A HUNDRED YEARS
WITH THE FEMININE SIDE OF THE FROCK

by

Sarah Whitlock Smith

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Approved by

Agnes M. Cose

Director

Examining Committee

Pauline E. Keeney

Helen K. Staley

Elliott N. Cameron

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PREFACE

If man has been lauded for his worthy contributions to an array befitting milady's fair form, she has ever been the determinant of his success. In no wise would he dare enrobe her with the "sack" without comprehending the abandon and unrestraint of her present lot.

A glimpse of the past hundred years or so from the feminine side of the frock is proposed to reveal a significance between the surface display and woman's ascendancy in a masculine world.

The donning of the fig leaf was a signal of the independent thought and action of the female. So, endowed with that inherent nature, Eve's daughters of this century past have resolved their efforts in the breaking of those confines, imposed by men, as if in a quest of "back to nature." "From Bloomers to Bikinis," woman is portrayed by Oliver Jensen in an enchanting "Pictorial History of the Century of Change."

Only the unobservant would fail to note the periodic reversions on the part of fashion to previous trends and silhouettes. Indeed, the cycles have been classified according to three distinct silhouettes - the bell-shape, bustle or back fullness, and the tubular shape.

Repetitiously, woman has adapted these to her manners and modes of life.

From the anthropological records of Jane Richardson and A. L. Kroeber's study of woman's dress fashions by means of exacting measurements of various features, skirts reached their peak of fullness about 1860 in a period of one hundred and fifty years. Maximum length was also achieved about that year and some forty years later, 1902-1905. A near-approach to that length was seen about 1934-1936. The extremes of narrowness and shortness in the skirt were found to be in the twenties of the present century. From the same study, the growth of the waistline dimensions reached a maximum in 1923.

The cycles of the past century have remained true to form with the tubular, varying from the sexless to the provocative, being the prevailing mode of the twentieth century.

The period of the "bell" tolled the note of confinement in hoop and home. The bustle effected the "Grecian bend" and the lady appeared as with forward intent. As she stepped into the new century, the tubular form had begun its round. With milady, it had its "ups and downs," reverting and converting as she groped for a level of near equality with man.

MacIver and Page, in the essay "Fashion and Custom," define fashion as "the socially approved sequence of

variation on a customary theme."[1] Elaborating upon the thought -

> The trend of fashion may continue in the same direction to undermine the custom which at first it merely variegated. Thus the long-range trend in women's fashion in dress has led to the obsolescence or disappearance of certain garments which were previously prescribed by custom - a reflection of major changes in the status of women, the sex mores and other factors.[2]

Continuously relevant to masculine prerogatives, woman's ascendancy has been forwarded by the progressive times. Transition thus made way for the transcendence of tradition - traditional dependency and its accompaniment, impracticality in dress.

The extent of this analysis of status and dress proposes conclusions and analogies a trifle dubious; but, it is hoped, with an insight to a vast subject as yet quite unexplored. Only enough interest has been aroused in the subject to bring two English authors, C. Willett Cunnington and James Laver, to the point of writing to any extent. This sort of study would indeed be a challenge to the psychologist and the sociologist.

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[1]R. M. MacIver and C. H. Page, Society, p. 181.

[2]Ibid., p. 182.

CHAPTER I

OF HER HERITAGE

[illegible] started with at least half of the destiny of [illegible] in her keeping.[1]

[illegible] as keeper of the cave, cultivation of the [illegible] guardian of the [illegible] gradually became the [illegible] earliest [illegible] in the society of the [illegible] arising from the demands of increased population, [illegible] religion and law which sanctioned man's power [illegible]

[illegible] Greek state was organized about a patriarchal [illegible] their creation, based upon the temptation and [illegible] Eve, condemned all women. The Greeks idealized [illegible] physical strength, and chaste aloofness of [illegible] gave her a place in the hierarchy of the gods. [illegible] done with all of its patriarchal idealism, [illegible], honored women in its religion as deities or [illegible] ministers of the gods. The German invaders of southern [illegible] in the third and fourth centuries [illegible] [illegible] of female [illegible] strength and weakness.

Aside from all idealism, woman's position is well defined in the pages of Homer and of the Old Testament as

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[1] E. Barnes, Women In Modern Society, p. 34.

CHAPTER I

OF HER HERITAGE

...She started with at least half of the destiny of the race in her keeping.[1]

Woman - as keeper of the cave, cultivator of the soil, and guardian of the child - probably became the center of the earliest civilization. The society of the patriarch, stemming from the demands of increased population, gave rise to custom and law which sanctioned man's power over woman.

The Jewish state was organized about a patriarchal Deity; and their tradition, based upon the temptation and fall of Eve, handicapped all women. The Greeks idealized the beauty, physical strength, and chaste aloofness of woman and gave her a place in the hierarchy of the gods. Republican Rome with all of its patriarchal idealism, nevertheless, honored women in its religion as deities or as servitors of the gods. The German invaders of southern Europe in the third and fourth centuries were also among those idealizers of female beauty, strength, and passion.

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[1]E. Barnes, Woman In Modern Society, p. 34.

CORRECTION

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PRECEDING IMAGE HAS BEEN REFILMED TO ASSURE LEGIBILITY OR TO CORRECT A POSSIBLE ERROR

Cartoon by Al Hirschfeld

Cole, W. and Robinson, Florett. Women Are Wonderful, p. 41.

CHAPTER I

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[1]E. Barnes, Woman In Modern Society, p. 34.

that of man's assistant. Nevertheless, in times of crisis or emergency, she has fought, judged, and served as legislator.

Prohibitive of woman's freedom was the jealousy of man, for he regarded her as a source of pleasure and honor to himself and to his family. Social custom and religious sanction are inevitable consequences once protection due to sexual interest is established. With the increase of wealth, woman has been subjected to yet another form of enslavement. Man has "put golden chains about her neck and bracelets on her arms, [has] clothed her in silks and satins,...and [has] put her in the safest rear rooms of the habitation."[1] In many centers of bygone civilization as well as of the contemporary world, women have become "luxury-loving parasites," having given up "their legitimate heritage of work and independent thought for trinkets, silks, and servants...."[2]

With the rise of Christianity, the status of women has doubtless risen due to the stress placed upon the value of the human soul and upon democratic equality. Nevertheless, with Christianity man has received every possible advantage, while the natural burdens of women have been

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[1]Ibid., p. 38. [2]Ibid., p. 39.

needlessly increased. Those practices and beliefs which gathered about Christian asceticism embodied a sort of suspicion, which is still existent to a certain extent, toward the woman and her special functions.

Chivalry conceived a "sterile hybrid" - that anaemic, unfruitful creature "robbed of her simple, human, pagan passions."[1]

Belief in the individual soul and the need of salvation through individual choice bodied forth in the Protestant Revolution did much to bring to respect the special functions of women. Nevertheless, many teachings of Catholicism remained authoritative. Marriage was a sacrament and the family remained subordinate to the Church.

The freedom, equality, and the right to opportunity so fundamental to the beliefs that swept forward with the French Revolution were not to be had until time made the necessary adjustments.

During the days of colonization in America women were recognized as being quite indispensable. Nevertheless, those practices and attitudes of European importation concerning the status of women were most resistant to the influences of pioneering civilization. The common law of

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[1]Ibid., p. 46.

England, which was to become the basis of legal principles in America, bodied forth those limitations and disabilities of women as compared with men. Despite the fact that women were not quite so bound by law in colonial days as even in the days of the early Republic, it was the exception rather than the rule that took advantage or had opportunity to take advantage of social and political privileges. Nevertheless, in most of the states, at the time of the acquisition of American independence, women

> "...were not permitted to vote, to hold public office, to serve on juries or to act in other public capacities. ...they were limited in the range of employment in which they were permitted to engage. Married women were under disabilities...in their own right to hold and dispose of property. In the words of Blackstone, 'The husband and wife are one and that one is the husband.'
>
> "With the common-law disabilities...were coupled certain common-law protections consistent with the view of women as 'the weaker sex.'"[1]

Among those exceptional few of the colonial period were the Quaker women of Pennsylvania who were allowed to speak in public when the spirit moved them. The Pennsylvania Germans established elementary education for girls as well as for boys in connection with their churches. Teaching became the pursuit of the more promising girls.

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[1]G. G. Battle and J. D. Lucas, "Legal Position of Women: United States." Encyclopaedia Britannica, XXIII, 708.

The Moravians were particularly interested in the education of women. As for the privilege of voting, most colonies failed to exclude women from this legal franchise.

The need of independent judgment, constant preparedness, and foresight upon the pioneering woman as she met her everyday responsibilities was to prove a quickening force to the advancement of opportunities for the American woman. Men developed an appreciation of this independence required of the wife and mother. Self-confidence and self-sufficiency were necessities.

In those days of the colonies women began to engage in such activities as to express economic competition with men. Upon the death or temporary absence of the husband, such undertakings as the ferrying business, tavern-keeping, and farming became the woman's responsibility. General store business, millinery, dry goods, gown-making, and tailoring were among the trades that women entered. "Zest for selling, for competition, and even the gambling impulse turned them to enterprises that were considered man's rather than woman's normal sphere."[1]

In the professional field obstetrics, school-teaching, and journalism were most open to women.

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[1]E. R. Groves, The American Woman, pp. 66-67.

In the colonial history the records of the persecutions of witches are especially revolting among unpleasant happenings. Reaction against this belief in diabolical possession and against mob-mindedness and the horrible persecutions "...marks the end in American sentiment of one of the oldest, most persistent and consequential handicaps of women."[1]

The movement of farmers westward of the Alleghenies gave to their women the opportunity to prove their worth as individuals. Woman's pluck and resourcefulness portrayed in every phase of this primitive sort of existence on the frontier encouraged judgment of her by those personal traits. Thus, those traditions and conventions of European origin supporting masculine dominance and sex discrimination were rapidly weakened.

The period of industrialization in the North, 1790-1830, provided a degree of economic independence by taking women outside their four walls and giving them cash rather than "keep." The gradual transference of domestic crafts into factory production was most rapid in the field of textiles. The development of the textile industries proved a stimulus to other industries; the approval of women's working outside the home was to become an established social convention.

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[1]Ibid., p. 70.

The slave-state culture of the South perpetuated those earliest traditions and lent support to the feminine pattern of a well-established aristocracy. Although Southern womanhood enjoyed the greatest prestige ever achieved under the code of masculine dominance, a great responsibility was hers in the form of managerial obligations and services for the Negro dependents. The patriarchal spirit dominated the southern scene and exacted of woman in every gradation of economic circumstances the acceptance of the domestic career.

Those customs and traditions maintaining social inferiority were most incongruous with that individual type of woman who weathered the consequences of another frontier - the Great Plains and the Middle West. This new environment demanded such struggle, hardship, and adaptability as would prepare the settlers

> ...to meet with native friendliness, even eager hope, suggestions of social change and experiments not only in political and industrial affairs but even within the fundamental human relationship of man and woman.[1]

Trends of thought that evolved with the development of the West weathered the thought-tide of Victorianism and proved a definite impetus to woman's advance after the Civil War.

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[1]Ibid., p. 185.

CHAPTER II

AS A LADY

In an age when Victorianism cast its spell upon the English-speaking world, the pioneering spirit of this new nation was most inconsistent. The war with Mexico, the discovery of gold in California leading to the great Rush of '49, and Morse's first telegraph message were but mid-century stepping stones of progress. This same spirit pervaded the sphere of woman, effecting an change which, as expressed by Ernest R. Groves in his study of the American woman,

> ...with its ramifications and practical consequences is beginning to seem...in contrast to the trend of the centuries, the most profound and the most revolutionary contribution to the modern world that has as yet come out of human experience in America.[1]

By the mid-1800's there were those women upon the Western Reserve accepting the consequences of the frontier existence; those women, within the homes of the more settled communities, who performed the endless household tasks; those women of the cities and towns who, of dire necessity, went out into the mills; and those of the leisure class who were no more than Victorian products.

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[1]E. R. Groves, The American Woman, pp. 37-38.

Even for this diversified grouping woman's sphere was quite confining. Education-wise, she of this first half of the century seldom went beyond the "three R's." She acquired

> ...enough reading to decipher her Bible and her recipe-book, enough writing to conduct voluminous if ill-spelled correspondence with her family and friends, enough arithmetic to keep her household accounts.[1]

However, for those ladies of fashion, there was yet another course, for French was a staple subject in the boarding schools.

With the exception of that small minority of mill workers, woman was confined to "her place in the home." As for the average American wife - she was but a breeder who, between babies, "...cared for the brood already born and maintained the immemorial kitchen workshop by the toilsome processes of hand labor."[2]

Thomas Gisborne's Enquiry Into the Duties of the Female Sex, although published in 1798, gives an insight to that masculine attitude brought forward into the Nineteenth Century.

> "In three particulars...the effect of the female character is most important.

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[1] I. H . Irwin, Angels and Amazons, pp. 23-24.

[2] Ibid., p. 14.

"First, In contributing daily and hourly to the comfort of husbands, of parents, of brothers and sisters, and of other relations and friends, in the intercourse of domestic life, under every vicissitude of sickness and health, of joy and affliction.

"Secondly, In forming and improving the general manners, dispositions, and conduct of the other sex, by society and example.

"Thirdly, In modelling the human mind during the early stages of its growth, and fixing, while it is yet ductile, its growing principles of action; children of each sex being in general, under maternal tuition during their childhood, and girls until they become women.

