

HISTORY OF COSTUME

THIS chapter describes the costume of the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, and briefly sketches the development of costume in France. No references are made to historical events of the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, because the costumes changed so little that such reference would scarcely be a help in placing period styles. In the description of the costumes of the French, however, from the Merovingians up to the present time, a brief outline is given, since frequently a costume is placed by calling it Empire, Revolution, Louis XVI, or Directoire.

The important points to remember in the different costumes are:

1. Silhouette, *i. e.*, bustle, hoop.
2. Texture, *i. e.*, satin, taffeta.
3. Details, *i. e.*, accessories.

The books used in reference are:

FREDERICK HOTTENROTH, *Le Costume*.

JOHN BRAY, *All About Dress*.

CHALLEMEL, *History of Fashion in France*.

M. JULES QUICHERAT, *Histoire du Costume en France*.

PAUL LACROIX, *Manners, Customs and Dress During the Middle Ages*.



PLATE III.—Late Gothic Tapestry
Designed and Woven by the Herter Looms

Guide to Egyptian Collection in the British Museum.

Guide to the Greek and Roman Collection in the British Museum.

FLINDERS PETRIE, *Arts and Crafts of Ancient Egypt.*

PAQUET FRÈRES, *Costumes.*

In his longing for adornment, primitive man first decorated his body with the stains of berries and leaves, painting designs much like those on the tattooed man of to-day. In his need for protection, he first covered his body with leaves—with the fig leaf of popular tradition—and then with knotted grasses and with skins. But it was not long before he discovered that these materials which he had been using in their natural state could be made more durable and convenient by a process of intercrossing or weaving. His first real garment, then, was the loin cloth made of coarse fibrous stuff or linen. Above it was added a girdle or belt, to which was suspended the tail of some animal—a trophy of the chase, or later an imitation made of leather. This custom still prevails among African people.

In the northern and colder countries a close-fitting leather jacket was evolved, since, from the custom of throwing over the shoulder the skins of animals killed in the hunt, the protective value of such a garment was discovered. In the southern countries a loose flowing dress of cotton or linen prevailed. In all countries the evolution of costume has been the same in

essential respects, from the wearing of leaves, through various stages to the present time. The modifications have been brought about by the fundamental influences of climate and of the national, geographic, and social characteristics of the people.

EGYPTIAN

Our first fashion plates are to be found on the ancient walls and tombs of Egypt. They show that costume developed from the loin cloth into a sort of skirt, which varied in length and folds, and then into a sort of triangular kilt which projected in a peak just above the knees. Later both men and women wore over this skirt a loose flowing garment reaching from the neck to the feet. The material at first was a coarse linen stuff, but in the luxurious period of the eighteenth and nineteenth dynasties the upper classes were wearing linen of the finest texture. Their apparel was very voluminous; the outer skirt was looped, girdled, and draped. This, in fact, was the beginning of draperies, panels, ornamented aprons, and girdles.

The burning winds of Egypt made the use of unguents an absolute necessity. Strong-scented woods and herbs were pounded and mixed with oils and rubbed into the body, while scents were, just as at the present time, in great demand. The cone, or large head-covering worn by men and women, very frequently contained a ball saturated with oil or pomade which slowly ran into the hair and spread over the

head and shoulders, causing a pleasing sensation to the wearer. Sometimes, also, the cone had a lotus flower or lily attached to it. In fact, the lotus flower, lily, asp, and such symbols were habitually used for costume ornamentation, in soft primitive colors which might well be adopted in the present day. Men and women often decorated their bodies with tattoo markings, which betokened their religious or tribal order.

Both men and women wore heavy full wigs, although the women often plaited their hair. Rings, anklets, bracelets, armlets, necklaces, and earrings were worn. The precious stones used in the jewelry were believed to possess magical powers, giving luck, long life, and health to the wearer. Sandals were made of papyrus and palm fibers neatly woven or plaited, or were made of goat or gazelle skin tanned and stained a pink color.

