

votaries, and often lulls their reason to sleep. Common sense is ignored in her realm, and it is only by accident if she ever produces anything rational or artistic.

The faults in women's clothing we may divide into two main classes—(I.) the temporarily absurd, and (II.) the permanently injurious. Some of the first become injurious also through their effects.

I. As an example of the first class we may consider the sleeves of late years gathered in a balloon at the shoulder and now expanding in bells to the wrist. If we could look at either of these styles through eyes unprejudiced by fashion, our reason would not approve, nor our æsthetic instincts admire.

There is only one slight comfort in considering them, in that they are not quite so unreasonable as they were the last time they reigned in the country. When last the full-topped sleeves were in vogue, artificial supports were worn, the best being down pillows. I remember seeing in my little sister's cradle a little incurved pillow at either side of the centre square one, and my mother told me they had been her sleeve-pillows, and she had kept them because they were so nice and soft, and now they had come in handy for the babies. The other kind of sleeves widened and widened, until they ceased to fulfil the function of sleeves in retaining heat, and became disastrous in overturning flower-glasses and china, and in assisting themselves to articles of diet. But it must be allowed that the wide-hanging sleeve looks pretty *in a picture*.

As examples of this class which produce evils which may pass when the fashion changes, and may not, I would mention the tight and tied-down sleeves that prevented free exercise; the crinolines and dress improvers, which led to so many accidents; the overweighting skirts with heavy trimmings, depending from the waist; the wearing of these skirts long, so as to sweep up from the streets not only dust and stains, but seeds of uncleanness and disease. I remember being much amused in my youth, when I was at Hamburg, to find that the municipal authorities had taken up the question of dress-trains as a public nuisance, and had affixed notices to public places that ladies with trains above a certain length would be fined so much for the first offence and more for the second. Such a notice reminded me that the City Fathers of London at one time, but not now, also concerned themselves with sumptuary laws.

II. Permanently injurious evils may be classed under the heads of insufficient or disproportionate clothing and constriction. Many women say they cannot wear woollen clothing next their skin on account of its delicacy, not realising the important hygienic uses of wool, even in summer. They do not know that fine wool is a cool as well as a healthy wear. If they want heat, the alternation of

foldes of cotton or linen with those of woollen textures provides more heat than a reduplication of the same material. Unequal distribution of clothing is a risk, for, should one part be over heated by exercise or overweight, another exposed to a draught may be chilled. This is a danger most frequently risked by the young in ball-rooms and other festive scenes, but it often takes place in daily life. The seeds of many a chest trouble have been planted because girls did not think of their physical needs in regard to their clothes, or because they preferred fashion to common sense. Here I would like to point out one of the moralities in regard to clothes that is too little considered. When girls are rash they too often carelessly say, or at least think, "Well, surely I can do what I like, seeing I have to suffer the evil consequences, if any there be!" But they mistake. No one lives for herself alone. A girl's neglect of the sanitary necessities of clothing may lead to continued ill-health, may put heavy nursing on her mother or sisters, heavy expense on her father or brothers, may also, if she marries, entail delicacy on her offspring.

The fashions that lead to constriction, such as garters, collars, stays, are, however, the most serious and permanent. With these I would class the use of high heels. I think very few women realise the terrible injuries to their health they risk by wearing these. They entirely alter the natural pose of the body and take away the easy grace of walking; they strain some important internal organs of the body, jar the spinal cord, and add wear and tear to the brain itself by their tap, tap, tapping on floor or pavement. No woman who wears high heels, especially of the fashionable type, has the full use of her life and brain possibilities. When combined with tight shoes, as they frequently are, she voluntarily lames herself, and establishes in civilised Europe a retrogressive imitation of the small-footed, limping, aristocratic lady of somnolent China. The bones and sinews of her feet become abnormal, her ankles swell, exercise becomes as unpleasant and painful as it is inelegant; she takes to reclining on the sofa, and thinking that her constitution is delicate. The morality question comes in here again. Even those women who wear what they call a reasonable heel ought to consider the different muscles exercised in walking on a level, going up and going down hill. A high-heeled woman is perpetually *going down hill*, in more ways than one.

What can I say of the tight lacing of corsets? No language I can use could be too strong. If in a reasonable age men heard of a government punishing malefactors by tight lacing, they would cry shame on it for inhuman cruelty, and demand the cessation of so horrible a punishment. Yet think of the millions of women who daily inflict upon themselves this punishment! They do not

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