"Are these objects insufficient to excite virtuous exertion?"[1]

Those ladies of leisure were but products of newly acquired wealth which afforded them the privilege of becoming idle ornaments "...sitting in resolute vacuousness at home, dabbling in parlor art, guarding female purity, and recovering from migraine.[2]

From this leisure class, nevertheless, results a type which perhaps mirrors the age, "...after all, better than the working woman or the housewife; for by and large they can afford to be what most women want to be."[3] The

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[1]T. Gisborne, Enquiry Into the Duties of the Female Sex, pp. 8-9.

[2]"Women in Business." Fortune, XII, (July, 1935), 51.

[3]Irwin, op. cit., p. 18.

fashionable lady of this era, dressing in accord with her position, donned that enormity, the hoop, and undersleeves of mull or lace so expressive of "...the widening gap between her and those who performed manual labor."[1]

The hoop was but a supplement to the crinoline worn during the forties which could not support the weight of flounces, frills, and furbelows continuously added until 1860 when the hoopskirt reached its climax. Waists remained close-fitting to those previously diminished, wasp-like dimensions. The skin-tight sleeves of the forties assumed a bell-like fullness, loose about the wrist, to display the dainty undersleeves. Fichus adorned many a neck, and bonnets were bedecked with ribbons, flowers, and lace to complete the picture. In truth, there was a gracious dignity about the whole, despite the fact that milady's clothes were as confining as her existence.

Even in that day confession was made of the errors and absurdities of this regalia. Sarah J. Hale, editor of Godey's Lady's Book for over forty years, turned a critical eye and poked a little fun at the hoop-skirt by publishing in Godey's, July, 1856, unsigned:

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[1]C. W. Cunnington, Feminine Attitudes in the Nineteenth Century, p. 165.

"It cannot be - it cannot be!"
The lady said right mockingly.
"Fain would I grant a parting kiss
But how can it be done in this?"
She pointed to her wide hooped dress,
And he sighed deep in dire distress.
.....

He walked the lady round and round,
She seemed intrenched upon a mound -
Securely spanned and fortified
As if all lovers she defied.
You'd say if you that hoop could see,
A war-hoop it was meant to be.

He walked again the lady round,
Then sank all weary on the ground.
"I'm sold," quoth he,"'tis all no go.
Oh love, how could you treat me so?
Farewell! In foreign lands I'll range -
At least until the fashions change!"[1]

Skirts held their own - Victoria's stamp of approval was upon them - despite attack from all sides. Yet again from Godey's Lady's Book, 1852:

> ...we venture a remonstrance against the still prevalent practice of wearing trains in the street.... We protest against it as a Lady's Book, in the name of neatness, common sense, and economy. Discoloration is inevitable; fringes are an ordinary sequence; and when such expensive silks are worn as we see at the present day, few purses can or ought to afford the outlay. Neither grace or expediency can be urged in its favor, and we trust the recent introduction of street sweepers into our large cities will preclude the necessity of our ladies' any further aid to the sanitary resolutions of the Common Council.[2]

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[1]"Ladies' Hoop." Godey's Lady's Book, LIII (July, 1856), 88, cited by R. H. Finley, The Lady of Godey's: Sarah Josepha Hale, p. 134.

[2]Godey's Lady's Book, 1852, cited by K. M. Lester, Historic Costume, p. 193.

High fashion, imported from France and England, was displayed in the engravings of the fashion books. Occasionally the actual garment was ordered from the foreign firm. Nevertheless, American women were criticized for not applying individual taste when adopting these imported fashions for their wardrobe. Sarah Hale brings forth this comment from the "Journal" of Mrs. Emma Willard:

> The French ladies are not in dress what they are supposed in our country to be, finical and dashing; but they really understand the matter, and their taste is chaste and correct.[1]

Whereupon Mrs. Hale continues,

> Undoubtedly there are in our country more sins against good taste in the choice and blending of colours in apparel than in the modes. We once remarked a very fine lady, and found, on counting the hues that adorned her, that, from her green kid gloves to the lilac bow on the crown of her sky-blue bonnet, she wore no fewer than fifteen distinct colors - sufficient to make two rainbows and a fraction.[2]

Europe did design those "specials for the American trade" early as 1837. This trick is one that must still be guarded against by American buyers.

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[1]Sarah J. Hale, Initial statement of policy of the combined Ladies' Magazine and Lady's Book, Godey's Lady's Book, (1837), cited by R. E. Finley, op. cit., p. 153.

[2]Ibid.

To depart from the critical note for a moment -

Luxurious fabrics were used in the making of these garments. The silk dress was to the lady a necessity in her wardrobe. Scarves of satin, crepe, and fur; pelerines and berthas of lace; mantelets and shawls of cashmere were quite fashionable. Taffetas, velvets, barèges were frequently employed; fine muslins, cambrics, and other white stuffs - washable materials - were exceedingly popular. Puffings of tulle, ribbon rosettes, and rows of lace added their superfluous note to many a hat and gown.

Jewelry was in vogue - bracelets, brooches, earrings, necklaces; and black ribbons were worn about the throat and wrist.

The canezou appeared in 1852. This was a type of corsage or waist to be worn with various skirts. Long cloaks, pelisses, and redingotes were among the outer garments worn over the voluminous dresses.

Yet the impressionable figure seems to remain as expressed by an anonymous writer in the London Daily News:

> "Look at her standing there in her stuffy thick clothing, her hideous frilled 'pelisse' with its puffed sleeves.... She has been grounded...in the principles of religion and morality. ...her fingers are sore with working 'samplers,' her body is stiff with that strange cult known as 'deportment.' She is just sixteen years of age and ready to 'come out' to a life of social and domestic inanition. When

she dances, it is to pace soberly through the measures of a minuet or the quadrille.... Little wonder that she breaks the monotony of her days by occasional fits of hysterics or a graceful swoon.

"She had her vanities, poor dear - her looks were one of her few interests.... Rosy, fresh cheeks were considered common, and she deprived herself of adequate food for fear of growing fat and 'material.' A pale and tired gentility was her creed." [1]

However, there were more optimistic souls. Another British writer, C. Willett Cunnington, in his study of attitudes among English women of the Nineteenth Century, comments: "The growing dimensions of the skirt seemed to symbolize Woman's increasing place in the world...."[2]

During that first third of the Nineteenth Century, women remained comparatively silent. And then, as a spark in the night, came the great intellectual burst of the forties. Sarah Josepha Hale began her writing career prior to this decade to blaze a pioneering trail as "the lady of Godey's." It is to her that credit is due for the establishment of Thanksgiving as a national holiday. Prolific were her contributions to a new nation:

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[1]London Daily News, cited by I. H. Irwin, op. cit., p. 18.

[2]Cunnington, op. cit., p. 163.

...first to advocate women as teachers in public schools.

...demanded for housekeeping the dignity of a profession and put the term 'domestic science' into the language.

...began the fight for the retention of property rights by married women.

...started the first day nursery - boon to working mothers.

...first to stress the necessity of physical training for her sex.[1]

Along this line of physical fitness, she invited enthusiasm to participation in the one traditional form of outdoor exercise in which ladies were still regarded as ladies. This envigorating exercise was no less than horseback riding. Many a costume for the equestrienne was reproduced in steel engravings in the Lady's Book.

That intellectual outburst was confined to the pioneering few. Hannah Adam's generation was before that of Mrs. Hale. She was to serve as that connecting link between colonial pioneers and those of the Victorian day.

The mainspring for woman's sallying forth upon her own into a masculine world has been found in the beginnings of higher education for women. Teaching, an exception to the professional taboo held for women, grounded upon the

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[1]Finley, op. cit., p. 17.

three R's, could doubtless impart little more. In 1824, the state of Massachusetts pioneered in woman's behalf with the establishment of a high school for girls at Worcester. It pioneered again with the State Normal school at Lexington and Barre in 1839, another at Bridgewater in 1840. The first paid high school or "academy" for girls was a Southern contribution. In 1802, the Moravians established the Female Academy at Salem, North Carolina.

Among those female educators of the period was Mary Lyon who was responsible for founding, in 1837, of the first girls' school to own its own buildings and equipment - Mount Holyoke Seminary. Catherine Beecher was an advocate of health exercises in the schools, and in 1850 published her book Physiology and Calisthenics. Miss Beecher also brought about the organization of the American Woman's Education Association in 1852.

Emma Hart Willard, perhaps the most famous woman educator of the period, her sister, Almira Hart Phelps, and Zilpah Grant helped to erect an educational milestone for the century.

In 1833, Oberlin College in Ohio opened for women an annex called the Collegiate Insitute. This was the first American institution of higher learning to open its doors to women. Colleges exclusively for women soon followed - 1839,

Georgia Female College at Macon; 1843, Wesleyan Female College at Cincinnati; 1849, Oread Collegiate Institute in Worcester, Massachusetts.

The advance given the colonial midwife was the founding of a school, the Female Medical College by a Dr. Samuel Gregory of Boston. His college was scarcely more than a course in scientific midwifery. The Female Medical College of Philadelphia, founded in 1850, aimed to give a thorough education.

Hannah Longshore, member of that first graduating class, 1852, of the college at Philadelphia, was the first "to hang out her shingle." Ann Preston of this same class was the first woman dean of a medical faculty - of this same Female Medical College.

Other careers are equally interesting. Harriot Hunt practiced illegally - was twice refused admission to Harvard College - until, in 1853, the Female Medical College of Philadelphia conferred upon her a degree of M. D. Those Blackwell sisters, Emily and Elizabeth, born in England, came to America and proved their feminine worth in the field of medicine. Elizabeth received her medical degree in 1849 from a small university in Geneva, New York, the first woman in modern times to do so.

The woman's missionary movement had been gaining impetus through this first half of the Nineteenth Century.

The missionary society of Methodist women sent Ann Wilkens to Liberia in 1835. Sarah J. Hale helped to organize the Ladies' Medical Missionary Society at Philadelphia in 1851. This failed; but the Woman's Union Missionary Society, organized in New York by a Mrs. E. C. Doremus, was quite successful.

Among those Quakers and Shakers, who had early given their women the privilege of expressing themselves publicly, was Lucretia Mott - destined to become one of the four great leaders of the early suffrage movement. Her preaching career began about 1818. First to be ordained to this profession was Antoinette Brown Blackwell. She was a "first" not only in America, but in all the world of Christianity. Yet another first among women in America - Augusta J. Chapin received the title Doctor of Divinity in 1863.

The woman's club may be traced to the days of the colonies, but the impetus to such clubs came with woman's working outside the home. In that early period of the mill worker, clubs were organized for "mutual improvement." Immigration displaced this earlier mill worker and until that outburst upon the heels of the Civil War, only an occasional club was formed. The Ladies' Association for Educating Females may be termed the first permanent woman's club, in the modern sense. It was founded in 1833 in

Jacksonville, Illinois. Another, the Ladies' Library Association, appearing just before the Civil War, built a library - the first to be supported and maintained entirely by women.

The trade organization for women made headway in this period of awakening.

> ...These early emigrants from the home found themselves facing hard, cruel, economic facts. Necessity forced them to forget the shrinking reticence held proper in those times for females, ladies or even women.[1]

Woman's fight for rights of her own was preceded by that in which she participated in the black man's behalf - and yet another in which she fought for temperance. This latter actually began long before 1840. Nevertheless a movement was started in this decade which evolved into the Sons of Temperance. This society gave rise to a sister group - the Daughters of Temperance.

These women vehemently supported the cause - raiding and praying in the saloons. Their zealous spirits were abashed when refused public utterance in a joint convention. After continued rebuffs, women became comparatively silent until the Civil War.

In the black man's behalf, she organized into anti-slavery societies. These societies came nearest to

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[1]Irwin, op. cit., p. 68.

maintaining independence of masculine control among any of those organized and managed by women before the Civil War.

The woman's rights movement found expression in the midst of this Nineteenth Century "Renaissance." It was at first a drive to obviate those immediate disabilities of women -

> ...the barriers of law against property-holding and guardianship of children, the refusal of industry to grant equal pay for equal work, the taboos of society on education and public expression, the superstition which held the weak feminine brain incapable of serious thinking.[1]

The formal launching, so to speak, of this movement took place on July 19, 1848, in the Wesleyan Chapel, at Seneca Falls, New York. This was the first Woman's Rights Convention. The assemblage was composed of Henry and Elizabeth Stanton, some neighbors, and James and Lucretia Mott. A list of principles and grievances drafted by Elizabeth Stanton follows the recital of wrongs in the Declaration of Independence. As adopted, the resolution begins:

> The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.[2]

Even though the first of the facts to be listed - that of the denial of the elective franchise - makes this

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[1] Ibid., p. 80. [2] Ibid., p. 84.

more than a "woman's rights" document, the great majority present at the convention favored no more than the legal and social reforms. This village meeting with its bald declarations aroused such publicity that it became the sensation of the hour - to be eclipsed only by the Gold Rush of '49.

Before 1852 woman's rights conventions had sprung up in several states. The year after the Seneca Falls Convention, a National Woman's Rights Association was formed. Many a convention was held in that decade following the first convention in New York.

As yet, these conventions merely supported woman's rights. Suffrage were but a corallary. Susan B. Anthony was to assume leadership of the movement and as that decade came to a close many of those endorsers of the rights came to realize the value of such a reform as "...would serve to accomplish all other reforms of the evils in woman's status."[1]

Of those valiant women of this early suffrage movement Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Stone, Lucretia Mott, and Elizabeth Stanton probably rise to an eminence above the rest. Notwithstanding, they became the butt of much ridicule and were commonly termed "unsexed."