GRECIAN

The dress of the Greeks was very simple. There was one type of garment which in difference of size and arrangement developed into many forms: the chiton, or tunic, and the himation, or mantle. The Dorian chiton seems to have been worn first. It was a rectangular piece of cloth measuring more than the height of the wearer and twice the span of the arms. It was folded and draped on the left shoulder, where it was fastened first by thorns, then by pins, and

finally by buttons. A girdle was sometimes used to keep the two edges together, and when such a girdle was worn the dress was pulled up, forming a sort of blouse. This Dorian form of dress was superseded by the Ionian chiton, which was of thin material without the overlap and sewed up the side. This became the under-garment of the women. The top garment was the Dorian chiton, unless the himation, or mantle, was worn draped over the under-dress. The himation varied in size but was always rectangular in shape.

In early times a similar dress was worn by the men. Later the long tunic was discarded and either a short form of the same garment was adopted or the outer cloak was worn alone, often fastened on one shoulder. Men of high rank affected a very elaborate arrangement of the himation by which the whole body was enveloped in folds.

The cloth generally used in the early Greek dress was a white cotton stuff. Later it was dyed many colors, and the robes of the upper classes were most frequently of purple trimmed with a band of white or gold.

The men wore their hair long, bound with bands of metal or cloth. The women arranged theirs in a single knot at the back of the head, adorned with flowers, ribbons, diadems, fillets, and jeweled ornaments of gold or silver. For head-covering the Greeks used the loose ends of their mantles, and it seems to have been the custom of the women to cover their faces when appearing in public. Travelers sometimes

wore a hat with a raised crown. Sailors and workmen wore a conical felt hat.

The first foot-coverings for both men and women were bindings of cloth. Later a sole was attached, making a sandal, and finally a heel was added to the sandal, which was then called a buskin. The upper part reached up the leg and was fastened under the knee with cords or ribbon. A little later the sandals, which were first made of cloth, then of skins, were richly ornamented with embroidery, gold, silver, and precious stones. There are some such sandals in the British Museum, made of wood and shod with bronze plates held in place by iron nails. In other ancient sandals, hobnails in the soles were so arranged as to impress a word or symbol on the ground.

It has been thought that gloves were unknown to the ancients, but they are mentioned by Homer, and pictures of early Greek and Roman soldiers show gauntlets made of skins and embroidered cloths.

ROMAN

Roman costume was adopted from the Greek and was practically the same. The under-garment of the Roman woman was the Ionian chiton, or tunic; and the over-mantle was the Greek himation, called palla or stola.

For men there was a tunic similar to that worn by the Greek, but in place of the himation, the Roman wore a toga. Its shape was semi-circular, the straight edge being about six yards long and the width in the

middle about two yards. One end was placed on the left shoulder with the straight edge nearest the center of the body and the point nearly touching the ground. The curved edge covered the left hand. The rest was then passed behind the back over or under the right arm and again over the left shoulder, the point hanging behind almost to the ground. This toga was the badge of Roman nationality and was made of fine linen, cotton, or silk. Except when worn by men of rank or high office, who might adopt purple, gold, or yellow, its color was universally white. Since purple was considered to be the royal shade, free-born children and the higher magistrates were distinguished by a purple stripe on their togas. In mourning this stripe was concealed. Those who boasted no stripe wore a dark colored toga for mourning.

Although the Roman head-covering was similar to the Greek, there was a distinctive national foot-covering. A leather boot, reaching above the ankle, was bound with leather thongs, the number and arrangement of the thongs denoting the rank of the wearer. This boot, called the calceus, was always worn with the toga. The caliga, on the contrary, was a boot for military use, and it was bound up the legs. In the home, the most common foot covering was a sandal laced on the instep.

