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Historic Costumes

Their Influence on Modern Fashions

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“OH! yes, I know what it means—only I can’t tell you.”

Lots of people—in stores and out of them—are in this plight as regards terms used every day that indicate a certain form of coat, or skirt, or collar or other detail of dress, or perhaps some general tendency in fashion. Those employed in certain departments in dry goods and department stores can’t afford to be unable to tell when a customer asks what it means when a coat is in *Directoire* style, for example. Or a customer may lose faith in the saleswoman who tells her a dress is “1880” when it isn’t anything of the kind. So here we outline briefly the characteristics of leading historical styles of costume to which fashion designers more or less continually have recourse as inspiration for our modes

Many books on historical costumes—most of them very expensive—have been published. As a rule, these works contain such a wide range of illustrations as to be confusing to the student, though of great value to the designer. This short review, with its accompanying plates, will give any thoughtful reader a clear conception of the principal costume ideas that history affords. Those who wish to pursue the subject further will, in our opinion, get the best results by reading histories and biographies, as well as books of costume. When you actually “know” the leading figures of by-gone days and their environment, you naturally visualize them in the dress they wore, the more so as in every biography and memoir you come every now and then on authentic and illuminating bits of description as to costume, hairdressing and other details.

Historic Costumes

COSTUMES of bygone days are the inspiration of the fashion creators of to-day. Sellers of women's apparel, neckwear, millinery and other articles in which style is a factor have constantly on their lips words derived from the personages or wearables of centuries long passed away.

True, these words are not invariably used in their correct or original sense. "Peplum," for instance, in its twentieth century usage, does not mean the close-fitting garment extending from neck to feet and girdled above the hips, spoken of by Homer and shown on archaic vases. Nor does "gabardine" to-day mean the garment worn by the Jews of the sixteenth century and spoken of by Shylock in Shakespeare's "Merchant of Venice."

Terms Have Definite Import

Nevertheless, the majority of the terms employed are used with a marked degree of accuracy; "Moyen Age," "Renaissance," "Medicis," "Louis XIII," "Directoire," "Watteau," "1830," "1880," etc., have a meaning and application that are definite and practically unchanging.

Sometimes, however, inspiration is directly traceable to some historic period not previously drawn upon. For example, "Moyen Age" was not heard of in connection with fashions until 1908. Sometimes a new name is employed to describe fashions based on the costumes of a certain period. Thus "Velasquez" and "Spanish Infanta" have only recently been employed to designate styles which owe their inspiration to the renowned Spanish painter of the seventeenth century and the dresses of the young and royal lady he portrayed so graphically.

National Dress Influence

Distinction should be made between period influences and those flowing from the national dress of a country or region. Such

dress may be modern or ancient. We have to-day the Egyptian influence, derived from the period of the Pharaohs, and we have styles drawn from the present-day costumes of the peasants of Bulgaria, Roumania and other Balkan States and of the well-to-do Chinese. Moroccan and Arabian costumes have also been a source of inspiration for fashionable dress of the current hour.

The foregoing glance, brief as it is, opens up a broad and long vista. It clearly indicates how vast a space of time and how extensive a territory the close student of costume must take under his observation. Is it not then an impossible task to cover the history of costume even in an extensive article? It is; and we will not here attempt it. What can be done in the space at our command is to touch the high lights of the subject, endeavoring to make clear to ECONOMIST readers what is meant by the costume terms that are nowadays in most general use.

For the sake of brevity, as well as clearness, we shall avoid direct reference to the classic dress of ancient Greece and Rome. These influences were strongly revived in France during her great Revolution and can be treated of in connection with that period. Furthermore, during the centuries that extended from the fall of the Roman Empire to the Renaissance, or revival of letters and art, which began in Italy in the fourteenth century, costumes showed little change and thus can be treated practically as a unit, under the title of Moyen Age, or Middle Ages.

Moyen Age, or Merovingian

Let us, then, take as our starting point the Moyen Age styles. Paris used these as inspiration for a new mode in 1908. The idea originated in a theatrical production at the Comédie Française, entitled "Le Bon Roi Dagobert" ("Good King Dagobert") and that

ruler of the fifth century of our era being one of the Merovingian kings, the styles in question in their application of twelve years ago were at first referred to as "Merovingian."

The principal feature of these Moyen Age styles was the close-fitting bodice, following the natural lines, extending to the hips and terminating in a broad band which further tended to hold the bodice in to the figure. There was also a strong use of embroidery, this being a feature of the costumes of the men as well as the women of the Merovingian period. The use of a girdle, either double and encircling both waist and hips, or at the hips only—in the latter case, tied at the front and with long hanging ends—was also essential to the well-dressed dame of the fifth century.

Ideas Drawn from Men's Costumes

The next period that has made its mark on modern fashions is that of Louis XI in France and of the earlier Tudor monarchs in England.

Here it may be said that throughout the centuries which we shall cover the French and English fashions coincided to such an extent that it is not only possible but proper to treat the styles of the two countries as a whole. Hence, where it is advisable we give both the French and the English names for each period or style.

It should also be noted that from the Tudor period down to the beginning of the eighteenth century the dress of the men was fully as elaborate or even fantastic as that of the women. At times, indeed, the men outdid the women in the richness and costliness of their apparel, as well as in the brilliancy of coloring and in the variety of materials employed.

