

Costume - As To Health.

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It is said that the subject of dress is the one nearest woman's heart, that she thinks only of dress; but is she not letting others think for her? Is it not the thoughts of others by which she is guided in her dress? For these others then, must we lay the blame of leading her astray in her choice of garments.

The human body is the only one that is not provided with an outer covering to protect it; but to man God has given materials with reason and judgment as to how he should cloth himself. Though in many instances the gift has not been used to advantage.

What is the object of clothing? Why do we dress? These questions are asked, and we answer, we dress to cover the body and to retain the animal heat. This is what clothing should do, and in connection with this, we add what clothing should not do; it should not deform nor contradict the natural outlines of

the body; it should not impede the movements. Every muscle should be free to move as if unclothed."

To have perfect health one must have perfect circulation, and this depends upon the clothing. The first attempt at clothing was loose and simple; but woman, bowing to fashion, discarded her loose robe, and encased herself in the tight fitting dress of the day. But persistent efforts are being made to bring back the dress of old, and woman is learning that to be healthful and of use in this world she must dress properly. Mrs. Lewis says - "Healthy dress allows the blood to circulate freely through every part of the body and keeps every part nearly at the same temperature; fashionable style does not secure free circulation, hence cold hands and feet and general loss of vitality."

Every part of the body has its proper clothing and every part has been in some way neglected.

The foot is as much admired and excites as much wonder as any part of the body, and yet it is being persistently deformed. The normal foot approaches the ellipse. The artist's model is not taken from the foot of a society woman, but from the baby's foot or the foot of a peasant who has never worn a shoe. Tight shoes weaken the muscles, high heels throw the body forward and curvature of the spine results from the effort of the body to maintain an artificial equilibrium. It is not always the fault of the people that the shoes are such miserable shapes, but the fault of the shoemaker. Shoes made for the individual are the best. For these, measurements of the foot should be taken. Place the foot flat on the floor and draw an outline of the bottom of the foot, then with a tape line take a few measurements of the upper part of the foot and from these have a shoe made that fits the foot. The feet require thick soles

and warm covering for they are on the floor which is often cold and damp. Rubbers should not be worn excepting in muddy weather. Care must be taken in the selection of stockings. Ill fitting stockings with rough seams will hurt the foot as much as tight shoes. Silk and wool stockings are the best. They keep their color better, and there is not the danger of poisoning that comes from the cotton ones that fade so easily. As to colors, gray, black, brown and dark blue in wool; white brown, blue, and sometimes black in cotton will keep their color. With good stockings, thick soled shoes and heavy garters the feet may be well protected in the coldest weather.

Tight gloves look as bad as tight shoes though they may not be so hurtful. The gloves should be loose, and come up well on the wrist.

One of the greatest crimes in the so called "fashionable dress" is the tight clothing decreasing the size of the

waist. At first, the clothing is not so tight, but stiff, but the habit grows. The contents of the body are pressed upward and downward from the middle, displacing the organs; the cloths are worn tighter and tighter until the muscles lose their power to work. "That this dreadful practice has done more within the last century than war, pestilence, and famine toward the physical deterioration of civilized man, I verily believe. More than this I believe it is doing more injury to our race today than intemperance in all its horrid forms." (Dr. Ellis).

Heavy skirts hanging on the hips and dragging them down are as injurious in their way as the tight clothing. Many suggestions have been made as to clothing to take the place of these skirts, among these are the bloomers, but they have met with but little favor except for wheel and horse back riding. A skirt that is light and short, but not enough so as to

attract unsuitable attention, may be as comfortable and healthy as bloomers. The skirt should not be put on a tight, narrow band but on a wide loose bodice or suspended from the shoulders.

For an underskirt, Mrs. Jenness Miller suggests the divided skirt, it has the appearance of a skirt but each leg is clothed separately so that the skirt does not need to be held up to keep it from being swept along the street. Consequently, there is less exposure to cold and dampness arising from this cause. It is not so heavy and clumsy as the petticoat, and the outer draperies fall more gracefully over it.

For the outer garment Mrs. Miller has dress forms and gown forms which may be handsomely draped.

