

WASHINGTON CITY SIDELIGHTS

Frock Coat Rescued on the Brink of Oblivion

WASHINGTON.—Washington tailors secured an official vindication of the much maligned frock coat at the hands of the fashion committee of the international custom cutters' convention here. This is the supreme court of masculine fashion, and woe to the poor wretch that dares defy its mandates. All early caucuses of the convention had determined the frock coat must go and that the cutaway was to take its place.

But threats of bolting on the part of the Washington tailors forced the fashion committee to surrender.

Washington claims the distinction of having the greatest per capita total of frock coats outside of Terre Haute —although why Terre Haute should be excepted no one knows. The committee wrote the following vindication into its announcement:

"We wish to emphasize that the double-breasted frock coat is by no means relegated to the background. While the three-button cutaway just at this time is the most popular garment, the frock coat is worn by the highest officials of our nation, and this itself maintains the dignity of this garment."

The saving clause, however, was put in, it seems, only for the benefit of frock coats already in existence. No reputable tailor will manufacture any more of them. For the remainder of the long report minute details for the architecture of cutaways are given, without ever referring again to the double-breasted affairs.

As to the sack coat, the committee condemns narrow shoulders, but insists on a tight waist, and for those who dare it suggests that narrow braid be worn.

Then there are about a thousand words concerning "close contours," "high waist lines," "little dips," "waistcoat exposures," "crescent pocket lines" and a lot of other things that only Jimham Lewis could understand.

Keeping Tab on Things That Are Worth Studying

"I DON'T like to ask you, but will you please give me change for a cup of tea? I haven't any money with me, and I'm so weak I can't go on." The woman who asked might have stepped out of dear old grand-mother's chair by the chimney corner. Except that there are no chimney corners these days, and precious few old grandmothers.

The woman who responded was just a so-so person who hurried on. And then felt ashamed of herself for not taking the little old dame into a cafe and seeing her safe home. You have to do a thing like that once in a while to feel that you were worth the Lord's creating. So she turned back to atone and had almost elbowed her way through the noon rush to the old woman when again she heard the quavering appeal:

"I don't like to ask you, but will you please give me change for a cup of tea? I haven't any money with me, and I'm so weak I can't go on."

As a thing like that is worth studying, the so-so woman stood by, and kept tab. After eight women and an earth-eathy young man had paid tribute, the old woman rested up long enough to turn around. Then she suddenly made for the corner. Obviously, she didn't like the appearance of the woman who was looking on. Some don't.

Begging is against the law, of course, but what are you going to do when an aged lady strikes you for a cup of tea? Remembering that cup of cold water? Besides:

You can't always go by looks. An apparent old fraud may be an angel of help who is pawning her respectability that others, more helpless, may have bread. If it was right for David to kill Goliath, why isn't it just as lawful to down the wolf at your door with any small stone you may carry in your sling? Life is only a game, anyhow, and if you don't hold court cards you've got to play deuces the best you know how. Of course, the big rule forbids cheating —which backs you into the law against begging. And a law must be obeyed.

But, anyhow, you don't have to act like a policeman unless you wear blue clothes and a pewter badge—so—

The woman who had watched went her way wishing good luck to the old soul. And the old soul went on with her begging. Maybe she's at it yet.

Thought Roman Numerals Latin for Uncle Sam

THIRD ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY NEWTON is a true-blue American. The figures 1, 2, 3 look better to him than the so-called Roman numerals. He has issued an order that hereafter the date of erection of public buildings shall be put in figures instead of Roman numerals. Secretary Newton says:

"Even persons of average education, being unaccustomed to the Roman numerals frequently find considerable difficulty in determining from the lettering on the public building just when it was erected. To many the Roman numerals mean no more than do the emblems of the Masonic Order to a person outside of that Order. So infrequently are the Roman characters now used that many persons of intelligence in this country believe that the customary date on public buildings are marks placed there by the engineers."

