

Big Business Banishes the Flapper

Her Dress and Deportment Are Now Toned Down as Banks and Corporations Adopt Regulations Dooming the "Vampy" Types on the Left in Favor of the Demure Ones on the Right.



The Short, Tight Skirt, the Fluffy Scarf Rakishly Worn, the Snappy Vanity Box, the Huge Picture Hat Made Up the Flapper Outfit Miss Eleanor Physioc Wore to Furnish a "Horrible Example" at a Dress Reform Exhibit in New York City.

WHEN the Flapper smashed all the traditions in sight and tinkered a bit with the prevailing moralities a great many people smiled indulgently. True, she had to stand a series of hot shots from conservative pulpits, not to mention a few shrill cries of protest from social workers, old-fashioned mothers and modest young men who were afraid of being corrupted. But, on the whole, she got away with it. It was not until she began to interfere with the sacred institution of business efficiency that she got hers. Now it looks as if Big Business may banish the Flapper. She will at least be made nonexistent during working hours if the present movement for de-flapperizing female employes of business houses gets very far.

Why the Boy Lingered

This movement was first noticed in Newark, N. J. A fond mother was bent to send her son to make deposits at the bank. After a while he began to consume much more time in the operation than mother considered necessary. She investigated and found that he had all his business dealings with a young woman that mother considered illegitimately attractive.

Everything about the young woman had a modern air—if the truth must be known—a provocative air. Her hair was bobbed, her hidden ears were hung with late earrings, her low-cut waist allowed certain exciting revelations, and suggested even more. And as she walked toward the back of her range a pair of low-cut, flat-heeled sport shoes with champagne-colored legs springing out of them, came into view. Even in the way she checked the deposit slips was an insouciance suggestive of a new age and new ideas. This circumstance was duly reported to officials of the bank—the Fidelity Trust Company—



Miss Amelia Johnson of Newark, N. J., in the Costume She Wore to Business at the Fidelity Union Trust Company the Day the Heads of the Bank Ruled—"No Sheer Hose, No Low Cut Waists, No Short Skirts."

whereupon the head of the institution, Uzal H. McCarter, paused in his consideration of foreign exchange, put-standing loans, etc., etc., and gave a thought to the feminine personnel of his establishment. The result was the issuance of the following order: "A rule is herein adopted regarding requirements in dress for employes holding positions in the bank. "All men employes must wear coats in the

office between 8:30 A. M. and 5 P. M. Should an employe not provide himself with an office in the office between the hours of 8:30 A. M. and 5 P. M. to the following requirements:

"The — dress (No. — pattern), sold in all stores at a cost of \$5, must be worn and must be provided by the employers, in either blue, black or brown, and sleeves must not be shortened above the elbow. The dress must not be worn higher than twelve inches from the ground. "These requirements are positive."

This order caused all the indignation that might have been expected. In the first place the girl workers resented the charge that exposed biceps and dimpled knees militated against efficiency. The girl whose get-up started the investigation contended that she couldn't be held responsible for the wandering brain of some weak-witted mother's boy.

"These low-hipped gobbies never worry me," she said. "I keep my cash straight and my decimal points in order. Furthermore, if some dumb-bell starts hanging onto the cage I tell him to move on. They don't block traffic outside my cell. Why, then, should they be starting all this plain-jane-and-no-nonsense business? They'll be putting us in gummysocks with nothing but our hands sticking out the next thing you know."

The Inconvenience of It

"It won't work out," another girl predicted. "For one thing, it isn't sanitary. How do they think we can afford to have office dresses enough to change around in, and outside clothes besides? It isn't sanitary and there will be many more reasons for not liking the rules."

"We were told that we could get the dresses for \$5, but I know better. We can't afford to buy several new dresses and it really isn't fair. If we want to go out to dinner or meet someone after work, we shall have to run home first to change."

Nevertheless, despite all this indignation, when the time came, all of the girls affected by the order came to work in the prescribed dress. The first group who came under the order were the fifty girls who came in contact with the public.

Concurrently with the action of the Newark Bank, female employes of the Federal Reserve Bank in New York were told emphatically that they could take no time off during the day for beautifying. She could have bobbed hair, but she could not fluff it on the bank's time. No standard rules of dress were put in force, but a committee of employes was delegated to prevent any ultra-flapper from wearing anything extreme.

The heads of one of the oldest department stores in New York found it necessary to redirect the attention of incipient flappers to rules that had been in existence for two years. These rules prescribed blue or black dresses for winter to be varied by a white waist in summer. The stockings and shoes must be black at all times and the dress must be not too high at the bottom and not too low at the top. In Detroit, telephone girls have been given a uniform, and in Dayton the National Cash Register Company has placed bobbed hair, short skirts and silk hose under the ban.

These actions are typical. Everywhere Business is seeking to extirpate from the minds and manners and appearances of their women employes those peculiar manifestations of vitality which make the flapper.

The outcome of this attitude toward doggy dress may result in a uniform costume for all women—for work-a-day tasks, at any rate. A

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The Street Costume in Which Viola Petrelli Appeared at an Exhibition at a New York Y. W. C. A. to Show Young Girls the Proper Way to Dress.

few observers have declared that there is an unmistakable trend toward the same standardization in women's clothes as now exists in men's.

Mr. W. L. George, the English novelist, was intrigued by this idea. He thought that women might, with profit, adopt a standard attire for all coat, his business coat must be worn during the hours above mentioned.

"All lady employes must conform their dress

APPROVED

Here's What the Business Girl Is Coming to, the Garb Prescribed by Big Business—Full Length Sleeves, High Necks, Longer Skirts. The High Heels Were Evidently Overlooked.

sorts of set occasion. For the evening gown he suggested black relieved by white at the edges. All women looked well in black, he declared, and the lack of variety would be more than balanced by the high standard of sartorial effectiveness.

Answering the argument, that women would lose interest in dress if they were denied the opportunity for originality, the adherents of Mr. George's view replied that comparatively few women showed any exceptional taste in dress, as it was.

A naval officer recalled the case of the girls who turned yeomanettes during the war.

"In the uniform they all looked smart, neat and attractive. And one looked about as good as the other, so far as her clothes were concerned, regardless of whether she had good taste in clothes. But when they were mustered out and went back to muffin—a comparatively small percentage of them continued to look smart while the others reverted to varying degrees of dowdiness."

Another reason advanced in favor of standardization of dress is that it would make a woman's wardrobe less expensive. Out in Emporia, Kansas, merchants testifying at the hearings of the Kansas Court of Industrial Relations said that a girl could dress on \$90 a year. This produced mocking laughter in New York.

Members of the New York League of Girls' Clubs made up a list of their own, which included the following items: One spring suit, \$27; one winter suit, \$50; three drassy dresses, \$75; one winter coat, \$50; one spring coat, \$25; six waists, \$30; two dozen stockings, \$42; seven pairs of shoes, \$35; two heavy dresses, \$40; one sport skirt, \$8; three summer dresses, \$36; underwear, \$40; four hats, \$20; novelties and incidentals, gloves, sweaters, purses, etc., etc., \$25; total, \$503.

Several members of representative women's organizations outside New York declared that such an estimate was unnecessarily liberal; that girls who would do their own sewing and part of their own washing and would purchase evening dresses that could be worn on other occasions could manage on much less. But even with economies all women admit that dress consumes from a third to a half of one's income.

But Big Business has apparently decided that the Flapper must go. Whether she will finally disappear, not only from business offices but from the parks, promenades and places where two or three are gathered for jubilation, remains to be seen.