As to the materials of which the clothing should be made we may find the kind suitable for each part.

Silk is a bad conductor of heat, linen is a more rapid conductor than cotton which in turn is more rapid than wool.

Wool is a bad conductor of heat and a good absorber of water, therefore is the best material for both hot and cold weather. A captain of a vessel has found flannel to be very healthful for underclothing. "After being with his crew among the ice bergs for two years, on his return to England he was ordered to sail immediately for the West Indies. He made investigations each day to see that his men each still wore the flannel, and notwithstanding the sudden change of climate, he returned to England with his one hundred and fifty men, without a single loss and no one sick on his arrival."

Perhaps the fur is the warmest of materials but it is seldom used except for ornamentation. But fur lined garments in extreme cold weather are both healthy & comfortable.

Vulcanized india rubber is used for mackintosh or waterproof cloth, and rubber shoes. The mackintosh retains the moisture and allows no wind to pass through.

The question of proper dress should be taken into every school, and there the

children should be taught the kind of
 dress which would have regard for
 "God's design of human form and
 would give physical comfort and
 mental serenity." The teacher must be
 careful in her dress, for the impressions
 made in the school room are often the
 lasting ones. A teacher who is the least
 slovenly in her dress or who does not
 respect the laws of health, should be put
 out of the school room, for she is not the
 one to teach the young minds how to keep
 the body beautiful by the proper exercise,
 diet and care. After we find the proper
 teacher, but she is met by difficulties
 arising from previous training. A lady
 instructor told me of an experience
 she had with a class of society young
 ladies. When they came to her notice she
 was amazed by their expressionless faces;
 they could not frown, their smiles were
 idiotic, their faces seemed to be entirely
 without any lines, - and yet they were
 welcomed by society. She understood
 the cause of this, but was puzzled as
 to how she should begin work on them,

knowing that they would be easily
 effected. She talked to them, and by
 degrees accomplished her purpose.
 At first she persuaded them to loosen
 their clothes when they came to class,
 then to remove the corset during class
 hours. The change was soon apparent,
 and many of them discarded tight
 clothing altogether.

Here in the school room is the best
 place to introduce reform in dress. All
 schools should have uniforms. When there
 would be no difference in dress to make
 a distinction of classes; but the dress
 adopted must be one that will insure
 health and comfort. If this plan were
 adopted, we would not find so many
 weakly ones in our schools and so
 many who are broken down in health
 when they leave.

The styles of dress reform have for the
 most part been so hideous that they have
 met with very little success. We want a
 dress that will be both beautiful and
 becoming, falling as a drapery over the
 body, but not disguising the form.

The costumes of the ancient Greeks were the most beautiful, and they answered the requirements that good dress should.

Of the dress reforms that have been suggested to us those of Mrs. Jenness Miller seem to be the prettiest and the best.

The garments should be made so that their weight would be distributed over the body, the shoulders should bear their part, the arms, the hips, the legs each their portion of the weight, and then one part will not be so tired from the burden it has to carry. For the most part the dress should be made so as to fall from the shoulders in graceful folds to the feet.

Smart women have the false impression that such a dress is not becoming to them, that they will appear much larger in a full dress, while on the other hand they make themselves ridiculous and uncomfortable by wearing clothes that fit so tightly.

The style of the dress should be adapted to the work. Women as well as

men, should have business costumes. Those who write a great deal must avoid binding the arms for they need freedom to perform the movements.

Those who stand or walk should wear a skirt of a comfortable length.

Athletics and all healthful sports need a dress that will allow great freedom of movement.

So far nothing, nothing has been said as to the collar. The neck of the dress when neatly finished with a ruffle, a ribbon or a soft, loose collar is very pretty. High collars tho' more pleasing to some because they will hide an "ugly neck", are very injurious. They arrest the motion at the chin, hence they should never be worn.

The hat should be made to cover the top of the head including the temples and the back of the head. It should not be too heavy but soft and light. It should keep the head warm tho' not so warm as to cause injury to it.

Let the woman wear the healthful

dress, the proper head and shoes, a loose fitting sack or cape, and in her journey thro' the world she is not always in danger of losing her life by the character of her dress.