to speak of the moral influence that such an one must have over the society in which she lives. Having gone through all the "progressive periods of life," having passed through its sunshine and its shade, she "now casts them all aside," and asserts her claim to our respect in the simple fact of her age. She knows that "to all who have eyes to see and hearts to feel, her silver locks are more precious than the most golden tresses money could purchase—her pale cheek more interesting than the finest bloom art could simulate—her modest coverings more attractive than the most wonderfully preserved remains of beauty she could exhibit— her whole venerable aspect of age more lovely than the very best imitation of youth she could possibly get up; who not only makes old age respectable and honorable, but even enviable, in the eyes of those who are still toiling in the heat and burden of the day.' In quoting this passage almost at legth, we render, en passani, the best tribute we could pay to the right feeling and eloquent description of one who has written so truthfully and well en the art of dress. We wish, with all our hearts, that her words would sink deep into the minds of the young and old of our time. The old would teach a lesson to the young which they have great need to learn, and the young would know that the unspeak-able charm of the picture which has been so admirably drawn lies in the fact that not even in the palmiest days of her youth and admira-tion did this old lady ever lay aside, or even lightly tamper with, that modesty and refinement which are in every sense the crowning graces of womanhood.

How different must be the influence of that meretricions style of dress of which the distinctive feature is unreality and imposture, and its chief merit successful simulation! How truly has it been remarked that it has a demoralizing effect! How can it be otherwise when women consent to indignities and with emotion; her delicate ear, pink like to a system of imposture that they may, as

they are assured and hope will be the case make themselves more captivating? No one disfigures herself for the purpose of difigura-No one adopts a costume because it is ngly and may take away from her charms. However unbecoming a fashion may be, it is adopted not with any idea that it is so, but under the impression that it is quite the reverse. Dyes and cosmetics are used to heighten beauty or to conceal defects; and for the same purpose these novel contrivances have been brought into fashion. It is remark. able that while the crinoline was introduced to conceal a fact, so these more recent novelties make all who adopt them appear to be in the very condition which the crinoline was intended to conceal. It is intelligible that elderly women, who

are concious of the ravages of time, who know that they are no longer young, and that the bloom of youth has left their cheeks, upon which the lapse of years have stamped its indelible traces, should do all in their power to simulate that which they have outlived, especially when they consider what are called "the claims of society" to be of paramount importance, and care only for the world and its charms, and live only for society. But it is incredible that the young, who have sustained no loss, who have no ground of complaint against the cruel, iron grasp of time, should have recourse to expedients which are utterly inconsistent with their early years. The roundness of form, the graceful curves, the soft tints, which belong to youth are theirs in all their fulness. They have no need to use false lights, because they have no defects to conceal. Why, then, should they adopt a fashion which, however much it may assist their elders, cannot be of any service to them? What man in his senses would suffer himself to be attracted by a painted doll? If the object of dress is to clothe without disfiguring the form, and if marriage is the desideratum of all young ladies, it is, to say the least, unwise in them to mar their prospects by the adoption of a fashion which, however prevalent it may be, is not only unsuited to youth, but is suggestive of the tricks of the demi-monde, who have no scruple about hanging out false lights to entrap the unwary. We remember an instance of a young lady of considerable personal attractions, whose only fault had been a certain pallor, which, after all, though peculiar, was not actually unbecoming, but which had recently disappeared. She asked a friend upon whom she was calling to lend her a veil which, when she returned it, was all covered with rouge and paint. It had been noticed that she had a beautiful bloom upon her cheeks, which had taken the place of her former pallor, and it was hoped by those who were kindly disposed towards her that the change was owing to renovated health rather than to art; but it turned out she was a mass of paint and rouge. Eyebrows and eyelids were darkened; paint and rouge were liberally used; and she had become nothing better than a painted doll. Her skin and complexion soon resented this treatment, and became so injured by the constant use of cosmetics, that was no longer a matter of option, but became a necessity to her use fictitious and meretricious arts. Her fixed brilliant coloring, dark eyebrows, and glittering eyes, became actually

repulsive. Some persons, who carefully watch over the education of young girls, resolutely set their faces against the wide field of literature which comes under the designation of novels. have no intention of discussing the wisdom of a wholesale objection to a kind of reading which undoubtedly had its advantages, be cause it is a large question, and there are tainly many books which come under this class which are decidedly objectionable, and which would lay open to the youthful mind a state of things of which the less they know the better. But it is a remarkable fact that they who are so watchful and tenacious upon point are quite indifferent upon a matter which is at least equally injurious. When a young girl "comes out" into society, the utmost care and consideration are paid to her appearance, avowedly for a partic that she may attract young men.

In order to accomplish this-to insure admiration, which the chaperons designate "her success"-no tricks are considered to be out of place. If she is pale, and it is unbecoming, recourse is had to the rouge-pot, which is judiciously used by the experienced hand of an anxious chaperon. If she is thin and spare, and her figure is not fully developed, the dressmaker is instructed to supply what nature has omitted, and by dint of pads to impart a roundness which does not exist. If she is the reverse, then the budding charms are to be exhibited, and low dressing is adopted. In short, the one idea is to make the most of a young girl's "points," and to hide her defects. She is introduced into society very much as horses are taken to fairs for sale. Her "points," her "paces," are carefully studied beforehand, and the chaperon takes the place and performs the part of the salesman. Her daughter's establishment in the world is the one all-absorbing idea, and men are valued according to their rent-roll. As dress is the means by which favorable impressions are first made, it plays a very prominent part in the game, and all the tricks and enticements of which dress is capable are adopted without any hesitation. We do not, of course, refer to those perfectly innocent embellishments which relate to the preference of one dress for another, or for one style for another. These are most legitimate and innocent. We refer to those impostures in dress by which things seem to be which are not, and the adoption of which is in itself a great indignity to the whole race of womankind. No one is bound to dress herself unbecomingly; but, on the contrary, is more than justified in making the best use of nature's gifts. Our protest is against the introduction of novelties by which women are taught to impose upon the world, which cannot fail to have a demoralizing influence over them, and which dese-crate that modesty which is the best jewel a woman can wear .- London Society.

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