It is for this reason that so many of the modern ideas in fashions for women are drawn *not from the women's costume, but from that of the men.*

The Tudor or Louis XI Period

THE period embracing the reigns of Henry VII, in England, and of Louis XI (Louis Onze), in France, and later those of Henry VIII, in England, and of Francis I (François Premier), in France,

shows the adoption of two distinct types of costumes for men.

The first of these types was a long and loose gown, with wide sleeves, belted at the waist, and having a broad collar folding back over the shoulders and displaying an undertunic or vest, loose at the throat. The other costumes consisted of a short tunic or vest, tightly fitting, worn under an open doublet with loose sleeves.

Men's Dress Remarkably Elaborate

During the later Tudor period—that is, in the time of Henry VIII, in England, and of Francis I in France—men's dress reached a remarkable degree of elaboration. The general effort was toward the creation of an extremely broad and capacious effect. The trunk hose, as the garments were called which afterward developed into breeches and later into trousers, were gathered at the mid-thigh and greatly puffed out. All garments for men were heavily padded, and were of such stiff and heavy material that only men accustomed, as were those of the sixteenth century, to the habitual use of armor could support such heating and uncomfortable costumes.

A Monarch's Rich Attire

Here is the description of the dress of Henry VIII in the year 1540—and doubtless his contemporary, King Francis I of France, was no less richly attired, for it will be remembered that the two monarchs united in holding a tournament at which the costumes and other appurtenances were so costly that the occasion has ever since been known as the Field of the Cloth of Gold.

A garment of cloth of silver damask ribbed with cloth of gold as thick as might be. The garment was large and pleated, very thick, of such shape and make as was marvellous to behold.

Women's Costume Less Extravagant

The costumes of the court ladies of the Tudor or Louis XI and Francis I periods were rich, but not extravagant. The hair was worn in an easy, natural style, something after the manner of the women of 1830. The sleeves were often puffed and slashed at the shoulder and elbow, and terminated with a cuff or frill of linen.

Lace did not come into general use until some years later. Thus, the ladies of Henry VIII's court, as painted by Holbein, wore plain linen headdresses and untrimmed frills at the neck and wrists.

Skirts Richly Trimmed

The women's skirts were full, the idea of breadth and capaciousness which characterized the upper portion of the men's costumes being carried out in the lower portion of the women's garments. The gowns were richly trimmed, often with gold embroidery or with other ornamentation.

Velvet was freely worn by both sexes, and furs were commonly employed for trimming. The use of furs was liberal on the part of the nobility of both sexes until the eighteenth century, due largely to the fact that the houses were very poorly heated. In fact, as late as the reign of Charles II in England and of Louis XIV in France even the higher classes wore their headcovering and furred mantles at meals during the winter.

Throughout the Tudor period, as also in the early years of the seventeenth century, both in the men's and women's clothes elaborate use was made of slashings in the sleeves and elsewhere, through which the undergarment was permitted to show. The slashed effect was also produced by the combination of material of different colors.

The Renaissance

The period just referred to coincides pretty closely with the Renaissance, more especially its development in Italy. But in that country the women's dress was suited to a milder climate, the gowns being loose and flowing, but of soft, clinging material, with wide sleeves, round or square neck, and loosely girdled at a rather low waistline.

These are the principal forms in which the Italian Renaissance inspiration is apparent in modern designing.

Some Well-Known Styles

The reign of Elizabeth of England and those of Charles IX, Henry III and Henry IV (Henri Quatre) of France, which occurred

while the "Virgin Queen" directed England's destinies, are associated with many fantastic ideas in dress, as well as with a number of forms which have been largely utilized by modern fashion creators.

The unfortunate Mary, Queen of Scots, had been educated in France, had married Francis II of France, who died a year after the union, and had thus become one of the historical personages of the great fashion creating country. From her we have the Marie Stuart headdress and the Marie Stuart collar. During this and a subsequent period Catherine de Medicis, widow of King Henry II, was the real ruler of France, and from this passionate and artful queen of Italian birth we have the collar which is known as the Medicis.

Hoopskirt and Pointed Bodice

During the same period there was introduced the hoopskirt, which was the forerunner of the crinoline, together with the deep, pointed corsage. The large, convoluted and stiffly starched ruff, which was worn in the latter part of the sixteenth and the early part of the seventeenth centuries by men and women alike, has fortunately not been handed down to their successors.

Voluminous Effect the Rule

During this period the dress of both men and women was elaborately trimmed, both slashings and embroidery being freely employed. As above suggested, the women's skirts were puffed out to an enormous extent, a wheel-like "farthingale" being worn in many cases around the waist and presenting almost the appearance of a circular table. Here we have the origin of the extended hip effect introduced by Paris designers for the fall season of 1918. The modern form, however, was flattened at front and back.

The voluminous skirts worn by the women were imitated by the men through the use of enormous trunk-hose or "petticoat breeches," which had almost the appearance of a short crinolined skirt. These trunk-hose were puffed and swelled out to an enormous size, descending to a little above the knee.



Nobleman of the
13th Century



Court Dress
Latter Part of 13th Century



Young Woman's Dress
14th Century



Young Gentleman
of the 14th Century



Court Dress
of 1390



Court Dress
Early 15th Century

The Pointed Bodice

THE long-waisted, pointed bodice effect which was introduced during this period was worn alike by men and women, and its use was continued by both sexes up to the early part of the reigns of Louis XIII in France and Charles I in England.