MEROVINGIAN PERIOD

452-490

HISTORY

The Roman Empire in the West was broken up in 476 A. D. Then the Franks, Vandals, and Goths ruled. Clovis killed Roman influence, founded the Frankish power, and made Paris his capital. After his death, his kingdom was divided among his four sons. The Merovingians became weak and were succeeded by Duke Pepin in 751.

DRESS

During the first part of the Merovingian period, both men and women wore the skins of animals, then felt, and short-sleeved mantles of camels hair or silk dyed red. The women wore a sort of cape consisting of a piece of material circular in shape with an aperture for the head and slits for the arms. This garment was held in place by a girdle around the loins. The women also wore a wrap which was wound around the body and fastened over the right shoulder.

A picture of Queen Clotilde shows a tunic confined at the waist by a band of some precious material, and her hair falling in long plaits. This method of wearing the hair was distinctly a Merovingian custom, for the Romans never allowed their hair to hang. The Frankish men, also, wore their hair long as a sign

of rank. Women frequently covered their heads with a fine cloth held in place by a sort of crown.

CARLOVINGIAN PERIOD

752-888

HISTORY

752—Pepin the Short, first ruler of the Carolingians.

768—Rule of Charlemagne, who founded the new Empire of the West and was crowned by the Pope.

814—Death of Charlemagne.
Succession of Louis I (The Pious).

817—Lothair becomes co-ruler.

840—Lothair becomes Emperor.

841—Lothair is defeated by his brothers Louis and Charles.

843—Treaty of Verdun. A division of the territory gives France to Charles the Bold.

877—Louis (The Stammerer) becomes King.

879—Louis III and Carloman reign jointly.

884—Charles (The Fat) reunites the Frankish dominions.

DRESS

With the exception of a greater luxury in appointments and decoration, there was little change in the dress of this period. The most elegant costume consisted of two tunics of different colors: one with

tight, and the other with flowing, sleeves. The neck, the sleeves, and the hem of the skirt were bordered with bands of embroidery. A waist-band, made usually of gold set with precious stones, was placed just above the hips.

The men wore inner-garments of linen and outer-garments of wool bound with silk. For everyday use their mantles were short, but for ceremony they were long and voluminous and many-colored.

Charlemagne, whose tastes seem to have been very simple, fought constantly against the growing extravagance and splendor. He finally issued edicts against the too luxurious dress and customs of his time.

FEUDAL PERIOD

888-1090

HISTORY

898—Charles III (The Simple) succeeds.

911—The Northmen under Rollo establish themselves in Normandy.

The feudal system is installed.

929—Charles III dies. Rudolph reigns.

936—Louis IV becomes King.

954—Lothair succeeds.

986—Louis V (The Slothful) becomes King.

987—Hugh Capet becomes King. He is the founder of the Capetian line of kings.

996—Robert II (The Wise) succeeds.

1031—Henry I becomes King.

1060—Philip I becomes King.

1066—William of Normandy claims the crown of England and makes war on Harold to obtain it.

DRESS

Some of the costumes of the women of the tenth century were tightly fitted, revealing the lines of the figure; others were flowing and so high as completely to cover the neck. The latter kind was called a "cotteshardie." This garment, a long tunic fastened at the waist and closed at the wrists, has always been a favorite French costume. It was also worn by men. Over it ladies of the nobility wore a long coat or another tunic without sleeves. Invariably they wore a long veil and dressed their hair with utmost simplicity. The nobles wore ermine-lined cloaks and tunics, often two tunics, an outer one of veiling or drapery thrown over the head and hanging down over the shoulders.

THE MIDDLE AGES

1090-1610

HISTORY

Period of the Crusades.

Reign of the Capets from Louis VI (The Great) to the death of Charles IV in 1322.



1388



1437



1437

Reign of the Valois kings, beginning 1328, ending with the establishment of the Bourbon Monarchy in 1610.

Union with the House of Medici by marriage of Henry II to Catherine de Medici in 1547.

Power of the House of Guise.

