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Gladys Branson
Iowa State College

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We Borrow From Our Predecessors

By GLADYS BRANSON

"Do you like my new blouse Rosa?"
"Indeed I do, it is so individual looking. That painted band around the bottom resembles an ancient Roman design yet it has that unmistakable touch of modern chineseness which makes it very attractive."

"You've guessed it already. Perhaps you remember my college chum who is now a designer in the East? She designed and had this made from a picture of an old costume and I'm going to wear it with my new spring suit."

"She says that the newest styles are adapted from the oldest ones and keeps her desk just piled with pictures of ancient Roman, Egyptian, European and American costumes. Our costumes now are in general construction quite the same as they have been since the time of the pyramids; the accessories and modifications of a few or several parts make up our mode in "latest vogue."

The chic boyish suits, new flare skirts, flaming colored scarfs floating in the spring breezes, capes and decorative smocking are being displayed as new or the very latest in spring modes but how new really are these? One can scarcely believe our grandmother's garments at all similar to these. Yet, get out the family album and find a resemblance to some modern feature.

The scarf, an added necessity to every American or girl's wardrobe was a luxury to our grandmother in the earlier part of the nineteenth century. In every wardrobe this spring is at least one frock trimmed with smocking. This has been an effective, useful decoration to the American for many years with bursts of popularity from time to time but who would guess that it is a modification of early peasant methods of fitting and embroidery. Peasant embroidery in itself is one of the lovely types of trimming used now. It is very charming and effective yet before civilization people used almost the same kind of trimming in the grotesque symbols and figures we still like.

The woman of today probably never suspects the origin of the tiny folklore and the comb she carries in her hand bag or coat pocket. Exact reproductions of these are shown from the true barbarian days in Denmark; more crude in workmanship of course since they were cut from bone but in size and style the variations are negligible.

The Grecian people made a lasting contribution to the modern wardrobe in the form of the low sandal and one strap shoe. The spike heels and unique colors of the early century modern adaptations but the true modern innovation is a comfortable low shoe so popular with the Greeks seems to retain its popularity even now with little competition. As early as the tenth century sturdy, leather shoes with heavy soles even a few which in pictures resemble our spiked soles for special sport wear are clearly the forerunners of the present sport oxford. The resemblance was even more heightened by the combination then of the two kinds of colored leather similar to the present snake skin or alligator shoes.

Hand painting and applique make lovely forms of decoration on the modern dress but again we must give the honor of originating the idea to the ancient Grecian people. They were especially fond of clever geometric figures, figures and animal designs.

The straight line boyish suits for this spring are so attractive and convenient that one thinks they are surely a true modern creation, however fashion plates from the time of Napoleon reveal the same tendencies in women's suits. And capes! Man's first kind of outer garment was milady's cape, the newest spring wrap.

The evening dress of approved style at present has a tight fitting bodice with a very full wide or flare skirt which is unmistakably a rejuvenation of the popular frock during the earlier part of the eighteenth century both in America and Europe. Now, as then emphasis was on the front of the skirt with either many tiny ruffles or a parted front with set in decorative material quite as fashion decrees today. With the absence of the old hoops and the use of our sheer materials in place of crisp taffeta our skirts our much less bouffant but quite as attractive and much more comfortable. Loose full sleeves in the smartest new frocks are really just as smart as for your grandmother a few years ago.

Kick-in plusses are only a modern adaptation of the gathered skirt of the Gallic period in which the straight line dresses or blouses and short skirts were worn. Many smocks and blouses suggest the oriental mandarin blouse.

One of the most interesting modern adaptations is the small, close fitting hat so popular now. During the latter part of the seventeenth and the earlier part of the eighteenth century in France