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[1]Ibid., p. 102.

The use of this adjective was possibly the result of the introduction of that bifurcated "Bloomer " costume. Having been worn by women of the Oneida Community in 1848, the costume was tried out by a Mrs. Elizabeth Smith Miller who was in Seneca Falls, New York, at the time in 1851.

Mrs. Amelia Jenks Bloomer happened to be in this same town publishing a journal. She and Elizabeth Stanton, Mrs. Miller's cousin, thereupon made outfits for themselves. Mrs. Stanton prevailed upon Susan Anthony and her other colleagues to try the costume. The idea of a dress reform had been running parallel to the times, advocated by men as well as women. A feminist in 1850 actually predicted the general use of men's attire by women by 1860. This costume of short skirt and loose trousers gathered at the ankles became attached to the name of "Bloomer." It was much funnier than Miller. This name has weathered the times and remains upon certain knickerbocker types of apparel.

Advance in woman's sphere was not only in the aspects of legal and social reform. Although not the original inventor, Isaac Merritt Singer was the first manufacturer of the sewing machine in this country. He took out patents in 1851. A Frenchman is given credit for the invention of the first sewing machine. Elias

Howe, having patented his lock-stitch machine in 1846, pa pawned his patents in England and did not retrieve them till some time later.

Commercial manufacturing was first to utilize this marvelous time saver. After the introduction of the machine into the home, Sarah Hale wrote:

> "The world has been moved by that portion of gentle womanhood whose sad destiny it was to earn a scanty livelihood by sewing.... Now...what philanthropy failed to accomplish, what religion, poetry, eloquence and reason sought in vain, has been produced by The Sewing Machine.
>
> "By this invention the needle woman is enabled to perform her labor in comfort: tasks that used to require the midnight watches...and drag through perhaps twenty hours, she can now complete in two or three...."[1]

But why save time? By way of forecast of those fashions of the following decades:

> ...the rise of trimming had been steady from 1850 on, and as early as 1870 a dress was little more than a foundation for display of all the many kinds of torture to which ingenuity could put cloth by means of a sewing machine.[2]

Another innovation of the times was the paper dress pattern. All credit is due Ebenezer and Ellen Butterick. The first pattern to be drafted and cut was a child's Garibaldi suit. The advent of the pattern for women's clothes decreased that limitation of the more beautiful and well-made clothes to a wealthy few.

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[1]Finley, op. cit., p. 150. [2]Ibid., p. 156.

Woman still existed in a man's world, and his advice:

> ...let ladies of the present day, who have highly cultivated minds, make a point of showing the world that their attainments are not incompatible with due attention to domestic affairs and personal neatness....[1]

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[1]E. W. R. Farrar, The Young Lady's Friend, p. 120.

Godey's Lady's Book, LVIII (February, 1859), 102.

CHAPTER III

OFF THE PEDESTAL

Womanhood had taken a forward step. The lady upon the pedestal had arrived to enhance the sphere of the female - she who merely exemplified those biological qualities of womanhood. Those "unsexed creatures" had exchanged the favors for privileges, and "woman's rights" were now in view.

The "pace-setter" of the day - the fashionable lady - continued to bedeck herself with all the superfluities that fashion could afford. France's dictatorial rule of the fashion world appears to have been on the wane, in so far as American women were concerned. Those hampering hoops and confining corsets continued to be worn well into the seventies, even though the death-knell of the hoopskirt had been sounded in Paris in 1865.

"Extravagance" had become milady's middle name. Cashmeres, silks and lace afforded reckless expenditure. The description of a "house dress" is given thus:

> ...of crimson silk, made with a train, the front breadth being trimmed with ruffles and fringe. Overdress and waist of black silk, cut in points, looped in the back, and trimmed with fringe.[1]

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[1] Godey's Lady's Book, LXXXI (December, 1870), 566.

And of an apron - "Black silk...trimmed with lace and velvet, with pockets of lace on it."[1]

A Dr. L. P. Brockett, writing of the young women of the day says, "The sums expended on fashionable dress are beyond the belief of those who have not investigated the matter, or had painful personal experience of them."[2] He continues by citing the words of a "poor" wealthy father:

> My girls tell me that they are so economical that they feel as if they were almost mean in their dress, and yet here are bills for over twelve thousand dollars, for the outfit of two of them for Newport, this summer. I wonder what they would spend, if they were extravagant.[3]

Dr. Brockett explains with a note of admonition:

> The idea which dominates the mind of a fashionable young married woman of the present day...is how she may surpass this acquaintance, equal that one, or excite the envy of a third, by the number, the splendor, and the costliness of her dresses, and her reckless display of them, in all weathers, and under all circumstances.[4]

In the masculine mind was ever present that thought of the proper performance of woman's natural calling. Disgust with the "fashionable ideal" is quite evident -

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[1]Ibid.

[2]L. P. Brockett, Woman's Rights, Wrongs, and Privileges, p. 137.

[3]Ibid. [4]Ibid., p. 136.

> The vocation of the wife and mother...is one which...requires the highest culture and the best development of the body, mind, and soul. Of the body, since activity, strength, skill, and elasticity of constitution are required; no tight-laced, fashion-distorted, pale, puny daughter of Eve can perform the duties of a good wife, much less those of a mother, successfully....[1]

Amidst this blasé atmosphere, a dilute intellectuality had come into vogue, although to remain fashionable, the lady must spurn all thoughts of seeming "advanced." She should "keep up" with current literature, even current thought; she might even concern herself with politics - but she must needs remain a lady, therefore expression of opinion was confined to the sewing circles.

But a darkening cloud had appeared upon the scene. South Carolina was followed by other slave states with its secession from the Union in 1860; the Civil War became inevitable in 1861. Within two years Lincoln had delivered his Emancipation Proclamation and the abolition of slavery became a reality with the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865. This same year marked Lee's surrender, whereupon five days later a deeper gloom overcast the nation with Lincoln's assassination and the beginnings of Reconstruction in the South.

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[1]Ibid., p. 125.

Woman's advance suffered as isolation became the way of the Southern woman. The period of Reconstruction heaped humiliation upon that poverty, grief, and helplessness left by the war. A sort of emotional isolation was the result; the Southern woman was therefore by instinct contrary-minded to any aggressive movements or demands made by those women leaders of the North or any other section of the United States.

That inherent leadership of the Southern woman acquired through obligation and experience was lost in so far as making contribution to the advance of women during this period.

Notwithstanding, the war was to prove enhancing to the value of woman, in so far as the multitude of average women in the North was concerned. Their contribution on the farms and in the factories during the national crisis made an impression upon the "...social consciousness, that conventional thinking and feeling which more than anything else defined the status of woman."[1]

The industrial revolution had virtually taken woman out of the lower-class home by the transference from home

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[1]E. R. Groves, op. cit., p. 232.

to factory of those economic activities performed by the housewife. Despite the inconsistency of thought, the Victorian age became an age of progress and mechanisms. The upper middle-class woman had become technologically unemployed with the release of such obligations as home spinning, dyeing, home baking, soap-making, etc. Upon the acquisition of this new wealth of time, she had evolved into the fashionable Voctorian ornament.

Her less fortunate sister, just now realizing compensation for her work, was "sweating herself to death." Upon the eve of the Civil War one quarter of the manufacturing of the country was being done by women. Factories for making shoes and rubbers; cotton, paper, and woolen mills were heavily dependent upon women at this time. No inhibitions of the cheapened wage afforded by the advent of machines were the concern of these women. The census report for 1860 gives the monthly wages of females employed in certain manufactures:

Boots and shoes	$11.25
Clothing	12.00
Cotton goods	13.30
Paper boxes	14.30
Umbrellas	13.38
Book folding	15.38
Hoopskirts	14.00
Ladies' Mantillas, etc.	16.00 [1]

[1] 1860 census report, cited by V. Penny, How Women Can Make Money, p. 490.

The ten hour work day was the average in most of the United States.

The advent of the war afforded more and better possibilities for employment as the men were drafted from their work. Aside from the farm and the factory, government offices were introducing women to clerical work. Some 1,500 were employed in these offices due to the efforts of General Francis Elias Spinner, appointed U. S. Treasurer by Lincoln in 1861. His report in 1869: "Some of the females doing more and better work for $900 per annum than many male clerks who were paid double that amount."[1]

Among the news items of the day, Harper's Weekly, February 18, 1865, features in full page spread a picture with the caption: "Lady Clerks Leaving the Treasury Department at Washington."

There was another possibility that was to help alleviate that horde of the "dispossessed," after the war had taken its toll. This was employment within the department store - whether as bookkeepers, cashgirls, or saleswomen. Captain Rowland H. Macy, whose dry goods store opened in New York in 1858, employed a woman as

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[1]Francis E. Spinner, cited in "Women in Business." Fortune, XII, pp. 53-54.

store manager, along with those other women who comprised some fifty percent of the employees of his store. The cashgirls received a weekly wage of $1.50 (except during the war when they received $2), irrespective of any amount of overtime. The weekly earnings of the saleswomen was $3. Salesmen received $6. Other retail establishments early realized the value of the female employee. Nevertheless these new openings were not adequate to supply the necessary jobs as the war came to an end.

The teaching profession was already swamped. Charity or work as an industrial laborer seemed for most women the only alternatives - but the typewriter saved the day.

The first "quasi-practical" typewriter was invented by Christopher Latham Sholes in 1868. An enthusiastic sponsor, one James Denmore, succeeded in selling the manufacturing rights to the gunmakers, E. Remington & Sons. Their improved Remington Model I was mounted on a sewing machine stand and was partially operated by foot.

During the first decade of its existence the typewriter, in so far as most people were concerned, was just a curiosity. Those who did decide to make a purchase must needs purchase a trained operator with it. Women seemed to possess a "special aptitude" for handling such a mechanism and hereupon lies the derivation of the system of commercial education for women.

In 1871 Sadler Packard's business college offered a full course in "Type Writing" and between twenty and thirty scholarships to young ladies who would take the course. Two years later three girls appeared to accept the offer.

Within the next ten years business men were beginning to find the machines indispensable, and the indispensable girl operator went into the office with them. Soon she adapted herself to other such office machines as the mimeograph and mechanical computators. According to the census of 1870, 2,000 females were employed in clerical occupations.

Another invention, that of Alexander Graham Bell, was to provide an opening in which women were to hold their own in the world. On an experimental scale women had proved their ability to operate the telegraph. But men were chosen to operate the first telephone exchanges. They were found lacking in just that amount of "finesse" necessary in dealing with people unseen. In 1878 two young girls stepped into the world of the telephone. An immediate switch was not made from male to female employees. As the telephone service grew, men were transferred to other jobs. By the turn of the century, women had practically claimed the field as their own.

With the rush of the new clerical job (by 1880 the number employed had increased to 7,000) the transition from Victorianism to Modern Age had really begun. As girls came tumbling out of their homes, society was faced with a housing problem. Women had to be protected; the breaking down of Victorian mores was a slow process. A Y. W. C. A. founded in Boston in 1866 was active in trying to relieve the situation. It acted as an employment agency and canvassed private homes to find lodging for the members. The housing demand had become so insistent that the Y. W. C. A. had opened rooming quarters of its own by the early nineties.

Until the turn of the century women were not to realize the extent of their potentialities in the "working" world. Even in the nineties authorities argued that women outside the home would mean race suicide and the loss of femininity. The belief that women were incapacitated to do exacting mental work, due to an anatomical difference in the breathing structure of the man and woman, was not to be disproved until 1894.

Thus -

> The influence of the War must not be interpreted so much as a breaking down of the barriers that hampered woman's advancement...as the enhancing of the tendency to increase woman's opportunities and to give her greater equality with men....[1]

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[1]Groves, op. cit., p. 241.

Woman's sphere of activity had increased in other directions as well as in that of business and industry. Matthew Massar forwarded the cause of education by giving the most of his fortune to found Vassar Female College at Poughkeepsie, New York. It did not open its doors until the close of the Civil War in 1865 even though it had been incorporated in 1861. This school of higher learning for women, the first that could be classed with Yale and Harvard, began with an enrollment of three hundred and fifty-three students.

By way of upholding the progressive attitude of reverring to women by something other than "female," the new college was authorized by the New York State Legislature in 1867 to drop its middle name. Reminder of the occasion may be found within the Vassar College Song Book:

An institution once there was
  Of learning and of knowledge
That had upon its high brick front
  A "Vassar Female College."
The maidens fair could not enjoy
  Their bread and milk and porridge,
For graven on the forks and spoons
  Was "Vassar Female College."

A strong east wind at last came by,
  A wind that blew from Norwich;
It tore the "Female" off the sign
  Which was upon the college.
And as the faculty progressed
  In wisdom and in knowledge,

They took the "Female" off the spoons
As well as off the college.[1]

Shortly thereafter, in 1869, Pennsylvania College for Women was founded; Smith College and Wellesley, both, were opened in 1875.

The new state universities, particularly in the West, had become coeducational. The Harvard Annex, the first coordinate college, came into being even before Smith and Wellesley. This "first" became Radcliffe in 1893 with the power to issue diplomas upon which was the signature of the president of Harvard University.

In the latter part of the eighties Barnard College came into existence as a result of the efforts to found a coordinate college with Columbia University. More such colleges were soon to follow - Sophie Newcomb Memorial College for Women of Tulane University, Pembroke College annexed to Brown.