DRESS

During the early part of this period there appeared a tendency toward over-elaboration of dress. The women wore long tight-fitting robes with a decorated band forming a sort of necklace and with long narrow sleeves. Their wraps were long also, and were made with large hoods on which could be draped a flowing veil. The accessories of feminine dress had multiplied rapidly and included purses, hats, fancy head-dresses, and finally external corsets, made of fur or silk and worn winter and summer. The former simple style of dressing the hair in two thick plaits was displaced by all kinds of fantastic coiffures. At the end of the period, women wore rolls on the tops of their heads measuring two feet in height. Trains made a first appearance and were worn until the Council of Montpellier forbade their use because they were thought to suggest serpents.

Men's costume consisted of breeches, stockings, shoes, coat, surcoat, and a chaperon, or head covering. Toward the end of the period the breeches shortened to doublets, and all garments had become so tight that two assistants were required for dressing and

undressing. Great extravagance was shown in the jeweled belts, while the points on the shoes, or pou-laines, were so long that they were held up by cords or gold chains which were fastened to the belt. Another masculine eccentricity was the length of the sleeves. These often touched the ground, as may be seen in the pictures of clowns and nobles of this period.

EARLY BOURBON MONARCHY

1589-1642

HISTORY

1589-1610—Reign of Henry IV.

1598—Edict of Nantes, granting toleration to the Protestants.

1600—Henry IV marries Marie de Medici.

1610—Assassination of Henry IV by Ravallac.
Reign of Louis XIII.
Period of Richelieu.

DRESS

Present fashions may be said to have originated in this period, because during it men and women adopted clothes fitting the body. Ladies wore full skirts, tight at the waist and panniered in front, over a very rich under-petticoat. Fullness at the hips was held out by means of large padded rolls, which developed into the vertugadin, an arrangement of whalebone and steel, which in turn became panniers. The large ruff

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worn at the neck was introduced by Catherine de Medici.

Men wore overcoats with tight sleeves, felt hats with more or less wide brims, and closed shoes and boots. The coats were short, tight fitting, and pointed in front. The trunk hose were tight, but around the waist they were puffed out and slashed. The men, as well as the women, wore the de Medici ruff.

LOUIS XIV

1643-1715

HISTORY

1643-1685—Reign of Louis XIV.

1660—Louis XIV marries Marie Theresa.

War with Spain.

1713—Peace of Utrecht.

DRESS

In Louis XIV's gorgeous court, every phase of life was exaggerated. With this in mind, it is not difficult to understand the exaggeration in dress.

The dresses of the women were very complicated in cut and were draped, trimmed, and upholstered at every conceivable place. Besides lace, which was just at its height of popularity, knots of ribbon, tufts of chenille, and buttons were used in profusion. The materials from which dresses were made were in themselves elaborate. Satins brocaded in gold, mus-

lins with painted flowers, and silver and gold gauzes were used.

One of the fashions was the draped bustle, of the same shape which returned in 1885. Another was the use of the vertugadins or panniers, which were so large on the sides that they looked like poultry baskets. Tight stays, injurious to the health, were adopted also, and to conceal the discomfort occasioned by them fans were in constant use. These were beautifully painted and mounted in wood, mother-of-pearl, ivory, steel, or gold. The feminine head-dress of the time is worthy of comment. It consisted of a framework of wire, a half-yard in height, divided into tiers, and covered with bands of muslin, ribbon, chenille, pearls, and aigrettes.

Men's costumes were as extravagant as were women's. The elaborately trimmed coats had a skirt effect reaching to the knees and held out by panniers of steel and whalebone. Men wore their hair long, curled, and beribboned, and their hats were trimmed with plumes and fur. They carried muffs, fans, and canes.

It is interesting to note that gloves of kid and netted silk were introduced generally at this time, whereas formerly they had been of leather, badly shaped, and worn only by men.