"The misinformation in this matter was recently illustrated when a party of tourists stood gazing at one of the show buildings in Washington. One man in the party, pointing to the Roman numerals high up over the door, said: 'What the deuce does that MCXVI business mean up there?'

"What," said another, 'don't you know? That's a mark the contractor puts on. It's his trademark.'

"You're wrong, there, Bill," exclaimed a third member of the party. 'That's a sign put there by the government. It's Latin for Uncle Sam.'

Mrs. Woodrow Wilson's Ideas on Dress Making

MRS. WOODROW WILSON, wife of the president, is getting a whole lot of support from women returning from abroad for her ideas of home dress making. It is said by fashionable modistes in Rue de la Paix, Rue Taitbout and Place Vendôme that they are practically facing ruin, in that they are not able to keep their styles exclusive. Our American women have been in the habit of going to Paris for their swell society gowns, which they buy as exclusive, and for which they pay a fancy price and high duty. They get them over here, only to find that there are women here who have worn a fac-simile of their gowns for weeks before they get back, and they have about concluded that the American modiste is just as artistic and decorative in their designs as any French modiste dare be. Mrs. Wilson, as the wife of the governor of New Jersey, stated that she could dress on less than \$1,000 a year, and she is doing it to her own satisfaction, if not to that of the high-priced foreign modistes. She selects her own silks, satins and laces and has them constructed almost under her own eye, many of her little gowns being made at the White House. A representative of a world-famous dress maker in Rue Taitbout, most of whose customers are Americans, said that unless it should prove possible to copyright not only designs of gowns, but also of trimmings and combinations of colors, he would shortly have to give up his present business and go in for wholesale manufacture.

DUTIES OF THE COMPTROLLER OF CURRENCY

Upon the application of disbursing officers, or the head of any department or other establishment not under the executive departments, the comptroller of the currency is required to render his decision upon any question involving a payment to be made by them or under them. This decision when rendered shall govern the auditor and comptroller in the settlement of the account at issue.

For instance, a government laborer employed in an icehouse renders a bill for a pair of rubber boots. The government is asked to pay for them on the ground that for work in icehouse rubber boots are tools and not wearing apparel. The comptroller has approved such expenditures under the appropriation for tools, but has been obliged to disallow the expenditure for some other article of dress which would be available for use of the employee when off duty. The determination of just where traveling expenses, for instance, cease to be public expenses and become personal expenses is constantly arising.

In general, the officials of the government are constantly striving to stretch the authority under which money has been appropriated by congress and the comptroller's duty is to maintain intact the restrictions.

Advance decisions by the comptroller are in the nature of precautions and prevent much misunderstanding and confusion. They remain law, to all intents and purposes, unless later modified or revoked, but sometimes a comptroller upon the submission of new evidence, or perhaps through a court decision affecting the controversy, will acknowledge himself wrong. The men who are big enough lawyers to be successful comptrollers usually have not hesitated to acknowledge error.

John Sherman said in 1894 that the comptrollers of the treasury had been equal to and better lawyers than the secretaries of the treasury since the beginning of the government. Alexander Hamilton pronounced the comptrollership the "second trust" of the treasury, evidently placing himself first.

If under an appropriation headed "carriages and harness" the head of a department desires to purchase an automobile, and the disbursing officer feels doubt as to the legality of the transaction, he is required to seek a decision from the comptroller. In just such case the comptroller held that the reference to harness indicated that congress designed the appropriation for horse drawn vehicles. But in another department's appropriation bill a certain sum had been voted for "vehicles," which, the comptroller felt, showed a congressional purpose to broaden the authorization, and would permit of the purchase of an automobile. About 100 advance decisions are rendered every month and about 130 decisions upon appeal from the rulings of authors.

FUTURE KING OF ENGLAND IS A SAD PRINCE

You very often hear people commenting on the fact that the prince of Wales, whenever he is seen (and that is not very often), looks as if he had not found life to contain a single joy. He is entirely devoid of the spirits of the average English boy, to say nothing of his fellow students, whose pranks are endless.