By the end of the eighties, scores of institutions for the higher cultural education of women stood with open doors.

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[1]Amy L. Reed, "Vassar -- College," Vassar College Song Book (New York: G. Shirmer, 1900), cited by R. E. Finley, The Lady of Godey's, p. 205. (Used by special permission in The Lady of Godey's.)

In secondary education the public high school was coming into its own. There were 160 between 1860 and 1870; there were 800 ten years later.

The first kindergarten in the United States had been opened in 1855 at Watertown, Wisconsin. Gaining momentum after the war, kindergartens had been established in Washington, New York, St. Louis, Chicago, Philadelphia, and San Francisco by the end of the sixties.

Women had begun to monopolize the field of teaching. In 1880, of the teachers in the United States 57.2% were women and 42.8% were men; in 1890 65.6% were women and 34.4% were men. However men held supreme so far as salary was concerned. Men's salaries averaged $389.88 as compared with women's $262.64 for twenty-three states in 1875-1876. In 1876-1877 the salaries were $437.98 and 290.69, respectively.

The war proved an impetus to women in the field of medicine and nursing. With the outbreak of the war volunteers for nursing were needed at the front. From a menial occupation nursing was to rise to the position of an honored profession. Clara Barton and Dorothea Dix stand among the famed of this period. Miss Dix was placed at the head of the nursing system serving the Union armies. By way of parentheses, she was the first

to call attention to the conditions of the insane within the United States. And it was Clara Barton who established the policy among those customs of warfare of giving aid to the wounded of both friend and foe.

Aside from raising the dignity of nursing, the Civil War taught women the necessity of organization in work. Effects of this were to be seen when the war was over.

Scientific nurses' training began after the war, about 1872, at the New England Hospital for Women. There were twenty-two training schools for nurses by 1883.

Women in medicine were still contending with the criticisms from the opposite sex within the profession. Nevertheless, they were progressing. By 1882 there were thirty-eight medical schools which allowed the admittance of both sexes. Despite the raps of the men, women had one factor in their favor: the excessive modesty of the women of that age. The feminine physician was much sought by the "shrinking violets" of the day.

As for the ministry - there were many able clergywomen during this period. The Rev. Anna Howard Shaw is most outstanding among them. Upon making the acquaintance of one Rev. Marianna Thompson, Anna decided to give up up her trade of sewing to go to high school. Early she

began to prove her talent as a speaker and soon attracted the interest of Dr. Peck, a Methodist elder, who invited her, upon occasions, to preach. Her family was much opposed to this (her previous work was to have paid her way through college) and soon were to wash their hands of her. Nevertheless, she proceeded to go to Albion College on her own and to support herself by occasional preaching. From there she went to Boston University to become a theological student. While there she received two pastorates. She was ordained by the Methodist Protestant Church in 1880. Growing dissatisfied with the ministry, she returned to Boston University to receive an M. D. degree. She felt this to be the better opportunity to reach humanity. She continued her preaching, nevertheless, as she carried her medicine bag. Presently she was to devote herself to the cause of woman's suffrage.

Two others must needs be mentioned in connection with this profession. Julia Ward Howe was preaching from the Unitarian pulpit and Mary Baker G. Eddy was performing her work as religious teacher and organizer of the Christian Science denomination. In general, however, advance in the ministry lagged behind that in business or medicine.

1870 marks the date of the first graduation from an American law school by a woman. She was Ada Kepley and the school was Union College in Chicago. Women were on the advance in this profession and these pioneers early contributed to the literature of law. During the latter quarter of the nineteenth century women lawyers began to organize; the Women's International Bar Association was formed in 1888. There were fifty-six women attorneys in the United States in 1882; thirty-one of these were law school graduates.

Referring now to all work outside the home, the census of 1870 reports the number of women employed as 571,966; the employment of women in domestic service engulfed 867,354 - totalling 1, 439,320 women employed. Within the next two decades the total had advanced to 2,647,157 and again to 3,914,571. The census of eighteen-seventy enumerates professions from hair-dressing to preaching, work in trade and commerce and work in factories. Among the curiosities listed were bar-tenders, stock herders, gun and lock smith, stereotypers, and pilots, architects, and naturalists, each of these last three categories numbering "1." The increase in population of the last three decades of this century was accompanied by a corresponding increase in those

employed in domestic service. This has been accredited to the increase in employment in factories and offices.

Most early organizations among these laborers was the result of a sort of philanthropist movement, to be discussed later, rather than from the workers themselves. Nevertheless, several of the organizations should be mentioned at this point. As an aid in the collection of wages the Working Women's Protective Union was formed in 1866. At this time there was but one national labor organization, exclusively for women. This was the Daughters of St. Crispin. In 1868 the Woman's Typographical Union was formed. It seems to have been quite a vigorous organization. The Knights of Labor, one of the two important national labor organizations at the time among men, admitted women to regular membership in 1881. During this time the state labor bureaus came into existence. They began to concern themselves with the scientific study of conditions among those women who worked.

The prohibition movement had subsided before the war. It flared up again in the seventies with the praying temperance women giving it their loyal support. The summer of 1874 witnessed the organization of the National Woman's Christian Temperance Union and within

the eighties the World's Woman Christian Temperance Union formed. The name of Frances E. Willard is linked to the temperance cause of this period.

The women, having extended their interests and activities during the war, now had need of continuing the expression of this side of the lives - the woman's club was the result. Secondary reasons for this organization were the educational progress, the loosening of the restrictions of the social code, and the "herd instinct" that came to them upon entering a world of affairs to which they were most unaccustomed.

The clubs, then as now, were of two varieties - cultural and purposeful. The earliest of the cultural type busied themselves with "dull little papers" and abstract topics. Gradually the more intelligent and purposeful clubs became prominent.

During the sixties and seventies the clubs gathered momentum; by the eighties the movement had attracted attention in all parts of the country. Women's clubs enumerated toward the end of the eighth decade totaled eighty-eight. Nevertheless, this was truly an underestimate; records were never left by many. This was due in part to the silent shrinking modesty of those who remained ladies in the Victorian sense of the word.

The larger organizations of the National Council of Women and the General Federation of Women's Clubs had come into being toward the end of the eighties and maintained a firm foothold with the approach of the nineties.

Now to regress for a moment -

A type of organization that was brought to self-expression as an effect of the war was the philanthropic groups and societies. Many influences were behind the number of these social service organizations that sprang up during the seventies. Among these influences were most certainly the attitudes resulting from the war experiences. Hand in hand with this was the increasing participation in the world of affairs after the war. And yet another - with the rapid development of industry many women became aware of the evils and deplorable working conditions involved. Here a philanthropic hand was extended toward the organization of many an early trade union, as previously mentioned.

The suffrage movement remained conspicuously upon the scene during this post-war period. When the war was in progress, the suffragists lent their support to the abolition movement with the organization of the Loyal League.

After the war their efforts were concentrated upon amending the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. They

wished to subtract the word "male" from the Fourteenth and to add the word "sex" to the Fifteenth. They did not succeed.

Dauntless in their efforts, the suffragists held a Woman's Rights Convention at New York in 1866. This was the first since the beginning of the war. At this convention the American Equal Rights Association was formed as the woman's rights society and the anti-slavery societies were merged.

The masculine attitude of any previous support had now become "This is the black man's hour." Upon the vote on the amendment to the Fourteenth Amendment in Congress, December, 1866, the Senate promptly crushed it with nine for and thirty-seven against it.

The movement of this period had many obstacles to overcome. One was the split in the American Equal Rights Association to form the American Woman Suffrage Association, a conservative group led by Lucy Stone and Julia Ward Howe, and the National Woman Suffrage Association, a radical group which gathered round Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

Another blow to the movement was the entrance of Victoria Woodhull and her sister, Tennessee Claflin, upon the scene. Their misdemeanors and campaign for free love left their sordid mark upon the movement.

With the split and formation of the two factions, the movement seemed to lose force; but the daughter, Alice Stone Blackwell, and husband, Henry Blackwell, of Lucy Stone have been given credit for a reunion. About the time that women's clubs were being organized on a national scale, the two factions met as the National American Woman Suffrage Association. The year was 1889.

The war had given momentum to those trends underway. In education and industry, in reform and organization, woman's advance took advantage of the times. These trends were moving toward economic independence and a "near equality with men"[1]....

Now from her pedestal and a myriad of crinolines and hoops

> ...the lady stepped discreetly forward so that the dress now began to take up a position at the rear; as she walked she seemed to drag her dress behind her, bag and baggage, for the crinoline was no longer a circumvention, but an afterthought, sustaining billowy masses heaped at the rear; as its shape changed into a "crinolette" it carried in addition an enormous Bustle, so that the whole center of gravity of the dress was shifted backwards. Instead of standing passively surrounded by an impregnable fortification, the Woman had boldly advanced, as it were, to meet the foe.[2]

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[1]Groves, op. cit., title of chapter XII.

[2]Cunnington, op. cit., pp. 197-198.

Although extravagance had come to be the by-word of a few, must need be practiced by the majority, for women and fashion suffered alike with the advent of the war. Toward the end of the sixties the huge skirts were cut in gores, reducing the yardage for a gown from twenty-five to a mere ten or twelve.

With the seventh decade came a change in silhouette as the tournure or petticoat bustle came to relieve milady of some of her skirt's weight by shifting a little of it to the rear hips. These bustles were still accompanied by large hoops and small hoops. An "S" curve was exacted in this silhouette as the lady, stepping into her high heels, tilted her body forward to achieve what fashion has termed the "Grecian bend." The curve was further accentuated by trailing skirts.

The mass of flounced construction rendered possible by the sewing machine was heaped in back upon the padded bustles. Frequently this was too much even for the hips, and shoulder straps that were sewn in the skirt back, passing over the shoulders (for they were fastened to the belt in front), transferred a portion of weight to the shoulders.

The hair style of the day was popularly known as the "waterfall." This was a chignon of false hair or

horsehair attached in back and usually held neatly in place by the hair net.

The peplin or basque bodice was much worn during the seventies. Coming down over the hips, it assured the downfall of the hoop.

Another innovation in the silhouette was achieved as the hoops were cast aside and the "tied-back" look became the vogue. Skirts were drawn so tightly about the knees that walking became difficult. The new silhouette did arrive at a simplicity of line not known since the early portion of the century.

Notwithstanding the simplicity of the line, the dress itself was a thing of ornamentation. Aside from the ruffles and drapes, buttons, buckles, belts, and jet beading, known as passementerie, were "musts" of the fashion. These trimmings added much to the ruinous prices of the gowns.

A conglomeration of colors were to be had in fashionable fabrics. This accentuated the wild extravagance and proved good taste to be nonexistent. Magentas, greens yellows solferinos, and violent blues in stripes, plaids, and checks made for mass confusion upon milady's fragile frame.

Toward the end of the seventies bodices were moving even lower upon the hips.

Sometime after mid-century a Madame Demorest was establishing herself in New York. Her fashions were imported from Paris but she adapted them to the use of her clientele. The fashion magazine, Demorest Monthly Magazine, was conducted by W. Jennings Demorest and ranked second only to the Godey's Lady's Book.

Just before the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876, the bustle truly came into general use. Of the costume of the eighties the bustle, boned basaue and looped polonaise were distinguishing characteristics. This polonaise was a type of dress consisting of waist and overskirt cut in one piece. This usually buttoned all the way down the front and was worn over an underskirt cut tightly to the knees and flounced at the bottom.

Fashionable jersey bodices made of an elastic cashmere fabric came in about 1882. These afforded much comfort and free action.

Costumes now began to come in two colors or materials. Polonaises and underskirts might be of different hues.

Among those materials highly favored were stiff taffetas, brocades, velvets, and of the more delicate fabrics, light-weight foulards, printed India pongee, Chinese crepes, and French cashmeres.

Hats and bonnets remained novelty concoctions of ribbons, lace, velvet, felt, kid, and horsehair.

The dolman was a favorite out-door wrap of the period. Varying in length, these wraps might be of the finest brocades, satins, and silks and trimmed with puffings, fringes, and passementerie. Other out-door jackets with long fronts and short backs were worn.

The usual attire of this day was such that "...the inside network of elastic bands, strings, and other cunning devices made sitting extremely impossible. Chair arms and table edges were safer for ladylike perching."[1]

A decided taste for sports evolved during this period. Before the Civil War, ice skating and horse-back riding probably completed the list of those sports in which the lady might indulge. Croquet, imported from England in the late sixties, was among the first to intrigue her. The game served as a social activity, and swinging the mallet between the legs - known as "spooning" - was truly improper unless bloomers were worn.

A croquet costume from a fashion book of 1868 is described:

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[1]E. Sellner, American Costumes, plate 31.

> ...the dress is made with an apron front and looped up over a gay coloured under petticoat and the high walking boots are finished with a silk tassel at the ankle. A short sacque or loose jacket is worn with this dress, and a small hat with a long ostrich feather falling over the hair.[1]

Tennis and archery were soon to be taken up. The frocks worn while playing tennis were draped and bustled and the trains of the long dresses were daintily held.

The bicycle made its debut in the sixties with a wooden type termed a "bone shaker." The high-wheeler was popular during the seventies, but the ladies preferred the tricycle until the advent of the "safety" or more modern bicycle. Cycling was all the rage during the nineties and a fashionable costume for the sport was adopted.

