



INTRODUCTION.

BUT, WHAT ARE WE TO WEAR?

This is the first exclamation on receipt of an invitation to a Fancy Ball, and it is to assist in answering such questions that this volume has been compiled.

It does not purport to be an authority in the matter of costume, for, as a rule, the historical dresses worn on such occasions are lamentably incorrect. Marie Stuart has been known to appear in powder; Louis XIV. wearing a beard; and Berengaria in distended drapery. No one would probably view the national costumes with more curiosity than the peasantry they are intended to portray, although certain broad characteristics of the several countries are maintained by Fancy Ball-goers.

Several hundred costumes, which a long and varied experience has proved to be the favorite and most effective, are here described, with every incidental novelty introduced of late years. A glance through these pages will enable readers to choose the one which will best suit them, and learn how to carry it out.

Among the Characters adapted to BRUNES are Africa, Arab Lady, Arrah-na-Pogue, Asia, Autumn, Bee, Gipsies of various kinds, the Bride of Abydos, Brigand's Wife, Britannia, Buy-a-Broom, Carmen, Cleopatra, Colleen Bawn, Connaught Peasant, Diana, Druidess, Earth, Egyptian, Erin, Esmeralda, Fenella, Fire, Greek, Harvest, Maid of

Saragossa, Maritana, and Rose of Castille, together with Italian, Spanish, and Oriental dresses.

For FAIR WOMEN, among others, the following are suitable:—Arctic Maiden, Air, Bride of Lammermoor, Aurora, White Lady of Avenel, Canada, Canadian Snow Wreath, Danish Peasant, Day, Dew, Elaine, Fair Maid of Perth, Fairy, Flora, Gabrielle d'Estrées, La Belle Dame sans Merci, Marguerite in Faust, Moonlight, Norwegian costumes, Ophelia, Peace, Polish Peasant, Rainbow, Rowena, Sabrina, Swiss, Schneewittchen, Titania, Twilight, and Water-Nymphs.

The most notable HISTORICAL DRESSES described are Queen Anne, Anne Boleyn, Catherine of Arragon, Catherine Howard, Catherine Parr, Catherine de Medici, Charles I. and his Family, Madame Elizabeth; Elizabeth, Queen of England; Elizabeth of York, the Georgian Period, the James II. Period, Princess de Lamballe, the Reigns of Louis XIII., XIV., XV., XVI., Marguerite de Valois, Marie Antoinette, Marie Stuart, the Queen's Maries, Tudor, Philippa of Hainault, and the costumes of successive centuries.

For ELDERLY LADIES the following costumes are to be recommended:—Mrs. Balchristie, Griselda Oldbuck, the Dowager of Brionne, My Grandmother, a Lady of the Olden Time, Night, Puritan, some Vandyke dresses, Quakeress, Mrs. Primrose, wife of the Vicar of Wakefield, Peacock, the Duchess of Orleans, a Maltese Faldette, Mother Hubbard, Mother Shipton, a Sorceress, a Gallician Matron, and some Gainsborough and Sir Joshua Reynolds's dresses.

GENTLEMEN'S FANCY COSTUMES are not included in this volume.*

A Husband and Wife might select Jack and Gill, Cock and Hen, any Kings and Queens, a Wizard and Witch, Night and Morning, or Night and Day.

Fancy Dresses are never more piquante and charming than when worn by children; the several characters in the Nursery Rhymes are admirably adapted for them, and I have given a special selection of dresses for boys in the Appendix, children's fancy balls being on the increase.

For Calico Balls, which of late are somewhat out of favour, among

* They are published in a separate work, entitled "Gentlemen's Fancy Dress: How to Choose It."

other characters I suggest the following:—Fille de Madame Angot, Bo-peep, Mothers Hubbard, Bunch, Shipton, &c., all the several Fish-girls, the dress carried out in striped and plain cottons instead of woollen stuffs; Cabaretière, Five-o'clock-tea, Flower-girls, Flowers, Normandy, and most of the other Peasant Dresses; Polly-put-the-Kettle-on, My pretty Maid, Shepherdesses, Poudré and Watteau costumes, Alphabet, Miss Angel, Scott's and Shakespeare's heroines, Bertrade, Bonbonnière, Queen of the Butterflies, Buy-a-Broom, Charity Girl, Chess, La Chocolatière Cinderella, Columbine, Coming-through-the-Rye, Dresden China, Dominoes, Friquette, Germaine, Harvest, Incroyable, Lady-Help, Magpie, Olivia and Sophia Primrose, Rainbow, and One of the Rising Generation. But it must be borne in mind that the word "calico" is of elastic meaning on such occasions, including cotton-backed satin and cotton velvet. Tinsel trimmings replace gold; ribbon is allowed; net takes the place of tulle; and very few people dream of adopting cotton gloves or mittens.