The explanation is easy enough to find. The future king of England is by nature exceedingly quiet and retiring, a boy who should in every way be encouraged to strike up friendships with boys of more exuberant disposition and take part in their pursuits

and pleasures, but instead of this he is kept continually under the thumb of his mentor.

His only pleasure is in his motor, which he drives as cautiously as an old man. Together with two of his college friends, young Lord Stanley and another, he had planned to use this car for an excursion to Switzerland to enjoy a couple of weeks' bob-sleighing and tobogganing during the mid-winter recess.

During Christmas he cautiously broached the matter to his royal father and paternal grandmother, assuring them he was perfectly willing to steer clear of Paris and also to take a couple of equestrian looks after him, but the result was just what the prince had feared. King George and Queen Alexandra both agreed that his desire was a most natural one and, while perfectly harmless, might do him a lot of good, but the matter never got any further, as the king immediately saw the hopelessness of trying to get Queen Mary's consent.

HONORED BY INFORMAL CALLS OF PRESIDENT

Mrs. Joseph P. Tumulty is the only woman in Washington who is ever honored by an informal call from the president of the United States. President Wilson not infrequently "just drops in" at her house in the course of an afternoon's automobile ride, to ask after Mrs. Tumulty's health, to chat a moment with her husband, his secretary, and most especially to pass the time of day with the Tumulty children.

When the White House car draw up at the front door of the Tumulty home there is a mad scamper of 12 little feet from the nursery to the front door. For the six Tumulty children are on intimate terms with the president and with every member of his family. When Jessie Wilson was married to Francis B. Sayre last November, little Mary Tumulty was about as keenly interested in the details of the wedding preparations as was the bride herself. She received, at the particular request of Miss Wilson, an invitation ad-

dressed especially to her tiny self. And when the hour for the wedding arrived Miss Tumulty, white-frocked blue-ribboned, her blond curls in order, her eyes shining with excitement, was one of the most interested of spectators.

If one approaches Secretary Tumulty on a busy day at the executive offices of the White House and asks him for the names of all his children, he is as likely as not to call on one of the under secretaries for assistance in setting them down with the respective ages opposite. Mrs. Tumulty, however, knows the list by heart, and can even say it backward, for the main business of her life is the rearing and educating of their six children. Her position in Washington, official life, as wife of the secretary to the president, gives her entree to that cosmopolitan society at the capital which the average woman would find irresistible. Mrs. Tumulty, however, cares little for it. About the only functions which she and Mr. Tumulty have thus far attended during the present season were the White House wedding and cabinet dinners.

Since going to Washington, Mrs. Tumulty has not allied herself with any social or philanthropic organizations. She declares that any woman who looks after the needs of a husband and six children has 12 hours a day of her time already engaged.

SARAH BERNHARDT RECEIVES GREAT HONOR

Had not the chancellery granted the decoration of the Legion of Honor to Sarah Bernhardt, President Poincaré himself would have created the actress arbitrarily a chevalier of the legion. She is the one hundred and ninth living woman with this decoration. The action of the chancellery, belated as it was, has met with a widespread demonstration of popular approval, says a Paris special cable dispatch to the New York World.

Now that the "Divine Sarah" has actually got the distinction, her friends feel free to discuss her long indifference to the honor. That indifference was due to her feeling that the

decoration meant nothing unless it was granted solely in recognition of her as an actress. This was a kind of claim on the legion which the chancellery did not recognize, and she knew it. The knowledge helped to reconcile her to seeing many less famous women decorated. Her exclusion from the legion had nothing to do with her private life, which was blameless from the French point of view.

Adelina Patti and the three other women of the stage who got the legion of honor before Madame Bernhardt did were given the decoration for reasons not connected with acting—for teaching, or for services to the state outside of their theatrical work. That this was realized by Madame Bernhardt and that she felt the rule was to be applied even to her is shown by the fact that at a recent luncheon with some of her foreign friends she referred to the possibility of the decoration being bestowed upon her, remarking that many people said it was her unique distinction to have spread the French language and French the atical culture abroad.

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