This style has since been frequently revived, and in more or less modified form appears in the fashions of the present moment.

The Henry IV and Early Stuart Period

In the early part of the sixteenth century—that is to say, during the reign of James I in England and the latter part of that of Henry IV in France—women's dress became considerably more lavish, as well as less modest and more seductive, than in the reign of Elizabeth, the "Virgin Queen." The neck was frequently low, and when the starched ruff was retained the front of the corsage was cut out so as to expose the bosom.

At this time the sleeve, which in Elizabeth's time had been rather tight around the arm and puffed out at the shoulder, was widened out into the "gigot" or leg-of-mutton shape. The hair, which had formerly been partly hidden under a coif or headdress like that which has become associated with Mary Stuart, was worn loose and flowing.

Men's Dress of Early Stuart Period

At this time men wore tight-fitting jackets, known as doublets, with wide, full sleeves drawn in at the wrists. Gradually the trunk hose developed into loose breeches, somewhat in the style of the modern knickerbocker. These were drawn in at the knee and tied with ribbon rosettes. Ribbons also were worn on the shoes.

Here is the picture of a rich goldsmith who did business with King James I and his court, as given by Sir Walter Scott:

The stranger's dress was, though grave, rather richer than usual. His paned hose [the word "hose" is not here applied to stockings, but to the garments, already referred to, which were the forerunners of breeches. "Paned" is an obsolete word meaning checked or ornamented with square pieces of cloth] were of black velvet, lined with purple silk, which garniture appeared at the

slashes. His doublet was of purple cloth, and his short cloak of black velvet, to correspond with his hose; and both were adorned with a great number of small silver buttons richly wrought in filigree. A triple chain of gold hung around his neck; and, in place of a sword or dagger, he wore at his belt an ordinary knife for the purposes of the table, with a small silver case, which appeared to contain writing materials. He might have seemed some secretary or clerk engaged in the service of the public, only that his low, flat, and unadorned cap, and his well-blackened, shining shoes, indicated that he belonged to the city.

Cavalier and Mousquetaire

The reigns of Louis XIII of France (Louis Treize) and of Charles I of England, are associated with those picturesque and romantic characters, the cavaliers in England and the mousquetaires in France.

In each case the broad hat of velvet or felt, ornamented with a huge ostrich plume, shaded a face that except for a small moustache and pointed beard (originated by Louis XIII), was cleanly shaven, and was framed in a mass of long curly hair, the tresses which fell over the front of the shoulder being known as "lovelocks." The stiffly starched ruff of lace or linen had given place to a "falling ruff" of lace or embroidery, which turned over a doublet tightly fitting and rather pointed in front.

The apparent width of the shoulder was increased by a sort of curved epaulet conforming to the armhole and extending outward and downward. A richly ornamented belt supported the rapier. The breeches were loose and tied at the knee with ribbons, and the hose showed over boots which extended above the calf and which were often made with absurdly wide tops. Frequently these tops were allowed to fall over half way down to the foot, exposing a lining of lace or other material.

Long gauntlets, from which are derived the "mousquetaire" glove, and a short cloak or mantle, elaborately trimmed with lace or buttons and having a silk lining, completed this picturesque costume.

Women of the XIII Period

The women of the Louis XIII or Stuart period have been immortalized by many



Court Dress of Tudor
or Louis XI Period



Citizen of Early Tudor
or Louis XI Period



Noble of the Tudor
or Louis XI Period



Citizen's Dress
of 1545



Court Dress 1540
Tudor or Francis I



Court Dress 1550.
Tudor or
Francis I

painters, in England, notably by Sir Peter Lely. Such portraits show that the hair was worn in rather natural style, curling in ringlets around the face and ornamented with a small headdress of jeweled gold and ribbon.

The bodice was low and around the décolletage was a fall of lace or embroidery closely resembling that affected by the men. The sleeves were elbow-length, loose and richly ornamented with lace and ribbon. The corsage was sometimes long and pointed and sometimes rather short.

The voluminous skirts were gathered at the waist and were trimmed around the foot with a broad band of embroidery. Often they were raised to show an under-petticoat of rich material. In other cases the costume consisted of a robe, opening in polonaise form and showing an under-petticoat of different fabric and color. In it is seen the source of inspiration for the overskirts and tunics and the sheer, embroidered underskirt which are so prominent in dresses for the coming summer.

The Louis XIV Styles

The reign of Louis XIV (Louis Quatorze) saw the introduction, about the year 1685, of enormous wigs of curled hair, known as perukes or periwigs, which were worn by men of the nobility and of the well-to-do classes, and, at times, by women. These wigs were an object of especial care on the part of their wearers, and it was the rule for the modish gentlemen of the period when making a call or attending a function, to linger in the hall and comb out their wigs, just as a man of the present day will add a few finishing touches to his cravat before entering the presence of ladies. The wig was a sufficient protection from the elements, but a hat was carried and sometimes worn, this being a large, round-shaped "castor," trimmed with feathers.