To be properly *chaussé* and *ganté* are difficulties at fancy balls. With short dresses the prettiest and most fashionable shoes are worn, either black with colored heels and bows, or colored and embroidered shoes to match the dress, the stockings also worked or of plain colors or striped. With the Vivandière dress Wellington boots are best.

To avoid glaring inconsistencies, it is well to remember that powder was introduced into England in James I.'s reign, though not very generally worn. It attained the height of its glory in the Georgian period, and in 1795 fell a victim to the tax raised by Pitt on hair-powder; those that wore it subsequently were called guinea-pigs, on account of the guinea tax. Periwigs were first mentioned in 1529. High-heeled shoes were not heard of till Elizabeth's reign.

It is uncomfortable to dance without gloves, so consistency yields to convenience. For most Peasant dresses mittens are best; but when gloves are worn they should be as little conspicuous as possible. For the Poudré costumes, long mittens and long embroidered gloves are ruffled on the arm. Gloves were never heard of till the 10th and 11th centuries, and not much worn till the 14th; still, what can pretty Berengaria do if she wishes to dance and does not care to appear unglowed?

With regard to **Hair-dressing**. For Classic costumes the hair is generally gathered together in a knot at the nape of the neck, and bound with a fillet, a few curls sometimes escaping in the rear when the knot is carried higher up at the back of the head. For Modern Greek costumes, loose curls fall over the shoulders, or the hair hangs in two long plaits. For Italian, the two plaits are tied with colored ribbon, and often entwined with coins or beads, or the plaits are twisted up into a coil, thrust through with pins. For an Egyptian costume, the hair is flat in front, with ringlets at the back. The Turkish women plait their hair in innumerable tresses, entwining them with coins and jewels; and round flat curls appear on the side of the forehead. At fancy balls often only two long plaits are worn, but it would be more correct to add to the number. For Scotch dresses the hair is worn flat in front, and curled at the back; for an Irish girl there is a coil at the nape of the neck. With regard to the German Peasantry; about Augsburg they wear the hair flat to the face, and a loose chignon at the back. At Coblenz and Baden, it is plaited and tied with ribbons; and near Dresden and elsewhere, where the peasantry sell their hair, a close-fitting cap hides all deficiencies. In Norway, the women wear it plaited and pinned close to the head, or allow the plaits to hang down. The Swedes turn it over a cushion, and let it fall in curls. The Poles dress it in two long plaits, the Russians braid it round the head. Marguerite, in Faust, wears two pendent plaits tied with ribbon. A Vivandière has hers rolled in a coil, or in plaits; Britannia, floating on the shoulders, like Undine, Winter, Snow, Fairies, &c., but in their case it should be powdered with frosting, applied by shaking the powder well over, after damping with thin white starch. A Normandy Peasant should have the hair flat on the forehead, and in broad looped-up plaits at the back. A Puritan has a close coiffure and a coil is best beneath the cap. For Ophelia, it should float on the shoulders entwined with flowers. The hair is worn hanging down the back for Berengaria, Gipsy, Druidess, Elaine, Fairy, Fenella, Peace, République Française, &c.

With regard to **Historical Characters**, up to Queen Elizabeth's time the hair was parted in the middle, and either allowed to float on the shoulders or was bound up under a coif; Elizabeth introduced frizzing and padding. For Marie Stuart it should be turned over side-rolls, so as to fill the vacuum beneath the velvet head-dress. During the time of the Stuarts a crop of curls was worn over the forehead, and long ringlets

at the back. As people desire to look their best at fancy balls, it is advisable to adapt the style required as much as possible to the usual method of dressing the front hair, leaving the more marked change for the back.