REIGNS OF LOUIS XV AND LOUIS XVI
1715-1789

HISTORY

- 1715—Louis XV succeeds. Duke of Orleans Regent.
1723—Louis XV assumes government.
1756—Seven Years' War.
1763—Peace of Paris.
1770—Marriage of the Dauphin to Marie Antoinette.
1774—Louis XVI King; Marie Antoinette Queen.
1789—French Revolution. Bastille stormed July 14th.

DRESS

Since Louis XV placed no restriction on the growing extravagance in dress and there resulted a growing tendency toward fanciful monstrosities during the reign of Louis XVI.

From side to side the panniers measured six feet, and in circumference they were at least eight feet. The pompadour was the approved mode of head-dress. It was sometimes two feet high. It was Marie Antoinette, however, who held the most despotic sway over fashion. It is said that she created a new style every week, giving costumes the most fantastic names.

When she played at being milk-maid and shepherdess at the Trianon her whims fortunately

changed and costumes and coiffures assumed a simplicity appropriate to her play. Their charm has been exquisitely portrayed by Watteau. The men's costumes were like those in the time of Louis XV, though not so elaborately trimmed nor so exaggerated in cut. The silhouette of all costumes at the end of this period became narrower from side to side, the bust and bustle being exaggerated.

REVOLUTION

1789-1795

HISTORY

1789—French Revolution; Bastille stormed.

1791—Death of Mirabeau.

1793—Execution of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. Fall and death of Robespierre.

1795—Insurrection suppressed by Napoleon Bonaparte and Barras.

DRESS

Simplicity instead of extravagance became the keynote of fashion in this period. Men wore long trousers of dull colors, great coats, cutaways, and dark hats. Their clothes were untidy and fitted badly. The women wore simple dresses, short waisted, and with a kerchief around the neck, crossed over the bosom and knotted at the waist in back. Caps were worn "a la Charlotte Corday" and "a la Bastille." Small bits of stone from the Bastille were set in gold and worn as necklaces.