The doublet had by this time lengthened into a coat, which was elaborately laced with gold, silver or other material, and which, from neck to waist, was closed with buttons, the wide skirts being left open. The coat was made without collar or lapels and was opened at the neck to show the waist-

coat. A long necktie of lace, known after 1692 as a "Steenkirk," from the battle in Belgium fought in that year, was carelessly knotted around the throat.

Cuff of Enormous Size

The sleeves of the coat were rather loose and were often turned up so as to be quite short, showing the ruffled shirt-sleeve of fine cambric. In some cases the sleeves were of the natural length, with cuffs of enormous size turned back almost as far as the elbow. These cuffs, like the front and shoulders of the coat, were richly laced. The breeches were of moderate width and were tied at the knee with ribbon. The high boots had by this time given place to a low shoe, ornamented either with a rosette of ribbon or with a buckle of gold or silver.

Women's Coiffures Were Monstrous

THE close connection between men's styles and those of women was apparent at this period in the greater elaboration of women's hairdressing. The coiffure was piled high on the head and was ornamented with ribbons and other devices. Then, and for many years thereafter, the art of the hairdresser was a most important adjunct to feminine attire, although the creations of this character did not reach the zenith of absurdity until the latter part of the eighteenth century.

Meanwhile the corsage continued to be décolleté. The bodice was usually pointed. The sleeves were often less than elbow length or were continued to a little below the elbow with loose folds of lace. The upper part of the bodice was also trimmed with loose folds of lace. Then, as in these days of still shorter sleeves, the long glove was fashionable.

The skirts, full and rather simple, were short in front, the fullness being given at the sides and back by means of an overskirt open at the front. This style is seen in afternoon and evening gowns at the present time.

Women Imitated Men

"Studied negligence," or "elegant déshabille," briefly describes the general styles

Historic Costumes



Elizabethan
or Marie Stuart period.
1558-1600



Elizabethan
or Henry III:
1570



Elizabethan
or Henry III period
showing Médicis collar



Henry IV
or early
Stuart period



Henry IV
or early Stuart:
1600-1615



Young Gentleman
Louis XIII period
1625-1640

of the women's dress of the period. On some occasions, however, their attire closely resembled that of the men. Samuel Pepys, Secretary to the Admiralty, during the reign of Charles II, whose diary affords such a mine of information as to the latter part of the sixteenth century, says:

Walking in the gallery at Whitehall [in 1664] I found the ladies of honor in their riding garbs, with coats and doublets with deep skirts just for all the world like my own, and their doublets buttoned up the breast, with periwigs and with hats, so that only for the long petticoat dragging under their men's coats nobody would take them for women in any point whatever.

Late Louis XIV Styles

As the reign of Louis XIV drew to a close men's dress became somewhat more simple in shape, although still elaborate in trimming. The coats began to be worn open in front, thus getting away altogether from the doublet shape of the Louis XIII period, and the waistcoat became an important article of attire. It extended almost to the knees and was richly laced. Buttons and embroidered buttonholes ran along the edges from top to bottom, although only those in the mid-part of the garment were of practical purpose, the upper part being left open so as to show the shirt, and the lower portion being also unbuttoned so as to afford freedom to the limbs.

The loosely knotted cravat of lace or fine mull continued to be worn.

The Louis XV Period

In the reign of Louis XV (Louis Quinze) the loose, flowing peruke worn by the men—which in its later stages had become greatly exaggerated, oftentimes rising in an enormous peak above the forehead—gave place to a smaller, powdered wig, rolling back from the forehead and drawn into a loose "queue" behind, where it was tied with a broad bow of ribbon. (To this source may be attributed a mode of hairdressing recently in favor.) Thus was ushered in the age of "powder and patches," the white locks and the court-plaster disks which set off the complexion being affected both by men and by women.

The male attire of the period approached that which has been rendered familiar to most of us through portraits and statues connected with the Revolutionary period of American history. The coats were cut away in front so as to form "tails" or skirts, and were ornamented with flapped pockets on the hips. Embroidery still prevailed, most of it appearing, however, upon the collar, skirts and pocket-flaps.

A light shoe, ornamented with a buckle—of the style now known as Colonial—was the rule for walking, high boots being used when riding, and gaiters being buttoned on the foot and leg in bad weather. The waistcoat, now revived as an accessory to women's suits, continued to be an elaborate feature of the period. Lace ruffles were worn at the wrists and a lace cravat at the neck.

The hat usually worn at this period was the tricorne, richly adorned with lace of gold, silver or other material—a shape which has since played so important a part in the millinery field.

The Pompadour Tendencies

It was during the reign of Louis XV that Madame de Pompadour was "the power behind the throne," and impressed her ideas upon fashion, as well as upon politics. She introduced a somewhat simple form of coiffure, the hair being combed back from the forehead and ornamented with a few flowers.

A portrait of "the Pompadour" by Boucher shows her hair in this style. A ribbon, knotted into a bow in front, is worn around the neck. The bodice is décolleté and is trimmed around the edges with small floral designs, such as are now generally known as "Pompadour" patterns. A cascade of ribbons falls down the front of the corsage, the sleeves of which are of elbow length, terminating in ruffles of lace.