A doctor's advice to young girls of the day:

> Walking, running, horse-back riding, tricycle riding, lawn-tennis, swimming, rowing, skating, bowling, hand-ball, and general gymnastics, are the exercises best adapted to girls, and, for that matter, to any persons who wish a healthful and well balanced rather than an abnormal physical development.[2]

To lend more freedom to the women in the home, "canned goods," kerosene lamps, and laundries had arrived.

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[1]E. McClellan, Historic Dress In America: 1800-1870, p. 282.

[2]L. M. Hall, Popular Science Monthly, cited in "Moral and Physical Health Hints," Good Housekeeping, I (May 2, 1885), 19.

Women's underwear and children's outer garments were being made in the factories. In many homes coal stoves and furnaces had taken the place of inefficient fireplaces. Drug stores now furnished milady's complexion lotions and facial creams. Everything made for the lightening of her labors and forwarded her to prove "the feminine side of a masculine civilization."[1]

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[1]E. R. Groves, The American Woman: The Feminine Side Of A Masculine Civilization.

Godey's Lady's Book, XCII (June, 1876), page preceding 505. (Figure 2).

CHAPTER IV

IN THE GIBSON WAY

Woman's "emancipation" had begun in the midst of that peculiar tide of thought termed "Victorianism." But Victorianism, with all its prudery and sentimentality, was essentially a moral and social revolt against the unrestraint and profligacy brought forward from the previous century. Now in accord with the changing times and the verities of life, a reaction to the trends of thought was once again occurring.

The progress of one generation now left the woman totally unlike her grandmother. The Civil War and its aftermath had proved to be quickening influences to the trends of progress. Upon the heels of the war came the influx of women into business and industry. A broadened scope of interest was evidenced in the women's clubs. The agitations of the suffragists had now become food for serious thought. The openings in the professions and in higher education worked a favorable change in the social tendencies. Action and reaction, woman stayed abreast of the changing times.

The entrance of women into the world of affairs had afforded her a certain amount of economic independence. This novelty, as it were, seemed much more desirable,

particularly to those of the lower economic levels, than the tiresome sort of existence filled with family burdens and the care of the home. Unimpelled by economic or personal hardships, the women of the middle and wealthy classes were likewise seeking an outlet from their inhibited sort of existence. With the broadening of interests had come frustrations from this totally dependent and confining rôle. The desire to work outside the domestic sphere thus spread upward through the economic levels. Although masculine attitudes were not to be easily reconciled, woman's gainful employment became an increasing conventionality.

With the acquisition of this economic independence came greater prestige. In light of their economic status, the existing distance between man and woman was lessened. Reaction to this new relationship of the sexes was inevitable as men were forced to recognize the rights and interests of women as they strived toward equality. Possibly through a subconscious fear for his own good, man beheld the woman towering above him -

The fair sex of the period was immortalized by the pen of Charles Dana Gibson. As described by an editorial writer of the New York Sun:

> ...Mr. Gibson's massive creation, a cathedral-like lady with an extraordinary reach and Atlantic shoulders.... She is the cedar of Lebanon, the

> Tower of Babel. Architects, interested in the problem of mass and support, have made strange calculations as to the necessary size of her shoes, the pedestals of so heroic a statue....[1]

And because the Gibson Girl was tall, men wanted to be taller.

The staid gentility of a Victorian era could scarce remain with the advent of the motor car at the turn of the century. Other facets of the changing times were the Klondike gold rush and the sinking of the Maine in Havana harbor which marked the beginning of the Spanish-American War. The electrification of the sewing machine and the introduction of electric cutting machines in 1890 were to prove a tremendous boon to the clothing industry. The increasing rise of enthusiasm for sports served to hasten the transition of the Victorian to the Modern Age.

Woman's advance had taken a decided step forward in the field of education. From scarce more than a study of the "three R's" her course of study now literally ranged from "A to Z." The curriculum of Vasaar College discussed in an article from The Delineator, May, 1894, bears marked resemblance to the usual curricula of colleges today.

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[1]New York Sun, cited by Fairfax Downey, Portrait of an Era, p. 194.

...The studies of every regular student up to the middle of the sophomore year are mathematics, English, Latin, one other language (either Greek, German, or French), hygiene, elocution and medieval history. In the second semester of the sophomore year eight hours are open to election, the languages being still required. Upon the foundation thus laid the student is expected to build in the future as she chooses, for with the exception of psychology and ethics, prescribed for the senior year, the entire remainder of the course is elective.[1]

What a sight is called to mind as description is given of the typical opening day over half a century ago:

September soon arrives, and the eager students, old and new, gather from all directions.... With the exception of the college parlors...the interior of the buildings is not as attractive as in June, for the corridors are filled with trunks and boxes, and furniture of all kinds unearthed from the summer store-room....[2]

The student was liable to judgment by the disciplinary body appointed by the Students Association upon violation of those rules by which the Vasaar student was bound:

She must be in attendance of all college appointments, including recitations and chapel services; she must have her light extinguished for the night at the stroke of the ten-o'clock bell; she must conscientiously devote at least one hour a day to ourdoor exercise.[3]

The refining of an occasional rough point has proved the most obvious advance in the higher education of women since those days of the nineties.

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[1]E. P. Cobb, "The Women's Colleges of the United States, No. 1: A Girl's Life and Work at Vasaar." The Delineator

[2]Ibid., p. 531. [3]Ibid., p. 532.

From the same discussion of Vasaar College the point is made that many of the graduates were going into the field of medicine. Those first pioneers had weathered the criticism of the times, so that now, by the turn of the century, women had attained a secure position and right to practice medicine. The medical schools that were strictly for women were decreasing in number, for of those medical colleges in the United States only seven important ones were to remain closed to women by 1900.

At the time of the World's Fair at Chicago in 1893, a Medical Congress was held. At this congress nursing was dubbed a subsection of the medical profession. Those women present at the Congress organized into the National League of Nursing Education. Later to stem from this organization was the American Nurses' Association.

With the outbreak of the Spanish War, just three years after the nurses had organized, they were to become an integral part of the Army. With this added distinction came a distinctive costume, to become increasingly familiar during the First World War. As the first woman to be fornally commissioned by the United States Army, Dr. Anita Newcomb Magee set about to organize a service exclusively for women. Congress was formally to make this corps a portion of the Army upon the close of the Spanish War.

The advance in the opening of the professions afforded a more prominent place for the woman lawyer. There were one thousand and ten women attorneys by the end of the century. They did not all practice, however. Many found employment with the legal periodicals, and there were those who studied law as a prerequisite for business.

By the end of the century there were five and a quarter million women gainfully employed outside their homes. Having invaded every branch of industry they had likewise become effectively organized. With a philanthropic motive those women of the leisure class had come to join forces with the workers to better the working conditions through legislation and reform. Organizers were traveling, virtually to every corner of the country forming unions among skilled and unskilled - every class of woman worker.

Not only did women work outside the home, they were coming to live out of it. The tendency had begun before this decade. The housing situation had created many headaches for the newly formed Y. W. C. A. Similar places of abode began to open all over the country during the nineties - but there was a constant overflow. Women were becoming more completely alienated from the traditional domestic life with this passage into the world of affairs.

...Teacher and preacher, doctor and nurse, stenographer and telephone operator, shop-girl and clerk, factory

worker and houseworker - more than five million of them were in 1900 making their living outside of their homes. And beyond them, as they paused to gather breath, stretched fields of further conquest.[1]

Earlier crusaders of the temperance movement had, as it were, forecast the actions of one Carry Nation, who was to gain notoriety for her preachments and destructive episodes. Wielding her famous hatchet, she illicitly destroyed property and made such an exhibition of herself over the country, that most serious people connected with the temperance movement renounced her.

The woman's club movement had progressed to the purposeful type of organization which was now more prominent than the cultural type. Many had become quite interested in politics but failed to rally to the cause of suffrage. The movement was attaining international proportions by this decade of the nineties. By the end of the century, the General Federation of Women's Clubs could boast a membership of 150,000 among twelve hundred separate organizations. Many church organizations, secret societies, and the suffrage groups were not members of this Federation. An estimate of all club membership was double that of the Federation, and there is a possibility that the number was half a million.

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[1]Irwin, op. cit. p. 192.

As the century came to a close, the Big Four of the suffrage movement was passing leadership into younger hands. Lucretia Mott, having gone into retirement, had died in 1880. Now Anna Howard Shaw and Carrie Chapman Catt were coming to the fore. And yet another - Maude Wood Park was to give a portion of her life to the cause.

The cause of suffrage had by this time risen to comparative respectability, and tangible results, yet small evidence of the persistent fight, were appearing as four western states granted the suffrage to women. Wyoming came into the Union as a suffrage state, having endorsed the measure as a territory. Utah likewise came into the Union with woman suffrage in its proposed constitution.. Colorado and Idaho, having previously obtained their statehood, were next in line to grant the suffrage to women.

Heart-breaking defeats were also in line as the "anti-prohibitionists" fought woman suffrage with "tooth and nail." The wreck and ruin of the liquor interests was linked to the woman's vote. This force of interests was a deciding factor in the course of the movement for the next fifteen years.

The Gibson Girl had become the epitome of womanhood of the period. In the words of Homer Fort:

> No artist in this country has done more to typify the American woman...than Charles Dana Gibson. His pen has caught the true inspiration and he embodies in one composite picture the vivacity, the independence and hauteur, the condescending amiability, the grace and the catholic spirit of the daughter of this Great Republic....[1]

Many there were who remarked upon the subject -

> The Gibson Girl was no mere rack for clothes, Robert Bridges maintained. Under her coat she had a pair of shoulders able to drive an oar or put a hunter to a fence. Healthy, brave, independent, well-bred, a flash of mischief lurked in the corners of her intelligent eyes.[2]

Now the woman with a purpose donned her purposeful clothes. As discussed in the columns of "advice to girls" in the magazines and newspapers, they were plain and neat -

> ..."a trim and spotless shirt waist, a plain sailor hat, an inconspicuous tie, heavy, business-like dog skin gloves, low-heeled shoes".... "Jewelry, except of the most modest variety, high-heeled shoes, ruffles, any coquettish touches" - these the business woman must avoid like the pestilence....[3]

But excrescences of Victorianism continued to remain to save the feminine face for, inwardly, there was yet "...a haunting fear of doing aught that was unladylike or mannish."[4]

Perhaps, in part, this accounts for the extravagant dimensions assumed by the forthcoming silhouette. The

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[1]Homer Fort, cited by Fairfax Downey, Portrait of an Era, p. 196.

[2]F. Downey, Portrait of an Era, p.196.

[3]Irwin, op. cit., p. 270. [4]Ibid., p. 274.

comparatively slim, severe creature of 1890 added balloon sleeves and bell skirt to accentuate that persistently fashionable hourglass figure.

With the beginning of the decade the basque remained quite fashionable, boned and laced to fit like a glove as it was worn over the corset. Soon after 1890 skirts, circular and gored, began to fit close to the hips, falling in great flute-like folds behind. Decided flare was added at the bottom, and to achieve the desired effect in fold and flare, a lining of canvas or fibre chamois, a heavy unpliable sort of material, was used. The close fit about the hips was the result of tying tightly across the back a strip of tape or elastic fastened at the side seams.

As the skirts grew, the sleeves kept pace. On an inverted basis, growth of the sleeve began with fullness at the top. Fibre chamois was employed in sleeve and skirt alike. The great amount of fullness was thus made to give a bouffant appearance. In the case of the balloon sleeve, the amount of material involved was sufficient to make an entire waist with sleeve of closer fit when this extravaganza had served its fashionable time. This balloon sleeve was actually an overgrown leg-of-mutton, which had had a brief recurrence in the first few years of the decade. The leg-of-mutton sleeve had been a fashion feature of the 1830's.

To further accentuate the extreme width about the shoulders, berthas, fichus, collars, and yokes were to be had in endless variety. Sometimes they were detachable so that older garments might be brought within the realm of fashion.

The popular shirt waists of the day were being worn in a variety of colors with white, black, and dark-toned skirts. Red, blue, and green in plaids and stripes were highly favored. These dress waists became quite the mode for evening and reception toilettes as well as for everyday wear.

Necklines of the period were quite high with the exception of the square decolletage for evening. Even with this, a "dog collar" necklace, close about the neck, was frequently worn.

A glimpse of the nature of the tailored simplicity arrived at by the woman of the world may be had from this description of a ladies' costume in the May, 1894, issue of The Delineator:

> "The costume has the natty masculine air which is just now admired by fashionable women.... The skirt is fashioned in the new five-tored style and presents a fashionably distended effect. The front is quite smooth, and the fulness is massed at the center of the back in long volutes or godets that spread gracefully from gathers at the top.
>
> "The jaunty coat-basque strongly suggests the masculine cutaway coat, the resemblance being especially marked when the fronts are closed at

the bust with a single button-hole and button. ...The fronts...are reversed in enormous lapels that meet the rolling collar in notches. The vest is cutaway in moderately low outline to accommodate a chemisette with which a four-in-hand scarf is worn; but it may be closed to the throat, if preferred, and finished with a close-fitting standing collar. ...The gigot sleeves are of enormous size. ...the fulness, which is disposed in side-plaits at the top, flares in innumerable folds and wrinkles at the elbow."[1]

Imagine a cutaway coat with huge puffed sleeves! Contradiction, indeed - but, for woman, this was a period of transition....

The bell skirt and balloon sleeve remained to form the predominant silhouette of the decade until the tight coat sleeve and slimmer skirts became the mode of 1899. The long coat was quite the fashion feature of that year. The tight sleeve was soon to be succeeded by the "upside-down leg-of-mutton" or the "bishop" sleeve.