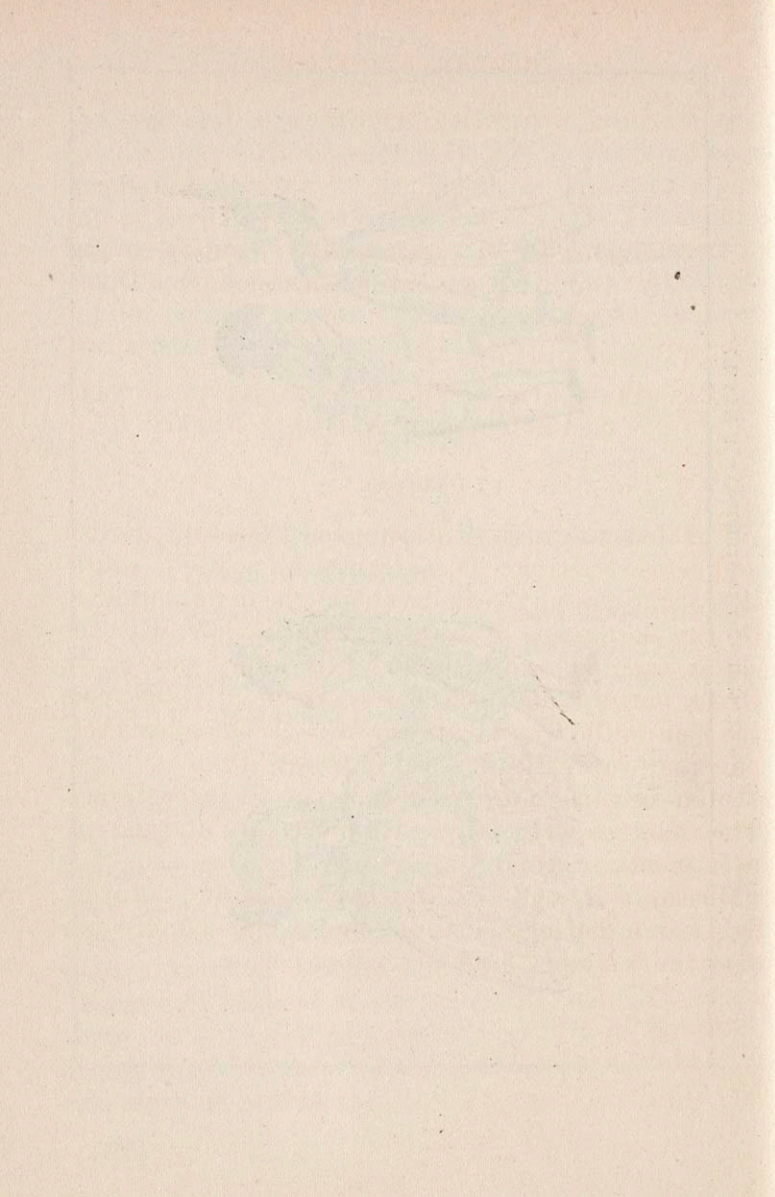


1796



1797

PLATE V.—Costumes of Directoire Period



HISTORY OF COSTUME

DIRECTOIRE

1795—1799

HISTORY

1795—Insurrection suppressed by Napoleon and Barras. Convention succeeded by Directory.

1796—War in Italy.

1798—Bonaparte's expedition to Egypt. French fleet defeated by Nelson at Abukir.

DRESS

Fashion was revived during the Directory. Softer and more transparent materials were used. Imitation of the classic Greek dress was the dominant idea. Gowns were made of diaphanous materials, with the skirts trailing and trimmed with gimp put on in Greek pattern. The skirts were frequently slit from the hem to the waist or to the knee. Women cut their hair and wore wigs dressed in Greek style.

Men became more fastidious in their costumes. Their clothes were fitted with more care and the appointments of their dress were more refined. The "Directoire" coat with its short front and cutaway line was a distinguished one and a marked advance over the costume of the preceding period.

EMPIRE

1804—1814

HISTORY

1804—Bonaparte crowned as Napoleon I, Emperor. Josephine, his wife.

1807—War with Prussians and Russians.

1809—Peace of Vienna.

1810—Napoleon marries Marie Louise.

1811—Birth of Emperor's son; created King of Rome.

1812—Russian campaign. Moscow burned.

1813—Napoleon driven back to the Rhine.

1814—The allies enter Paris. Napoleon abdicates.

DRESS

The court of Napoleon was noted for its bad taste in dress as well as in manners. Greek fashions prevailed and short-waisted Empire styles. Ladies' gowns had long skirts of simple lines, but the waists were too short and too low. Hats and bonnets were ugly, large, and elaborately trimmed. Artificial flowers were used a great deal. In fact, this whole period, with its undue pomp and ceremony, was an artificial one.



1810



1811

HISTORY OF COSTUME

RESTORATION

1814—1848

HISTORY

1814—Louis XVIII accepted as King. House of Bourbon restored.

1815—Bonaparte returns from Elba.

Battle of Waterloo.

Napoleon banished to St. Helena.

1824—Charles X.

1829—Charles X abdicates.

1830—Louis-Philippe made King.

1848—Revolution commences.

Louis-Philippe abdicates.

Provisional Government.

Louis Napoleon Bonaparte elected President.

DRESS

The dress at the beginning of this period was very ugly. The shoulder was long, the sleeve was enormous, the skirt was held out by a huge hoop. The figure was thrown out of all proportion. Bonnets of various shapes and sizes were so worn as to show the chignon, held at the back of the head with a huge comb. The front of the hair was usually parted, and curls were arranged at each side.

SECOND REPUBLIC

1848-1851

HISTORY

1848—Louis Napoleon Bonaparte elected President.

1850—Louis-Philippe dies in England.

1851—Revolution. Louis Napoleon seizes the reins of the Government; dissolves the National Assembly; constitutes a new ministry; election under various controlling influences makes Napoleon President for ten years.