The Watteau Influence

ONE of the tendencies of this period has left its mark upon the fashion world in the word "Watteau." "Watteau was a successful painter who loved to lose himself in an ideal world—to put on canvas his dreams of an idyllic existence amid country scenes, where

Historic Costumes



Mousquetaire
or Cavalier costume
1620-1640



Costume of Manservant
reign of Louis XIII



Louis XIII.
about 1640



Louis XIV Period
about 1670



Louis XIV Period:
about 1700



Later Louis XIV Period
1700-1715

Nature was ever mild and where shepherds and shepherdesses closely resembling courtiers and dames of high degree lolled on verdant banks, danced to the music of the flute, or dined *al fresco* at ormolu tables spread with the finest napery, china and Bohemian glass. His pictures became the rage and set a fashion whose influence by no means ceased with the death of the artist, in 1721.

Due to the vogue created by Watteau and his pleasing, but artificial scenes, the panier or looped-up skirt effect came greatly in favor. To further simulate the shepherdess style the bodice was often made over a sort of under-vest and was laced up the front in corset style. Frequently the skirt was ornamented with a flounce at the foot, and in some cases another flounce was placed at about the height of the knee.

In Earlier Days of Marie Antoinette

When Louis XV's unfortunate grandson, then heir to the throne which he later ascended as Louis XVI, was united in marriage to his beautiful consort, Marie Antoinette of Austria, that princess introduced into the French court a number of conceits which had more or less influence upon the modes of the time and on those of a later day.

It was the whim of the young queen to play at rusticity; to reproduce as far as possible in real form the artificial pastoral life which had been lauded by the poets of modern France and of ancient Rome and, as we have seen, had been put on canvas by Watteau and other French painters. In the parks and gardens of Versailles the members of the court circle, transformed into graceful shepherds and charming shepherdesses, disported themselves throughout the summer days, drinking milk at what would now be called a "model dairy," lunching on curds and whey and dancing the minuet, *passepied* and *gavotte* on the green sward.

Thus was created a strong tendency towards "elegant simplicity." The short skirts of soft silk or cotton material printed in floral effects and rendered elaborate by means of paniers, which had enjoyed so strong a favor, remained in vogue and long flourished both

in France and in England, being immortalized in the latter country by Charles Dickens in his *Dolly Varden*, the heroine of "Barnaby Rudge," and whose name has been given to this same type of dress.

Costume for Grand Functions

The dress worn at grand functions, however, partook of the simplicity idea only in slight degree. The hoopskirt was revived to such an extent that the skirts were fully as large and unwieldy as those of the Medicis, Henri IV or Elizabethan period, and fully equal to their successors of the 1860's under the crinoline régime of the Second Empire of Napoleon III and Eugénie.

The polonaise effect was a favorite in these earlier days of Marie Antoinette and Louis XVI (Louis Seize), the back portion of the dress consisting of a plain colored material, while the front bore a woven design, or was of plain material elaborately embroidered. Usually the edges of the polonaise were trimmed with ruchings of ribbons. The corsage was *décolleté* and extended into a point in front, ribbons being freely used for its decoration. The elbow-length sleeves were of fine mull or lace.

Exaggeration in Hairdressing

The coiffure became extremely elaborate, and at this period, both in France and England, owing to the difficulty of securing the services of a hairdresser at the desired hour, it frequently became necessary for ladies invited to attend a grand function to have their hair dressed twenty-four hours before the time. In such case the unhappy votary of the mode was compelled to spend the night in a chair, or to lie with her neck supported by a block of wood, so as to avoid any interference with the mountainous structure of hair, pads and ornaments.

A cartoon published in the year 1788 caricatures the *grande dame* of the period in the hands of her hairdresser. On the walls are architectural plans, suggestive of the immensity of the hairdressing designs of the day. The coiffeur, kneeling on the bench, is completely overshadowed by the elaborate



Louis XV



Gentleman of the
early Louis XV period



Court costume
Louis XVI: about 1780



Marie Antoinette style
Late Louis XVI period:
1790



Morning costume of Dandy
of the early
Revolutionary
period: 1791



Street costume
Late Louis XVI period:
1790

structure of rolls and curls on which he is working and which is supported by a wooden framework, extending upward and outward to a length of eight or nine feet.

The Later Louis XVI Period

In the latter days of the Louis XVI period the skirts were still voluminous, but the polonaise effect had gone out, giving place to circular flounces of lace or other material. The elaborate caps which until the early sixties were worn by elderly women in France, England and America were introduced, while the lace scarf or fichu, still known by the name of Marie Antoinette, was placed over the shoulders.

Toward the close of the reign of Louis XVI, or about the year 1789, a radical change of dress was introduced by the dandies or "macaronis" of the day. This consisted of a long coat with a high velvet collar and having a small shoulder-cape. The waistcoat was shortened, so that it came only to the waist, and the silk "small-clothes" gave place to snug-fitting riding breeches of cloth or buckskin, tied at the knee with ribbons. Hessian boots, reaching to the knees, were worn, and the three-cornered hat gave place to a beaver with curled brim and somewhat tapering crown.

This costume was worn chiefly in the morning. It by no means came immediately into general use, so that up to the end of the eighteenth century the dress of many men, especially the older ones, approximated in no small degree that of the Louis XV period.

During the French Revolution

When the French Revolution, with its watchword of "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," got under full headway, dressmaking and tailoring, like all the other arts and crafts, were placed under a cloud. "Good clothes" and elaborate dress had always been the sign of aristocracy; therefore, it was necessary for the citizens and citizenesses who wished to escape death to attire themselves with the utmost simplicity. Women wore a plain gown, with a fichu or shawl over the shoulders, and a plain head-dress of straw or linen.