The shirt waist reigned supreme by 1899 and the appearance of milady's tailored costume was decidedly more consistent with the advent of the well-fitted sleeve.

Various materials were used at the end of the century - aelion (a mixture of silk and wool), jaconet, India prints, Pompadour sateens, satin stripes, Italian silk, striped grenadines, and Turdish, Japanese, and Persian materials. Serge and other woolen materials were

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[1]The Delineator, XLIII (May, 1894), 468.

used for the tailored suits. The first of the shirt waists were of smooth finished cotton material or of white or colored linen. Fancier ones of a later date were of grenadine, silk, or some transparent fabric and bedecked with ribbon and lace.

Belts of leather and fancy silk girdles were fashionable items to be worn with the shirts and skirts. Jabots were a featured part of many a shirt waist, the stiff collar and tie considered by some to be hard and unladylike.

Necklines of the shirt waist were high but evening dresses of the last few years of the decade were round and low. Sheer materials such as gauzes, chiffons, voiles, georgette crepes were used.

Fashionable hues included a particular shade of red, blue, and blue-green. Combinations of materials and colors continued to be used.

Bonnets and hats were worn. The sailor hat was particularly popular. A profusion of flowers and feathers adorned the top of all head-gear.

The particular hair-style of these latter years was the cause of much jest. Drawn up over a large cushiony affair, the coiffure assumer exaggerated proportions. The lady entered the new century <u>á la Pompadour</u>, and she was to remain that way throughout the first decade.

The rising tide of sports, as previously mentioned, greatly influenced milady in her dress. Among others already underway, golf became a favorite and allowed the skirts to rise to the tops of the high shoes.

The bicycle, now all the rage, commanded a particular set of apparel. Maria Ward, in Bicycling for Ladies, 1896, discusses the proper clothing.

> "Clothing should be most carefully selected with the view to an equal distribution of weight and an even thickness of material; it should have no constricting, no tight bands anywhere, but should permit of absolute freedom of movement, and be warm enough to prevent chilling through too great radiation of heat, yet porous enough to allow of free evaporation.
>
> "All seasons of the year permit of cycling; the bicyclist therefore has opportunity for much variety in dress. The essentials are knickerbockers, shirt-waist, stockings, shoes, gaiters, sweater, coat, no skirt, or skirt with length decided by individual preference, hat and gloves."[1]

Fashion now afforded special bathing costumes for a young and immodest generation. Of a "Ladies' Bathing Costume":

> "...The costume may be made up with a high neck and standing collar, if the low neck be deemed undesirable; and it may have long shirt-sleeves finished with round cuffs, in lieu of the short sleeves covered with ripple caps. ...The drawers reach a trifle below the knee and are drawn in closely in knicker-bocker fashion. ...The body is closed at the center of the front with button-holes and buttons, and is made fanciful by a Bertha frill....

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[1]M. E. Ward, Bicycling for Ladies, p. 93.

"The full, round skirt reaches to the knee...the belt is closed at the center of the back."[1]

In such an outfit any lady would be a sensation on the beach.

And now the motor car at the turn of the century soon brought forth a bevy of goggles, veils, capes, dusters, and gloves.

An epoch-making half-century - overture to a great concert, times by the sound of marching women; and the keynotes of the next movement could be heard as the shackles of custom and law as well as those which still confined her limbs in odd places were continually cast aside.

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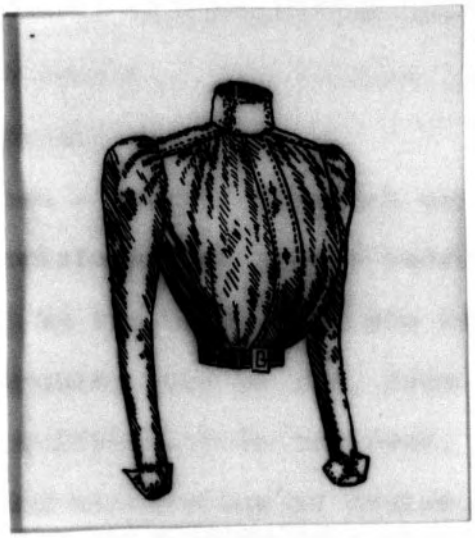
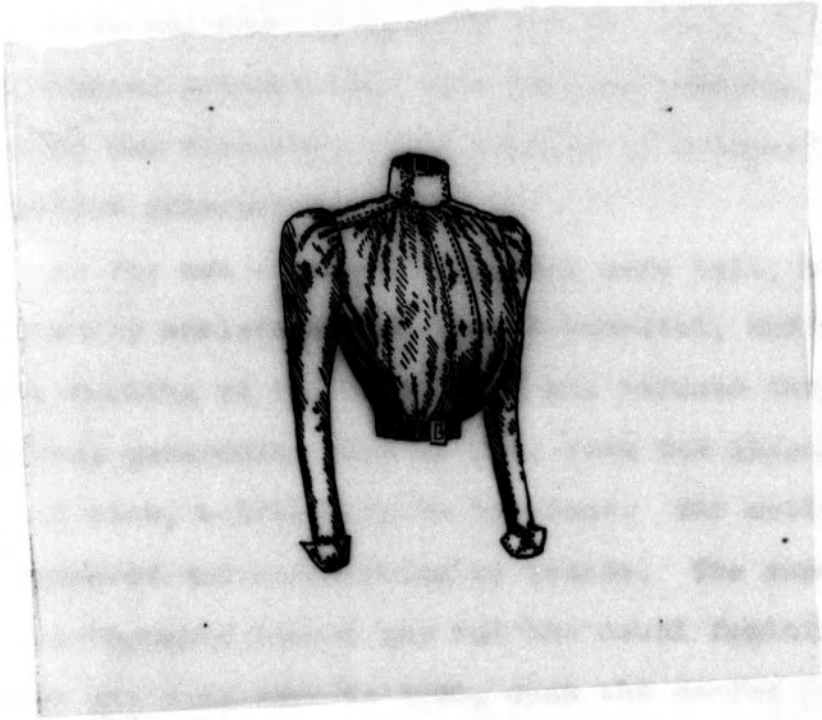
[1]The Delineator, XLIII, 455.

The Delineator, XLIII (May, 1894), 461.

The Delineator, XLIII (May, 1894), 443.





<u>The Delineator</u>, 1899.

CHAPTER V

UP WITH THE SKIRTS

With her chin in the air and her skirt in hand, woman stepped precariously into the new century. Yet each step was expressive lf a freedom of movement unknown to previous generations.

As for man - even if his idol were tall, he persistently envisioned her upon a pedestal, and now with incense burning at its base. All who refused this chivalrous generosity were as yet, from the masculine point of view, a liability to the race. Her motives were self-centered and undeserving of praise. The summation of man's thoughts toward any but the usual feminine endeavor was made when in 1900, upon the daring feat of Anna Edson Taylor, the first of either six to go over Niagara Falls successfully in a barrel, the male editor of the Denver Republican remarked that Miss Taylor was "taking a lot of credit that belongs to the barrel."[1]

Although she seldom cared to be so blatantly expressive of her talents, the woman was bored to be preoccupied with a pedestal.

Denver Republican, (1900), cited by O. Jensen, The Revolt of American Women, p. 85.

Forthwith she donned her straight-front corset, that innovation devised upon common-sense principles, and pressed forward as with utmost haste; for the great amount of flexibility afforded by this variant of confinement made possible the forward bend. A dip to the front waistline further accentuated her stance, and in effect, milady appeared in such haste as to leave the lower portion of her fair self behind.

But as she hurried on, she must needs take note of the masculine gaze upon her. As yet, the man did reign supreme. So feminine-wise, she ruffled and flounced and braided and stitched her gowns so as to partially disguise her forward intent.

Skirts of these first five years were of a bell-like sort, termed "morning-glory" skirts. These fell from a smooth fit about the hips to an undulated mass about the feet. Waists were full, and the horizontal note was all the vogue. Shoulders added epaulettes and sleeves spread out at the bottom.

With neck still stiffened by whalebone stays, the lady decided in favor of a slight change of pace. About 1905, reverting to the previous decade, she puffed her sleeves at the top and amassed a further complexity of puffs and frills.

Amidst her disguise, evidence of her ascent in this world was prominently affixed upon her head. As will be recalled, the hair was extravagantly bedecked into the pompadour. Placed upon this was the engulfing Gainsborough type hat - and upon this was displayed quantities of plumage and sizeable feathers which remained a fashionable "trim" until 1914.

Discovery and invention had surely lifted much of the drudge from housework. Vacuum cleaner, dish-washer, and washing machine, of a sort, had made their appearance, and electricity was making its way into the home. Changes in domestic habits had made for woman's freer movement.

Her invasion of industry and the professions was slowly, but surely breaking down the opposition. Organizations for women had made for consolidation of expanding interests. And the trend away from Victorian ideals was unconsciously reshaping the conventions.

And, as yet unmentioned, in every state man had condescendingly given to his mate the right to make a will. The married woman might control her own wages in most states, and in seven states, she had equal guardianship of her children. These rights she now possessed as she entered the Twentieth Century.

While invention and discovery were claiming new pages in history, woman was claiming a new page for herself. The event which brought her to the fore was the first of the World Wars. And from thence, gathering all her resources, she sallied forth to make herself known to man as a fellow human being.

Prejudice to the education of women had more or less evaporated by the end of this new decade. However, want of facilities proved an occasional check to the more technical and scholarly ambitions. Notwithstanding, attendance to the colleges and universities grew by leaps and bounds. Between 1900 and 1916, the number of women in search of a higher education more than quadrupled. By 1927 three women to every four men received the bachelors degree. They had actually surpassed the men in attendance to the schools of secondary education.

Women of this century have reigned supreme in the teaching profession. For the year 1921-1922 women constituted 100% of the teachers in kindergartens 87% of those in the public elementary schools, and 64% of teachers in the public high schools. However, in colleges and universities the percentage was considerably lower - less than 26%.

The educational program of this century took a new bent and began emphasis upon preparing students for family

responsibilities. Economy in the home, child-care and parenthood education, and the study of problems and practices involved in the marriage relationship were distinctive features of the program.

In 1925 the University of North Carolina was the first of such institutions to offer a course for credit in the study of problems of the marriage experience.

As a course for instruction, home economics continued to gain ground in the high school and college curricula. The American Home Economics Association had come into being in 1908.

And now prejudice and want of schooling were things of the past for those who desired to enter the medical profession. By 1927 women were crowding into the profession with sixty-three university medical schools to grant them entrance.

In 1915 the Medical Women's National Association was formed. This organization was to contribute greatly to woman's work in World War I.

The war was to prove an impetus to the field of nursing. Public health nurses were employed for the first time by the Federal Government and by 1919 American industries, realizing a need for their service, employed twelve hundred and thirteen graduate nurses.

Women were likewise proving their worth in the field of law. Many firsts appeared as this new century reflected this professional growth of women. A first district attorney, a first federal judge, a first municipal court judge, an associate judge of the United States Customs Court, and an assistant attorney general of the United States made their appearance from the feminine side during the first three decades.

Woman began to make predictions of her new release to be afforded by the war and the suffrage victory soon to follow in 1920. 1909 seemingly marks the beginning of those progressive changes. The high boned collar was losing favor about this time. A freer sort of neckline became popular. A shortened skirt made its debut into the century that year, but woman disguised her liberty in the form of the "hobble skirt" - one of unbelievably narrow dimensions. In this skirt men perceived her as merely mincing along.

The new line of the silhouette was at once straight and narrow. The line of shoulders and hips were disregarded in the effort to achieve this "bean pole" effect. Skirts had diminished to a mere thirty-two inches to a yard and a half around the lower edge. Yet, the arrival of the straightened silhouette sounded a progressive note.

Waistlines had risen to accent the lengthened line. Now corsets had opportunity to be sensible, for they reflected the silhouette of the outer garments. "Bones" were eliminated; the waistline curve now no longer need be exaggerated.

Numerous were the variations concocted by Fashion for the narrowed skirt. They might be split at the side or topped with a tunic. And for a brief period the more daring woman adopted the trouser-skirt of oriental influence. Fashion was orientalized by way of the theatre and truly effected a dazzling note. Colors were brilliant and gold embroidery, pearls, and diamonds served as trim. Tunics, short and puffed, were worn atop the trouser skirt. A deviation from the straightened line were these tunic skirts.

Tight lacings had gone their way and the fair lady relaxed into a miseravle stance referred to as the "debutante slouch."

Fullness began to creep into the skirt and presently the "peg-top" silhouette came into view. Thus the fullness had been laid into pleats or arranged in gathers about the hips. This subtle drapery was to bloom into puffs and such draperies tnat the lady became, literally, all wrapped up in material.

For all this flow of drapery such supple materials as charmeuse, chiffon, messaline, silk mulls, silk poplins, and embroidered and printed crepes were used.

Fashion was fickle and the basque dress came upon the scene to drop the waistline to the hips.

1915 and 1916 brought an additional change - full skirts, crinolines and the well-defined waist were back - but only for a brief moment. Anything demure may now be termed a "calm before the storm," for "blazing youth" and the "flapper" were on their way with the "roaring twenties."

The working women of 1900 were something of a "social phenomenon." Conflict and contradiction were the results of much discussion of their working outside the home. From the one side, they would "...lose their looks, their grace, their charm..."[1] and from the other, they would "...gain in spirit, in wide-awake mental quality, in fascination."[2]

Never quite accepted during this first decade, they were scarcely more than perpetual apprentices. In 1910, the situation of the average worker was concisely expressed by Emily Greene Balch:

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[1]Irwin, op. cit., p. 309. [2]Ibid.