DRESS

The costumes of this period were like those of the preceding one. There were long shoulder lines, small waists, and skirts held out by hoops. Small black lace mantles were popular; also black velvet bands at the throat and at the wrists. Straw bonnets and drawn bonnets were worn for several years beginning with 1850. Drawn bonnets were made of crêpe, tulle, or horsehair, with bands of straw sewed on.

SECOND EMPIRE

1852-1870

HISTORY

1852—The Senate decrees the restoration of the Empire.

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1853—Marriage of the Emperor and Eugenie de Montijo.

1865—Napoleon meets Bismarck; consents to Italo-Prussian alliance against Austria.

1869—Great increase of opposition in Assembly.

1870—Liberal ministry reformed.

War declared against Prussia.

DRESS

The silhouette changed somewhat in this period. Because of the use of crinoline and the hoop, skirts were made fuller around the bottom, the drapery being carried toward the back. Every gown was made with a long-waisted basque and with a voluminous train. In 1859 there was a rage for Zouave and Turkish jackets. In fact, all dress accessories were growing in importance. The fan, parasol, handkerchief, smelling bottle, shoes, and purse were given as much attention as the gown.

THIRD REPUBLIC

1870

In the early part of this last period, the dress was still bouffant, the drapery especially full at the back. In 1873 it had become very complicated and much ornamented. For instance, fifteen or twenty flounces were put on one skirt. A dolman, called "the Montenegrin," was made of silk and literally covered with braid, silk embroidery, and jet ornaments. The hair

was dressed high and frizzed or waved over the forehead. This, however, went out of fashion about 1875, and a very simple coiffure was chosen. The hair was looped on the nape of the neck with a loose ribbon bow. Dressmakers and tailors began to sell ready-made clothes.

1880-1900 AND SUMMARY

From 1880 to 1900 there was a decided development in good taste and originality. With the exception of the bustle and leg-o'-mutton sleeves, costumes had simple, logical lines.

If it had been possible to have in this small booklet a complete series of period costume plates, it would have shown clearly that in

The time of Margaret of Valois, hoops and corsets were most noticeable.

The time of Louis XIII, there was over-decoration.

The 4th, 5th, and 6th Centuries, A. D.—the Gothic period—there was tightening of drapery.

The 10th Century—the de Medici period—there were corsets and the pointed waist-line.

The 16th Century Velasquez paintings, 1599-1660. Mail was worn. Huge equipment for hoops and large slashed sleeves for freedom of movement mark this period; also clumsy home decoration and ornate way of living.

1599-1641, Van Dyke emphasized collars, neck linens, and armor. Example: Goya, 1596-1656.

The time of Louis XIV, there was no structural line. All lines were artificial, and there was much over-decoration.

1795-1799, the Directoire, the long Greek line was revived. Men wore long coats and trousers below the knee.

The time of Josephine during the Empire, there was a return of the Egyptian or Greek bust line.

The early Victorian period, drooping shoulders were emphasized.

In following the evolutions and revolutions of dress, it is evident that the designs in times of peace were characterized by loose flowing robes, whereas close-fitting garments, over which leather or armor might be worn, were adopted in war times. It is obvious that color played an important part through the centuries, from simple, primitive color to our more elaborate color combinations of to-day. The costumes of southern peoples were, and are now, characterized by their masses of harmonious primary colors. Royal pageants and ceremonials of church and state were rich in color, line, and adornment. Nobles, court fools, judges, monks, all classes of people, wore clothes suited to their social status. It seems that in our modern dress all class distinction has been lost.

At the present time Dame Fashion is still full of whimsicalities. There is a decided tendency, however, to limit her vagaries by a study of the history and psychology of the costume and by a growing appreciation of its aesthetic worth as one of the Fine Arts.

Thus, in our present-day problem of the designing of clothes we must consider mass, line, and color; and in order logically to analyze dress, it is necessary to study it in relation to the different types of persons.