One form of headwear adopted at this time has come down to us labeled with the name of Charlotte Corday, the innocent young girl who, fired with resentment at the butcheries that had been perpetrated, stabbed the "patriot" Marat and expiated on the guillotine her "crime against the Republic."

Incroyable and Directoire

Despite the implacable hatred of anything verging upon "aristocratism" and despite the suspicion which was apt to attach to anyone but a "sans-culotte" (without breeches), the desire for the novel, if not the beautiful, in dress could not be kept down and, as a consequence, the French Revolution gave us two remarkable and distinctive modes, the "Incroyable" and the "Directoire," and laid the foundations of what are known as the First Empire styles.

Pen-Portrait of an Incroyable

"Incroyable" (incredible) was the sobriquet given to the fops or dandies of the later Revolutionary period. Here is the description of one of these remarkably dressed personages as given by the French writer, Honoré de Balzac:

The costume of his unknown presented an exact picture of the fashion which at that time called forth the caricatures of the Incroyables. Imagine a person muffled in a coat so short in front that there showed beneath five or six inches of the waistcoat and with skirts so long behind that they resembled a codfish tail, a term then commonly employed to designate them. An immense cravat formed round his neck such innumerable folds that the little head emerging from a labyrinth of muslin almost justified Captain Merle's kitchen simile. [Merle had described the Incroyable as looking "like a duck with its head protruding from a game pie."] The stranger wore tight breeches and boots à la Suwarrow; a huge white and blue cameo was stuck, as a pin, in his shirt. Two watch chains hung in parallel festoons at his waist, and his hair, hanging in corkscrew curls on each side of the face, almost hid his forehead. Finally, as a last touch of decoration, the collars of his shirt and his coat rose so high that his head presented the appearance of a bouquet in its paper wrappings. If there be added to these insignificant details, which formed a mass of disparities with no ensemble, the absurd contrast of his yellow breeches, his red waistcoat, his cinnamon brown coat, a faithful portrait



The Incroyable of the Revolution period.
1795



Middle class costume during French Revolution; showing Charlotte Corday Cap



Women's costume during the Directory 1795-1800



Evening dress of Directoire and early First Empire 1798-1804



Reversion to the classic (Grecian) type at close of Directory and beginning of First Empire



Men's street costume Late Revolution and early Empire

will be given of the height of fashion at which dandies aimed at the beginning of the Consulate. Preposterous as the costume was, it seemed to have been invented as a sort of touchstone of elegance to show that nothing can be too absurd for fashion to hallow it.

The Directoire Style

AS to the women's dress of the same period, which has given rise to what are known as the Directoire styles—named after the Directory or later Revolutionary government—this was founded largely upon the Grecian or classic model, but was modified by the military spirit which, originating in the invasion by Prussia, fanned by the French Republic's decisive victory at Valmy, and later destined to blossom into full flower under Napoleon, had kindled a brilliant flame in the breast of every Frenchman and Frenchwoman.

Thus, with the simple garment of "slip" form, which combined in one the corsage and skirt, were worn short coats somewhat of the cavalry soldier type and headwear which often simulated the Grecian helmet. The broad and pointed lapels, or revers, characteristic of the Incroyable, were repeated in these jackets or other wraps, the garment being further embellished with embroidery and buttons of enormous size.

Revival of Antique Grecian Costume

The antique Grecian or classic style of dress was at its best in the ball costume. The ball dress of the period, which in modified form prevailed throughout the earlier part of the First Empire, is graphically described by a French writer as follows:

A dress of India muslin, rather short and clinging like damp linen, showed the delicate outlines of her shape. Then she put on a red overskirt, whose folds, numerous and lengthening as they fell to one side, had the graceful sweep of a Greek tunic. This passion-provoking garment of pagan priestesses lessened the indelicacy of the costume which the fashion of the day permitted the women in dressing, and, to reduce it still further, Marie drew a gauze veil over her white shoulders, which the tunic left bare all too low. She twisted the long plaits of her hair so as to form at the back of her head the truncated and flattened cone which, by artificially lengthening the head, gives such grace to the appearance of certain antique

statues, while a few curls, left loose above the forehead, fell on each side of her face in long, glistening ringlets. In such garb and headdress she exactly resembled the most famous masterpieces of the Greek chisel.

Men's Costume at Close of 18th Century

The men's costume of the later Revolutionary period shows two distinct types, the one adhering somewhat closely to the costume of the Louis XVI period, the other embodying largely what might be described as the modern form of men's attire.

In the first form knee-breeches were worn and the stockings were still visible. The coat, although having a collar and lapels, in form closely resembled the coats of the Louis XV period. The waistcoat was shorter and, in other features, approached somewhat closely to the modern style, and the loose flowing "Steenkirk" was replaced by a stiffly starched stock, the ends of which were tied in a bow. The wig was worn chiefly by old-fashioned men; many young men wore their hair long, having the front portion curled and the long locks at the back drawn into a stiff queue, or "pigtail," and tied with ribbon.