> She does not care to make herself efficient in industry for she hopes soon to marry, and meanwhile, the semi-self-supporting woman drags down the pay of women wholly dependent on their own earnings. And also that of men, perhaps including that of the man who might marry her but cannot afford it; thus increasing the chances against her in the lottery of marriage.[1]

But she was to make herself efficient in industry and at least alleviate the harshness of Miss Balch's criticisms. The First World War afforded her this opportunity. The war proved an eroptive influence to the prevailing routine. As the war continued and the men were transported to Europe, increasing demands were made for the woman worker. The reshaping of mass production, due to the demands of war, made her employment imperative. She entered and quickly adapted herself to the work of the war-time industries. Women were employed in the manufacture of explosives, airplane parts, hand grenades, and gas masks. As the war continued, women were employed by the thousands in major industries as well as in those strictly pertaining to warfare.

Two other conditions accelerated the demand for the woman worker. The influenza epidemic of 1918, creating a shortage of workers of both men and women, and the decrease

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[1]Emily Green Balch, cited by Inez H. Irwin, Angels and Amazons, p. 310.

in immigration provided additional opportunity for her increased employment.

Women now browsed in fields entirely new. Some found a special aptitude or interest in the new work. As the soldiers came back from France to reclaim their jobs, many of these new employees were obstinate to giving up their work. Previous industrial habits, lingering prejudices, and promises of reëmployment for the men worked against them.

A functional and masculine trend had grown out of necessity somewhat as women were thrown into the offices and factories. Now as the men returned, her method of competition was to minimize in her appearance the differences between the sexes.

Now the trend in clothing adopted mainly for comfort became even more masculinized. Further encroaching upon her rival, she partook of his sacred privileges. "She smoked cigarettes publicly; tossed down bathtub gin, and threw away many conversational taboos. Clearly it was the beginning of the end of the double standard...."[1]

Despite all this competition, increased tolerance had risen because of so great an appearance of women in

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[1]L. E. Graham, "From the Flapper to the Pin-Up." New York Times Magazine, (January 12, 1947), 21.

industry. And woman, having proved her ability, did create for herself a partial opening within the industries. Especially did they remain in those lines of work which required much precision and attentiveness. Man's superior muscular strength was of no consequence beside those inherent qualities.

The Woman's Christian Temperance Union had come into this new century as truly the strongest national women's organization. They continued steadfast in their pursuit until prohibition became a national law in 1920.

That same year is memorable in the feminist mind for yet another reason -

Linked to the prohibition movement were the suffragists who likewise, in their own right as the National American Woman Suffrage Association, came into the twentieth century a strong and flexible organization.

Progress toward their goal was more or less concentrated in the West as Washington State, California, Arizona, Colorado, Kansas, and Oregon "went suffrage." About 1913 their work began to shift to the East. Work was begun in many of the states, but about 1917 the emphasis was transferred from the state voctories to the passage of the suffrage amendment as a national law.

Proving their worth in World War I, women brought the realization to the anti-suffragists that their arguments were refuted. Without their services behind the lines and in the munition factories, the American effort would have collapsed.

Another vote in their favor was cast when in 1914 the General Federation of Women's Clubs endorsed the cause of the suffragists. This was proof that the majority, and especially those millions of women working outside the home, wanted this legal franchise as a means of protection and added dignity.

In the year 1914 a break had occurred in the suffrage ranks. The more militant group came to be the National Woman's Party. Their membership had increased to 50,000 before the final victory.

Prominent in the work of this decade were Alice Paul and Lucy Burns. Miss Paul played no small part in bringing President Woodrow Wilson to the side of the suffragists. She and her group even resorted to picketing the White House in their effort to gain the President's full support.

Next the campaign for suffrage was waged in the Senate, for the southern opposition with its chivalrous ideals, belief in states' rights, and "woman-on-a-pedestal" remained adamant. And forcible methods as might be used

on the Negro men could not be used by "southern gentlemen" to keep the Negro women from the polls. Another body of opposition came from Massachusetts. A group of wealthy women and President Eliot of Harvard exerted their influence against the measure.

The suffragista remained persistent in their struggles. The Sixty-sixth Congress convened in May, 1919. The vote upon the issue was favorable in the House, and finally, on June 4, 1919, the Nineteenth Amendment became a realization as it passed the Senate.

But the battle was not finished. Three-fourths of the legislatures or conventions of the states must ratify all amendments to the constitution. Forthwith these steadfast women resolved to pass the issue in the states before the election in 1920. In March, 1920, they had thirty-five states on their list. Eight of the southern states were regarded as hopeless. One more state was actually needed, and Tennessee became the objective.

The Tennessee Legislature met and the amendment passed the Senate but opposition was concentrated in the House. Much preliminary bantering preceded the actual vote upon the measure. Roll call vote was taken with 49 ayes, 47 noes. The "ayes" were a majority of those present, but not a constitutional majority (majority of the entire House).

A member of the "anti" force, deciding to change his vote so that he might call for reconsideration of the issue, jumped to his feet. His was an "historic blunder" for now he had given to the amendment that necessary constitutional majority. The suffrage galleries were filled with a joyful noise for now their vote would be cast in the presidential elections that year.

Women may now view with pride amidst the laws of the land:

> "Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.
>
> "Section 2. Congress shall have power by appropriate legislation to enforce the provisions of this article."[1]

With the ballot in hand woman exerted a new freedom. It was during those twenties that men were certain she had lost all femininity. Desexing herself with flattened chest and shingled hair, she straightened her dress and discovered her legs. These were particularly useful to the girl on the job and she quickly adapted them to "...dancing mad new dance steps like the Charleston and Black Bottom;

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[1]Nineteenth Amendment, cited by Irwin, op. cit., p. 352.

and for making a dash when the lights went out in speak-easy raids."[1]

Accordingly, hemlines proceeded to an all time high level and "...the brashest admirer of a shapely calf had to close his eyes on a windy day."[2] Gowns for the most formal of affairs were as much abbreviated as the routine dress. And the poor parent of many a young flapper wondered what was coming to pass with all this indecent exposure. But the trend was hardly calculated to intrigue the opposite sex; it was merely a convenience in which to keep up with an hysterical new way of living.

Necessity of the four years of war forced a simplicity of line and a subduing of color. The world responded to the seriousness of the time in conservative efforts along the line of dress. Wool was reserved for those who fought; so the fashionable fabrics were silks - satins, chiffons, and crepes. The threatening shortage of dyestuffs resulted in a quietening of color tones. These were somewhat suggestive of the suppression and dismal outlook of the times.

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[1]Graham, New York Times Magazine, 20.

[2]Ibid.

The one-piece frock, possessive of little trim, was a direct result of the economical efforts. Satin and wool jersey were among the materials used for this type dress. This and the coat-suit were typical war time dress.

The tailored costume had continued in use from the nineties. It had been worn in the first decade with a small toque instead of that ungainly fashionable head-gear. Now the tailored detail was used right down to formal attire. This was particularly true of the post war days, and the mannish theme was exploited in its use in the ensemble type of costume.

Regulation uniforms were authorized for women in the many departments of service during the war. The Red Cross nurse was seen in white at home, but overseas she wore a uniform of gray chambray. A touch of red or blue was added in the use of coifs. Outdoor uniforms for the various services might be of whipcord or serge, perhaps trimmed with leather - all of durable materials. Over these uniforms a leather coat with removable fleece lining might have been worn.

And with the postwar period came that sexless look. Old and young, broad and slim donned the abbreviated costume and did their best to effect the boyish figure. Uncorseted and flat the new silhouette held sway until

the latter portion of the decade. And the full-blown figure, in the effort to adapt this casual fashion to herself "...looked very much like Nature's charms running riot without troubling to disguise themselves."[1]

And if the skirts were high, waistlines were low - so low that they were nonexistent in 1923 as the tube dress ushered in the predominant silhouette of the decade. 1921 witnessed the lengthening of the skirt, slightly, as woman's immodest dress was threatened to regulation by law.

High-topped shoes with many buttons had been worn during the period of the way. Legs were not visible for the skirt touched the top of the shoe. The oxford had become popular for summer wear and many women continued to wear them with spats during the winter. The only sort of high topped shoe worn by the flapper was the galoshe and this she left unfastened to flop and flap with every step.

The rolled silk stocking was the mark of the flapper. Hosiery now came in a variety of transparent flesh-pastels. Although many a stocking was worn rolled, the garter made an elaborate appearance and, to comply with the very short skirt, came into use as a matching accessory.

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[1]C. A. Hall, From Hoopskirts to Nudity, p. 124.

Decorative suspenders and trimmings of various sorts - braid, knit, ribbon, beading, and sequins - were the fads of the moment.

The "bateau" neckline came in about 1923. It remained fashionable with the straightened silhouette.

Capes were frequently worn during the period, and it was them that fur coats began their reign.

The tight cloche about shingled hair-do was yet another distinguishing characteristic of the new creature. She indulged in the use of cosmetics, and the "vanity-case" with its lipstick, powder, and rouge was her passport into the fashionable world.

Short-skirted and sleeveless, the flapper effected a daring pose. Those less slender among her decided to give their garments a firmer foundation when American corset makers came out with a combination girdle, hose supporter and brassière. The upper portion had a boyish sort of form.

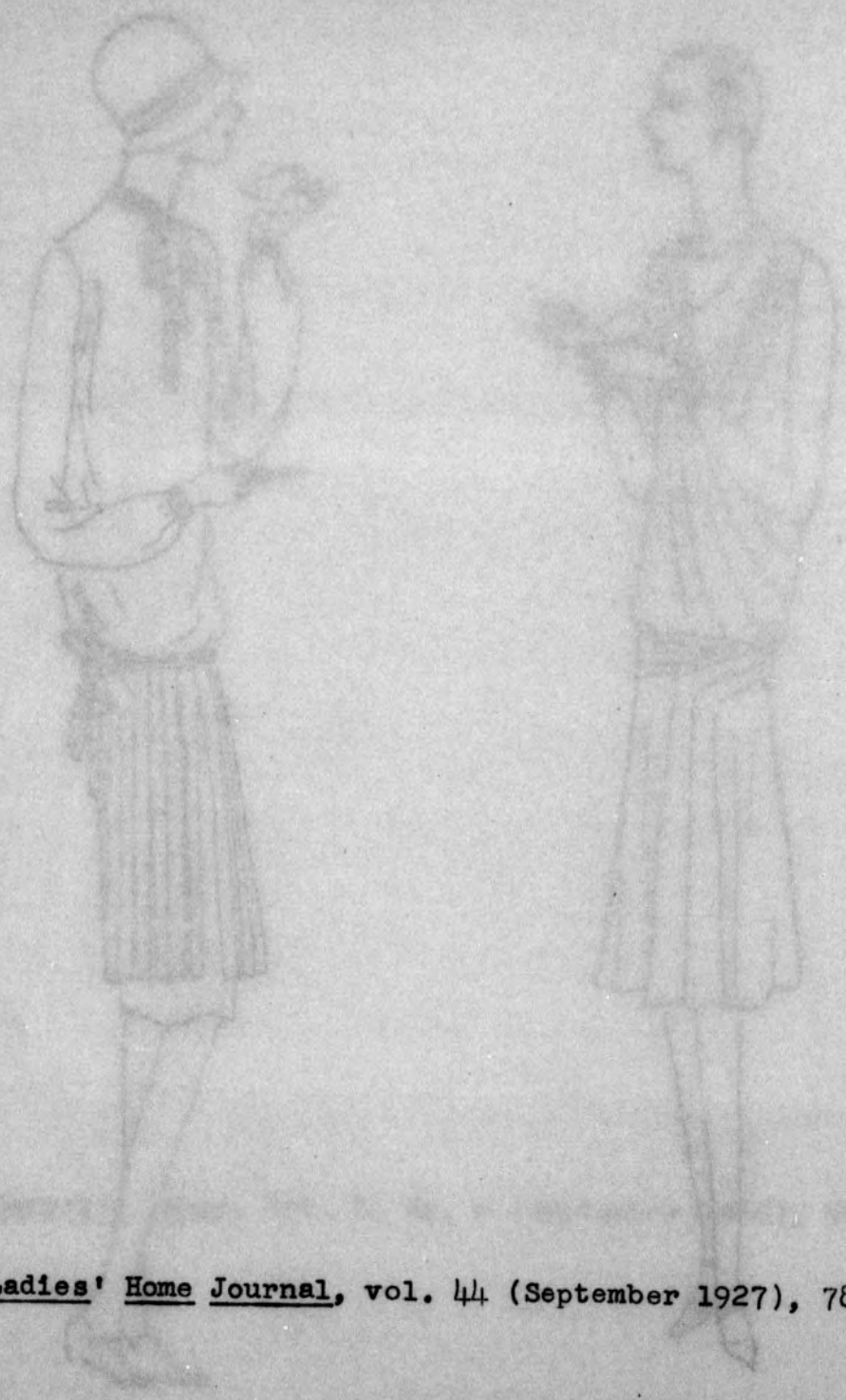
Milady was now completely Americanized, for in 1918 New York had taken the reins on the "clothes horse" from the hands of Paris.

