

Another Dictator Is Dame Fashion!



1800



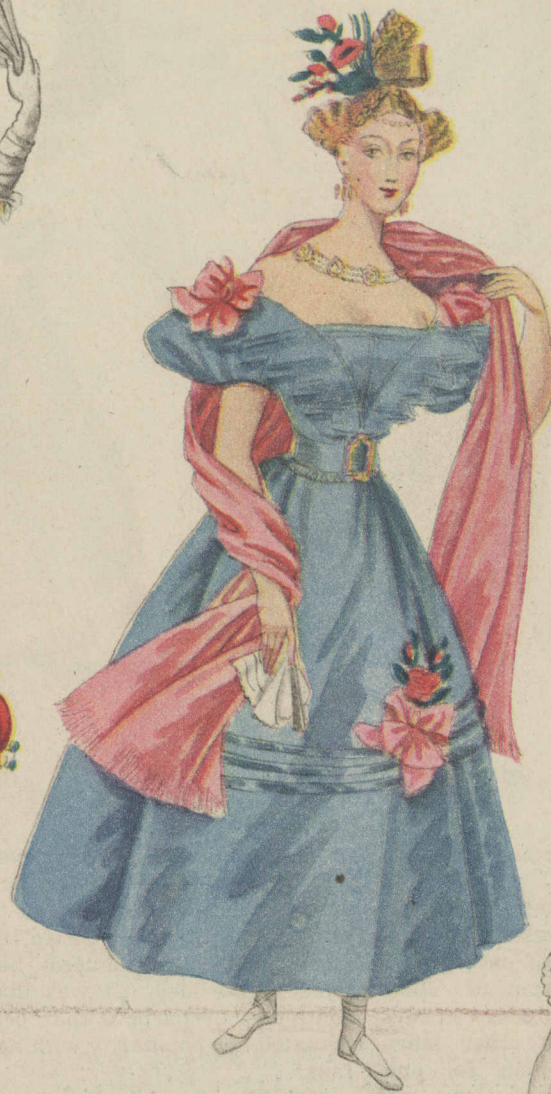
1810



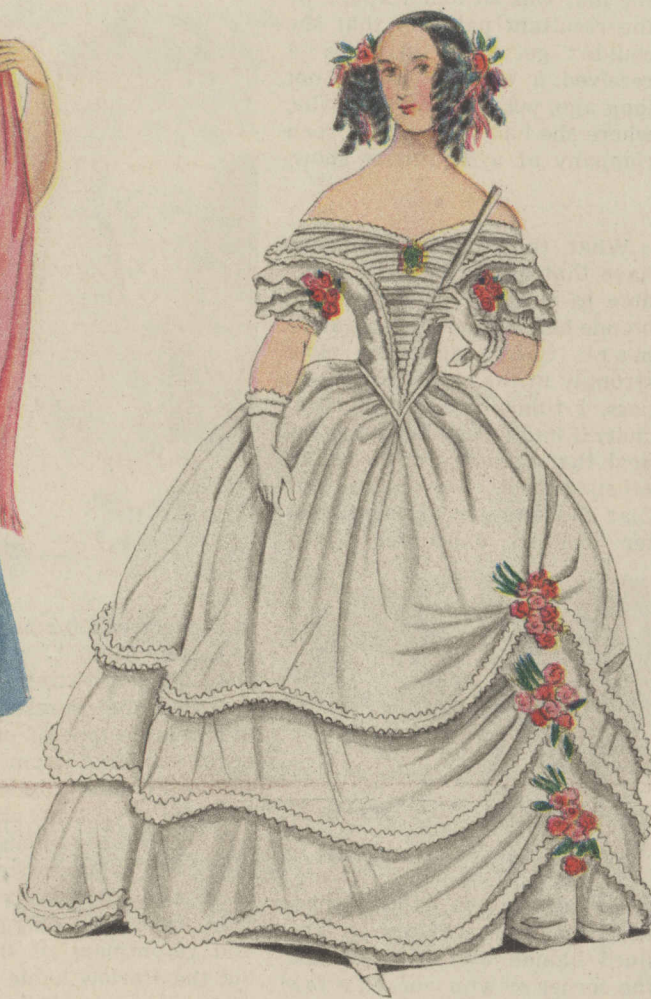
1815



1820



1830



1840



1850



1860



1870



1880



1890



1900



1939

Styles the Mirror of History

FASHION is a stern taskmistress. She used to be more adamant than she is now.

● Marie Antoinette, hapless queen of France, stuck feathers in her hair. All the court ladies perforce followed her lead. The price of aigrettes rose until a good one cost 10,000 francs. Some grande dames went broke buying them.

● There were other inconveniences. Headdresses became too tall for the carriages of the nobility. The canaille around Versailles were titillated by the sight of duchesses riding courtward with their heads, awash with plumes, craned out of their coach windows. Serious writers maintained that if the mode persisted architects would have to start building higher doors and ceilings. Before any such drastic changes were made the queen's feathers were gone and her head was off.

● Dame Fashion trips along with history and mirrors it. Marie Antoinette's ladies suffered for her whims. They wore iron hoops in their dresses and pretended to like them. But the woman friends of the men who made the French revolution threw off all restraint and most of the traditional garments

of woman-kind.

● Mme. Tallien wore rings on her toes and nothing on her bosom. With unanimity the new leaders of fashion discarded the chemise. One shapely lady went to a dress ball as a living representation of a classic statue.

"They showed everything they shouldn't have shown," wrote one shocked observer. Thin and clinging materials, silk and muslin, were favored; wool and linen were abhorred.

● Fashion changed from day to day. Greek and Roman dresses were taken for models, worn, and discarded. It was said that a Parisienne of the ruling group during the directorate had to have 600 dresses a year.

● Some of the modes, naturally, were bizarre. One (Continued on page two.)