In the second form of costume the breeches were replaced by pantaloons. When walking, top-boots or "Hessians," reaching almost to the knee, were worn, but for house-wear or in the evening the tight pantaloons were displayed, reaching to the ankle, where light shoes or pumps revealed the stockings. The coat began to approximate in form the dress coat of a later day, being double-breasted, buttoned over the body and cut away over the hips so as to form tails, leaving the front portion of the body and the lower limbs free. The collar of this coat was very high and the lapels were broad and pointed.

The neckwear consisted of a stock of stiffly-starched piqué or similar material, passed twice around the neck, the ends being tied in front.

Knee-Breeches Died Hard

From this period onward the dress of men became largely conventional and has but little influence upon the women's fashions of the present day. Hence, it might be well to



The more practical gown of the Empire period



Ball dress Late Empire



Late Empire, street costume



Ball costume 1825



French Restoration period 1823



The 1830 effect

mention before dismissing the subject that even when the tight pantaloons had been replaced by trousers some years elapsed before the knee-breeches were entirely abandoned, especially on ceremonious occasions.

Michael Scott, an English writer, describes how about the year 1814 a party of English naval officers were debarred from a ballroom because they were wearing trousers, in preference to the knee-breeches and silk stockings exacted at such affairs by the best society of the day. Until the world war knee-breeches and silk stockings were required to be worn by men taking part in great functions at European courts.

The First Empire

The reign of Napoleon, known as the First Empire, began in 1804, and during the first half of that period of a decade or so the styles of women's costumes adhered in no small degree to the classic lines which were in vogue during the latter part of the Revolution. The low bodice, the clinging gown, the "Psyche knot" style of hair-dressing and the other Greek revivals continued in force. The turban, which had been introduced for evening wear by women in the first year of the century, doubtless as a tribute to Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, still held favor, and in some cases enormous headdresses of this character were worn.

During the latter half of the First Empire period the classic style was greatly modified. The extremely short waist remained in fashion, but the skirts were more gathered at the waist and the simple, but effective headdress for street wear gave place to a bonnet of the "coal-scuttle" type, which was frequently brought so far in front as to obscure the features of the wearer, except when viewed directly from the front.

The French "Restoration" Period

After 1815 there began what is known as the "Restoration" period, during which the Bourbons again possessed the throne of France. The short waist continued, but the gowns were more frequently ornamented with ruffles around the lower part of the skirt, while the sleeves were puffed at the elbow.

During the First Empire and Restoration periods some rather fantastic ideas in millinery were introduced, a favorite form of hat consisting of a beaver, resembling in shape a man's silk hat, trimmed with ostrich feathers and other ornamentation. The coal-scuttle bonnet was also worn, though rather elaborately trimmed.

The 1830 Styles

We now come to the 1830 styles, which quite lately have been utilized in no small degree as a source of fashion ideas. A marked feature of that period was the sloping appearance given to the shoulders.

The sleeves of dresses for day, as well as evening wear, were loose and frequently of elbow length, or even were no more than tiny caps just covering the shoulders. The skirts were full and rather short. Elaborate bonnets and round hats were worn.

The Second Empire

NO radical change in women's costumes occurred until the early fifties, when what are known as the "Second Empire" styles were introduced. A remarkable feature of the fashions set by Eugénie, the consort of Napoleon III, was the enormous crinoline, of which we have more than once in recent years been threatened with a revival.

The monstrous dimensions of women's skirts during the period from 1853 to the early seventies afforded an excellent theme for the pencil of the comic artist, and those who care to search the volumes of "Punch" and other illustrated publications of English and French origin, as well as those produced at the time in this country, will find both exact reproductions and caricatures of this style of costume.

With the crinoline went a tightly fitting bodice, having a pointed front and with rather tight sleeves.

Second Empire Millinery

A favorite style of headwear for the younger women was what was known in England as the "porkpie" hat; in other words, a simple, round hat, without brim and trimmed

Historic Costumes



The 1840 style



Early days of the crinoline 1855



The extreme of the crinoline 1862



Days of the pannier 1874



The Grecian bend a feature of the late 70's



Tie-back skirt of the early 80's

with a single quill or ostrich plume. This style of headdress, by the way, closely approximated the "polo" hat, which was in vogue in 1904.

The bonnets of the earlier Second Empire period were small, but in the '60's they increased in size and in many cases extended upwards and outwards from the hat, the large space between the hair and the edge of the bonnet being filled in with artificial flowers. During the early '70's a strong feature of women's costumes was the panier effect, the skirt being brought up very high in the back and extended—often to an enormous distance—by artificial means.

Late '70's and Early '80's

The bustle remained an important feature after the panier effect had been discarded. The skirts were made severely plain and were pulled back by strings, so as to fit with extreme snugness in the front. At the back, however, they were drawn out over a bustle of such extent that the fashion plates of the late '70's now have the appearance of caricatures.

The early '80's saw the introduction of a tendency diametrically opposed to that of the crinoline and the bustle. Skirts could hardly be made tight enough all around and it was no uncommon thing for ladies, especially when in evening attire, to find it practically impossible to sit down, owing to the constriction of their lower limbs.

This style gradually gave place to a more rational style of dress, and since that date the fashion creators seem to have abandoned the eccentric, at least in large degree.

Notes on Our Plates

The somewhat tight-fitting, clinging gown, without a waistline, shown in the "Woman's Court Dress of the Latter Part of the 13th Century," approximates somewhat closely to the well known princess style.