For **Poudre Costumes**, it is wisest, if possible, not to have recourse to wigs, they are heavy and unbecoming. It is far better to powder the hair, using violet powder, and a little brillantine before applying it; this entails, however, a great deal of trouble in subsequently removing the powder. Some hairdressers cover the head with a thick soap lather as a preliminary. The powder is applied thus: A puff well filled is held above the head, jerking the elbow with the other hand. The process should be repeated again and again, and it is incredible the amount that ought to be used to produce a satisfactory result. An easy mode of dressing is to part it across the head from ear to ear, turning the front over a high cushion, making the back into a long loose chignon, with a few *mardeaux* or rolled curls behind the cushion. Sometimes the roll in front is replaced by a series of *mardeaux* placed diagonally. Sometimes the centre-piece only is rolled over the cushion, with *mardeaux* at the sides, and the back has four *mardeaux* on either side, put diagonally, with others behind the ear, or a bunch of loose curls fall at the back. All this may be made easier by having false *mardeaux* and curls, which have a far better effect than a wig. It is, however, much the fashion to powder the hair as it is worn now, viz., with curls in front and a coil or twist at the back, a style which accords well with the dress worn when powder was in fashion.

The giving of Fancy Balls requires more pre-arrangement than an ordinary entertainment. The men-servants are often put into the costumes of family retainers of old days, the women dressed as Waiting-maids of the 18th century; the Band also dons fancy attire.

The Decorations should be arranged with some regard to the many vivid colours worn by the company. Chinese lanterns hung in passages and balconies have a good effect, and the flowers should not be of too brilliant a hue; green foliage is the best background.

Occasionally the hostess elects that her guests shall appear in costumes of a particular period, and Poudré Balls find many patrons. At these sometimes the lady guests only wear powder with ordinary evening dress, the gentlemen making no change in their usual attire, save perhaps that white waistcoats and button-holes are enjoined.

A marked feature at most Fancy Balls is a specially arranged Quadrille. (*See Quadrille.*)

Country dances are being resuscitated for costume balls; the Maltese country dance, the May Pole dance, the Swedish dance, Sir Roger de Coverley, the Tempête, Morris dance, ribbon dance, and others. The most effective pre-arranged dance, is a well-performed Minuet or the stately Pavane. The See-saw Waltz, the Staffordshire Jig, Le Carillon de Dunkerque, Ribbon Dance, Mazurka, a Highland Schottische, a Norwegian dance, a Polonaise in Watteau Costume, or the Cachuca in Spanish dresses are attractive. But nothing is so popular or so fashionable as the Cotillon*. At juvenile fancy balls dancing is not, as a rule, the sole amusement. Conjurors, Ventriloquists, Christy Minstrels, a Punch and Judy Show, and a magic-lantern, please the little ones, but possibly no thing so much as a Horn of Plenty, out of which a liberal number of presents are distributed, or the old familiar Christmas Tree, a Gipsy Cave, or a Fairy Pool, where the children fish for presents; and the Brandy-ball Man (one of the guests with a tray of sweets), who distributes goodies to the children.

Fancy Balls were brought over to this country by a German lady, Mrs. Teresa Cornelys, at the end of the last century, when they were held at Carlisle House, Soho. Lady Waldegrave, Lady Pembroke, and the Duchess of Hamilton were among the beauties. But then, as now, the fashions of the day asserted their sway in the costumes of old times. Fashionable materials are always used, however inappropriate. When crinoline was the mode, even the peasants' dresses were slightly distended; during the reign of the jersey, elastic silk served for the bodices of Gipsies, Folly, and many others; and materials tinted with aniline dyes are used for historical raiment of very early periods. A march round which sometimes takes the form of a Polonaise shows off the dresses to advantage.

There is much in a name,—A Coquette, a Lady of the Past Century, Petite Sole à la Normandie, the Bounding Ball of Babylon, His Picture in Chalk, a Duchess of the Next Century, &c., have attracted attention to very mediocre costumes ere this.

Any popular play or opera will be pretty sure to originate the most fashionable costumes of each season, or possibly some pretty pictures

* Full particulars of the several figures are given in a small volume, the "Cotillon by Arden Holt," published at Windsor House, Breems Buildings, Chancery Lane, E.C.

Mr. Walter Crane's and Miss Greenaway's charming sketches suggest many of the quaintest dresses at children's fancy balls; and costumes of the early part of this century and the latter part of the last, as also the styles of the sixteenth century,—flowing skirts, low square bodices, and puffed sleeves richly embroidered.

It behoves those who really desire to look well to study what is individually becoming to themselves, and then to bring to bear some little care in the carrying out of the dresses they select, if they wish their costumes to be really a success. There are few occasions when a woman has a better opportunity of showing her charms to advantage than at a Fancy Ball.

ARDERN HOLT.



