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Comment

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Comment by the Editor

FASHIONS

Fashions change, like the wind, and the world of the commonplace is thus refreshed. Every generation laughs at the oddities of yesteryear, but devoutly follows the prevailing mode, unconscious of the paradox. That is inevitable, for variation is the law of nature. Progress is founded on change: novelty is the wine that gives zest to the heavy course of dull routine. If style were not forever new it would become insipid. Carrots, they say, are good for a girl's complexion, but think of a diet of nothing but carrots!

The mere mention of fashions directs attention to ladies' attire. To women the terms are synonymous, and even the most fashion-immune men are likely to have visions of dresses — dresses for morning and evening and Sunday; dresses to sit in and walk in, to work in and dance in — dresses, indeed, to do nothing at all in; dresses for winter, spring, summer, and fall; dresses all different in color and shape; made of muslin or silk, velvet, satin, gingham, georgette, and chiffon or other material quite as transparent and much more expensive; dresses designed with lace and insertion, twelve gores, and a flounce, smocked at the hips and flared at the bottom,

cut on the bias and embroidered by hand, with a rûche at the neck (or a vacant expanse), four darts in the waist, and sleeves that set out from the shoulder on the Rotarian plan to be bigger and better but return at the elbow quite disillusioned. To say nothing of cloaks, bonnets, petticoats, slippers, and hose.

But feminine apparel is not the only realm of style. Fashions change in almost everything. Last year's car with a statue on the steam cap of the radiator is practically useless now. If a whim of the Queen of France once ruined the whalebone market, the dicta of Fisher with respect to the form of other bodies are equally potent. As recently as 1901, the vogue of bridge and dancing had not entirely supplanted the pleasant art of conversation. That was the time when the Kaiser and a few college presidents, among others, were conspiring to clip a year from the nineteenth century and start the twentieth on the first of January, 1900, despite the protests of the Pope and the Czar and most every one else, particularly creditors, that ninety-nine is one short of a hundred. While the public in general was learning to count, the "white man's burden" was still being debated and bold irreconcilables were opposing the fashion of shooting the people who didn't speak English. Those were the times when applesauce and bologna meant nothing but food, when women wore shirtwaists and the total deforestation of the male countenance had not been com-

pleted, for Mr. Gillette was only beginning to make shaving safe for democracy.

Why continue the obvious contrast? The habits, ideas, and conditions of twenty-five years ago seem almost archaic. Fashions, indeed, are imperious but benevolent tyrants.

J. E. B.