The short jacket or basque seen in the "Young Woman's Dress of the 14th Century" and the somewhat similar jacket shown in the "Court Dress of the Tudor or Louis XI

Period," are not far removed from the effects that were worn in the crinoline period of the early '60's. The overskirt or tunic effect shown in the court dresses of 1390 and the early part of the fifteenth century are also familiar.

The slashed sleeves of the "Court Dress of the Tudor or Francis I Period," and of the "Citizen's Dress of 1545," have characterized modern dress in a number of instances. Sleeves that were open and drawn together by straps, showing puffings of net and lace, were adopted in 1906. The panel trimming on the skirt of the court dress is often used.

The costumes designated Elizabethan, or of the Marie Stuart and Henry III period, show the beginnings of the crinoline. The stiffened and expanded skirts, and the sleeves padded, puffed and otherwise extended at the shoulders, have in more less modified form been reproduced at later periods.

The Medicis collar, shown in the sketch marked "Elizabethan or Henry III Period," was extremely popular from about 1873 to 1877, has since reappeared at various times, and is now being shown in organdy neckwear.

The gigot, or leg-of-mutton sleeve, worn in France under Henry IV and during the early Stuart period in England, is another form which has been frequently revived, practically in its entirety, as also the pointed corsage shown in the same costume.

The hip drapery or panier shown in the feminine costume entitled "Henry IV or early Stuart" has also been seen in modern dress, though in greatly modified form, for during the period from which this costume is taken the full effect at the hips was produced by the use of the farthingale or hoopskirt, the forerunner of the modern crinoline, though naturally of a more cumbrous character.

The hat carried by the "Young Gentleman of the Louis XIII Period" and worn by the figure entitled "Mousquetaire or Cavalier Costume" is a form still frequently employed by modern milliners, being often trimmed in the same way, with a single ostrich feather.

So, too, the epaulet which was a feature of the Mousquetaire or Cavalier costume is often adopted by dressmakers of the present

day. This epaulet or shoulder extension has been shown within the last year on French costumes.

The polonaise effect shown in the woman's costume entitled "Louis XIII Period," and in a contrasting color from the front portion of the skirt, has also been employed in modern costumes. Where this double skirt is not used the effect is frequently simulated.

The elaborate sleeve shown in the woman's costume described as "Louis XIV Period," consisting chiefly of lace from the shoulder to the elbow, has, as above stated, formed the basis for many of the effects of to-day.

In this drawing also is exemplified the draped pannier, again appearing in our third page of illustrations over the descriptive line "Louis XV," and which, as said, is frequently known as the "Dolly Varden."

The costume of the early Louis XV period, having a draped and stiffened overskirt, with ruchings and ruffings around the skirt proper, was reproduced in the pannier effects worn during the late 70's, and again reappears in the pulled back gown of the early 80's with which our series of illustrations closes.

The men's coats of the Louis XIV period, more or less elaborately embroidered, have frequently been adapted to women's wear.

The man's coat of the early Louis XV period shown in the drawing entitled "Gentlemen of the Early Louis XV Period," differs from that of the reign of Louis XIV (see the drawing on the second plate), not only in shape, but in the greater richness of the embroidery and in the form which this ornamentation takes. Coats of this type are the ones from which many of the Paris creators have derived inspiration for suits for the current spring season.

The "Court Costume: Louis XVI" shows the use of floral decoration and of the bow-knot effects which twenty years ago were known as "Louis" bows.

Like the Louis XV costumes, this court costume of the Louis XVI period displays a large amount of hand work, and was responsible in no small degree for the quantity of needlework lavished on French gowns at subsequent periods. The crinoline effect is

strongly apparent in the same illustration.

The later Louis XVI costume, entitled "Marie Antoinette Style," with its triple flounces of lace, is a style also familiar to 20th century fashion observers. The same effect when produced by insertion is a popular form of trimming, while the fichu or scarf has been worn at many different periods.

The "Street Costume, Late Louis XVI Period," shows a short jacket with basque, which was a feature of the mode of fourteen years ago. The headdress shown in the same drawing is one of the first forms of the picture hat of the present day and is an outgrowth of the shepherdess styles which were so strongly favored by Marie Antoinette.

The "Morning Costume of a Dandy of the Early Revolutionary Period," shows a cape-coat effect that has been widely adopted for women's outer garments. This coat and the one shown in the "Men's Riding Costume: Empire Period," are the forerunners of the redingote styles now favored. Incidentally "redingote" is the French form of the English words "riding coat."

The Charlotte Corday Cap seen in the "Middle Class Costume During French Revolution," is another form of dress characteristic of the same period which has been reproduced in various forms, as is also the surplice drapery forming a part of the same costume.

The Incroyable effects are very clearly illustrated by the drawing bearing this appellation and which clearly brings out the peculiar styles affected by the swells of the Revolutionary period, who were known by this odd title of "Incredibles." It shows the high waist and the large and pointed lapels, or revers, which are the distinguishing features of what is now known as the Incroyable style. The large and pointed revers also appear in the jacket of the "Women's Costume During the Directory," and which in its form closely resembles the Eton jacket of to-day.

The beginnings of the Empire style costume are shown in the drawing illustrating the reversion to the classic (Grecian) type and which developed into the pure Empire type shown on the same page.



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Historic costumes; their
influence on modern fashions
by S. H. Dutchett
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