After World War I women were attracted to sports as never before, and with the twenties came the type of

sportswear as it is recognized today. Skating skirts were particularly shortened when all other skirts were at such a high level. A one-piece knit bathing suit was popular about 1910. Legs were covered by this suit and remained so, even with the above-knee style of 1924. The sports toilette had adopted for itself such items as scarves, sweaters, other knitted woolens and gloves.

Ease of action and functionalism had now pervaded every corner of milady's wardrobe.

Harper's Bazar, Vol. L, No. 9 (September 1915), 50-51.



<u>Ladies' Home Journal</u>, vol. 44 (September 1927), 78-79.

CHAPTER VI

AT LOOSE ENDS?

The first half of the new century was a period of transition, not in the nature of an orderly course, but as upheavals, one upon the other. Immigration, reaching high peaks in 1907 and 1914, World War I, the increasing usage and necessity of the automobile, woman's new rôle in politics, industry, and commerce - all made for a maddening new way of life.

Industrial expansion now went on a rampage. Advertising reached exaggerated proportions with all its misleading and fraudulent claims. Congress was forced to take a hand in all this uncontrolled business, and forthwith such measures as the Pure Food and Drug Act and the Wheeler-Lea Act were passed. The process was slow, but protection of health and happiness was worth the effort involved.

The increasing use of gadgets and labour-saving devices allowed the housewife more leisure time. Those of the lower economic levels were soon to keep pace with the wealthiest, "on the installment plan." Demands for means of amusement and recreation were the stimulus for the development of the motion picture and radio. These

These two were to become increasingly influential upon ways of thought and popular character.

And with the radio the era of the "commercial" had begun. These affected women in such fashion as to persuade the fairer among us, within a very few years, to be on television to wash dishes, sample coffee, squirt deodorants and perfumes, or to glibbly antagonize the listeners with the miraculous powers of a new soap, sausage, shampoo, or cereal.

Economic and social change engendered manifold contradictions in the American way of life. As for the divergence between faith and practice, two worlds may as well have existed - and even so today.

A spirit of isolationism was the result of big business' having meddled with foreign trade and policy. This outlook was promoted by women in their various activities and organizations by their efforts to keep the country out of war. Nevertheless two world wars occurred in this half century. And the depression beginning in 1929 was yet another slump in which women were deeply involved.

As the century advanced, it seemed as if for all that woman had attained - this new found freedom - she was no nearer to happiness nor the enjoyment of life; indeed, many were but frustrated souls - literally at loose ends.

To take a closer view of her advance in business -

Woman was now employed in more fields than ever before. She might take her place beside any male taxi driver, automobile mechanic, banker, technician, orchestra conductor, deep-sea diver, or undertaker. Her numberous trade unions have long been permitted membership in the American Federation of Labor, but an exclusive organization of her own comprised of those women affiliated with the AF of L. has never existed.

According to census reports in 1930, 10,752,116 women were gainfully employed. In 1952 they numbered over 18,000,000. Those women classified as in business and the professions more than doubled their number between 1910 and 1930. And those engaged in selling occupations - store clerks, saleswomen, or any other - increased by 93.3 percent during those same years. The number operating and managing business concerns likewise increased considerably. However in 1930 those engaged in the sewing trade decreased to thirty-six percent of the number of such workers in 1910.

Economic pressure has become such that many women must work, as sole bread-winner or as a means of supplementary income. Before and during the early years of marriage it has frequently been necessary for the young girl to work. The instability of this situation - for she has an eye on the full time job of family and home - has

had particular effect upon woman's industrial status. The temporary situation has discouraged complete organization and the protection afforded by such. The double standard of wages for men and women and other forms of exploitation have been encouraged by this situation.

Many truly interested in the welfare of society have considered woman's predicament as a wage earner and have concentrated efforts toward legislate reform. The shorter working day, illegalization of night work, the establishment of minimum wages, improvement of working conditions, and breaks for relaxation were among those reforms toward which this work was directed. Efforts were also made to prohibit woman's work in certain occupations considered detrimental to her safety because she was a woman.

The depression brought insecurity and loss of jobs to men and women alike. So much attention had actually been given to the woman's ability and skill in business and the professions that the deflating effects upon position or salary were shocking to her.

Actually men seem to have suffered more from unemployment than the women. Ernest R. Groves in The American Woman makes reference to two particular studies with results showing less unemployment among women than among men.

For awhile there was something of a reversal in man's attitude toward the working woman. He demanded that she leave the few available jobs for him and return to the family.

The straight-lined silhouette, predominant in the twenties and having approached something of a banal monotony, now gave way to a great deal of movement. The hemline dipped until it reached the floor in back and even extended into a train on some evening gowns. All eyes were on the legs for the front remained knee-length. The feminine shape was still somewhat elusive in the prevalent mode of dress, but the previous uniformity had resolved into a molded hip line and semi-fitted bodice. The softened line remained through 1930.

By 1931 all traces of the flapper were completely erased for the longer skirt in day and evening wear was now in vogue. The skirts leveled off just above the ankles for daytime wear. The depression was under way, so many a flounce of chiffon, tulle, or velvet was added to the short dress to bring it to the prescribed fashionable length. The shock of realization that came with the times jerked woman into a dignified stance. Hats marked the pace of the time, for the formidable cloche was replaced by little creations that gave their wearers a look of alertness.

The motion picture now lent a dramatizing effect to milady's wardrobe. Color was used without inhibition.

Those who would be in line with the times affected "les hommes pauvres," possessive of a very meagre wardrobe. This gave an opportunity to the inventive genius of dress designers, nevertheless.

Evening wear displayed various design movements. The spiral treatment was used in 1931. Later the high front, low back, and long-sleeved bodice was quite popular. The halter type bodice came in about 1934. The masculine trend could also be seen in evening wear as well as in suits and sport clothes of daytime wear.

The shoulder line was given particular emphasis with puffed sleeves and bertha collars.

A revival of previous fashions came about the mid-thirties. The fashions of the nineties and of the first new decade were particularly put upon as fancy blouses, jabots, sailor hats, flounced skirts, and the leg-of-mutton fullness were incorporated into the fashionable attire.

A variety of knitted garments were worn and rayon was a fashion fabric, particularly in 1934.

By now the woman as well as her clothes were the exclamation point of the century. Speaking of the

thirties, Carrie Hall in From Hoopskirts to Nudity remarks:

> ...It is only a little more than a quarter of a century from the "Age of Innocence" to "This Freedom." The ideal beauty of today is engagingly frank. Nothing is concealed. She restores her complexion at the table between dances; cocktails, cigarettes, and scarlet fingernails are essential parts of her daily life, and and "make it snappy" is the last word....[1]

But the war alarm was soon to sound again with the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. As usual women were called to man the homefront. Now they worked not in an assertive sort of manner, but as a matter of cooperation. Their emancipation was well under way and there was no need for the competitive spirit. Women donned the uniforms of the Wac and Wave and stepped into action.

But this time feminism remained intact, for society had accepted their move into the world. The silhouette now reverted to curves. Clothes were molded to an upholstered figure, for shoulders, hips, and bosom were evermore emphasized. Drapery, pads, peplums and shirring were used to achieve the desired effect.

Glamorous clothes were seen "en masse," for those who stayed at home wanted to be particularly alluring on weekends when the men were on furlough. And those who were deprived of their husbands or other male companionship

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[1]Ibid., pp. 150-151.

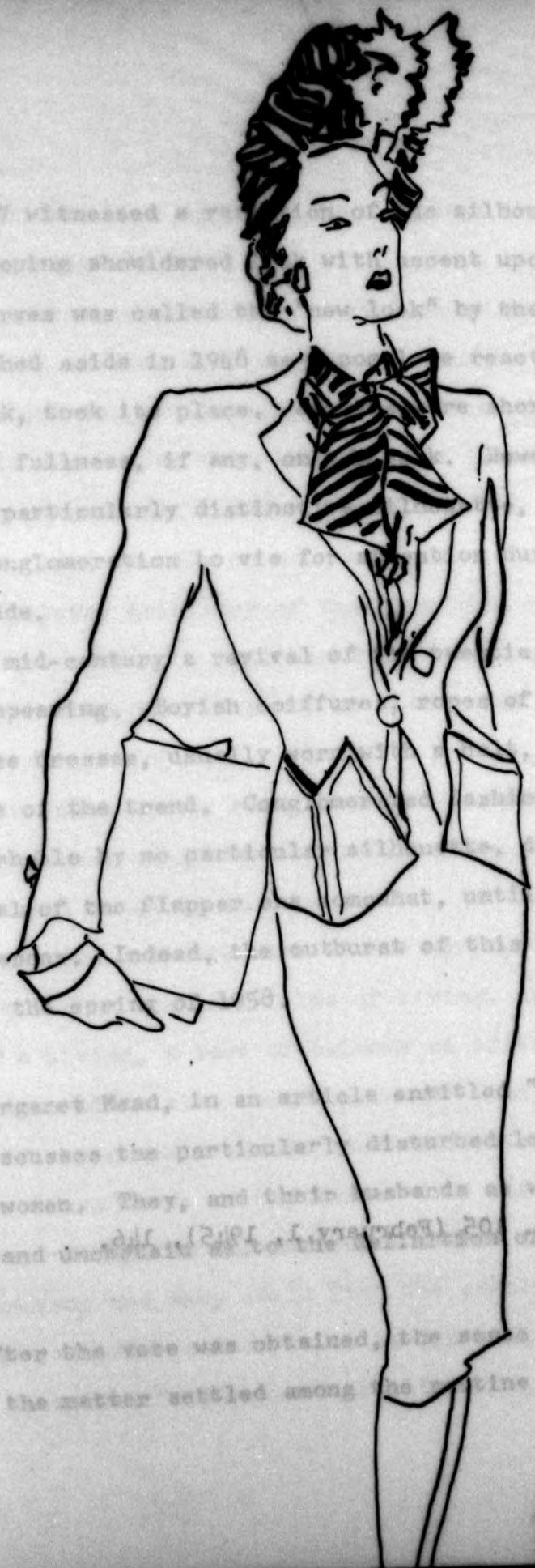
for several years were more than eager to dress and play the part of a woman.

About 1940 skirts began to rise somewhat but by the end of the war they were dropping again. Limitations were placed upon the amount of material in frocks, thus keeping them short and comparatively narrow during the war.

Suits were the paramount fashion, for all practical purposes, during the war. They made their mark upon the times and have continued in high favor, but women were quite eager to vary the sombre monotony by the end of the war.

"Separates" had become increasingly popular. Many outfits could be had by combining the various skirts, shirts, and jackets.

Shoes were of a bewildering assortment. The high-top shoe had gone with the first war. Since then all sorts of low cut styles in flats, heels, and wedges have been worn. Espadrilles and peasant sandals were particularly popular sometime in the forties. Woman's feet had taken the brunt of her new freedom. An article published in 1947 states that her ever growing, over exercised feet were demanding more 7 1/2's than any other size.



<u>Vogue</u>, vol. 105 (February 1, 1945), 146.

CORRECTION

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PRECEDING IMAGE HAS BEEN REFILMED TO ASSURE LEGIBILITY OR TO CORRECT A POSSIBLE ERROR

<u>Vogue</u>, vol. 105 (February 1, 1945), 146.

1947 witnessed a variation of the silhouette. The natural sloping shouldered look with accent upon other natural curves was called the "new look" by the press, but it was pushed aside in 1948 as a complete reaction, the sparce look, took its place. Jackets were shortened and skirts had fullness, if any, only in back. However, this was not a particularly distinctive silhouette, but one among a conglomeration to vie for attention during the fifth decade.

By mid-century a revival of the twenties was timidly appearing. Boyish coiffures, ropes of pearls and chemise dresses, usually worn with a belt, were indicative of the trend. Conglomerated fashion, distinguishable by no particular silhouette, delayed the renewal of the flapper era somewhat, until the more recent seasons. Indeed, the outburst of this revival came with the spring of 1958.

Margaret Mead, in an article entitled "What Women Want," discusses the particularly disturbed lot of many American women. They, and their husbands as well, are confused and uncertain as to the definition of woman's place.

After the vote was obtained, the sense of injustice removed, the matter settled among the routine affairs of

life. Women who have actively participated in politics have been in the minority.

They have neared equality with men - in holding jobs, signing checks, wearing pants in public places, owning businesses, and joining unions. The greatest limitations posed upon them are the laws that would protect motherhood and those expectant of it.

Yet women are disturbed - women are often lonely in their isolated existence of the home with every modern gadget and appliance to take her work from her hands and to leave her sitting. They may be distressed with having to give up career for home or home for career, or if both are in the balance, with having to weigh the scales. And she may question if she shall feature herself primarily as a woman or as a person....

Miss Mead proposes that if men were given more responsibility in the activities of living, as opposed to making a living, a sort of balance as affected in the earlier homes of America could be found. And indeed the majority of women would choose the institution of homemaking - exclusive of the career - as the full time occupation. And given the choice, a source of discontent may be removed, and many could find the combination of mother and jobholder as adaptable as did their mothers with all their manifold responsibilities.

But the other side of the matter -

The reversion back to the fashion of the twenties has not been so starkly unsexed as the original era. Indeed, those decorative bows on the abdomen or the completely reverse position appear to be but a form of feminine flirtation.

And by way of predictions -

If woman be given freedom of choice, she will reflect in her life's work her response to "the eternal feminine"[1]; and this response will be reflected in her dress.

And if, according to the theory of fashion change through cycles of three characteristic silhouettes, the next reversion is toward the bell-skirted fashions, women will don them and adapt them to the exigencies of her existence.

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[1]Hall, op. cit., title of chapter X.

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