

At the Sign of the Maple

EDITED BY ESTELLE M. KERR

The Fitness of Things

"FIRE!" The alarm spread through the wing of a summer hotel in the dead of night, and the guests, rudely roused from their slumbers, vacated their rooms in an incredibly short time, but none too soon, for the building was soon reduced to a charred ruin.

A few hours later the ladies, most sketchily attired, gathered for breakfast. Many of them had never spoken to each other before, but now they chatted like old friends, their conversation being—now what is usually the subject of conversation when two or three women are gathered together? Clothes.

"I had to shake Ella to get her awake, and then she ran to the mirror and began to brush her hair. I told her to grab some clothing and run. What do you think she picked up? A pair of silk stockings!"

"Stockings were always my weakness," confessed Ella, "but they're not very satisfactory as the sole item in a wardrobe. Look at Mrs. N——, she looks as if she had just come in from a walk. However did you find time to dress?"

"Dress!" laughed Mrs. N——, "I'm not dressed. I instinctively grabbed this long coat and my husband's deerstalker cap."

Two maiden ladies, huddling modestly beneath the same shawl in a corner, nodded approvingly. "Let this be a lesson to us, sister," said one. "After this I shall wear a fresh nightgown every night and keep a—what did you say the name of your cap is? Deerstalker. Thank you. I forgot my pencil in my hurry to escape. You will excuse my sister for not speaking, she left her teeth behind."

"The trouble is, you all go to bed too early," said a girl in a pink tulle evening gown. "Here am I fully dressed, but I look just as silly as you do, breakfasting in a dancing frock. Mrs. N—— has kept up her reputation of being the best-dressed woman in the hotel. I shall always wear an ulster and hunting cap for fires after this! Success in clothes, after all, depends largely on a sense of the fitness of things."

Clothes and the War

HOW many women are distressingly lacking in a sense of the fitness of things? Fired with patriotism, they will volunteer for agricultural work and appear before the disgusted farmer in open work stockings and patent leather shoes. "What shall I wear on war service?" is the constant question at the Labour Exchanges in London. "Will a sport's coat do and how shall I dress my hair?"

SOME, in the spirit of play-acting, have adopted trousers, and great concern is expressed by many against this innovation. They needn't worry. The skirt will survive, not from a desire in women to accentuate the difference in sex, but because they prefer it. Deprive women of the privilege of wearing skirts and there will be a greater uproar than if you deprived the Highland regiments of their uniform.

MRS. PLUMPTRE, of Toronto, has received about 13,000 letters from soldiers at the front, and in less than a dozen were there any murmurs of complaint. One was from a Scotchman, who said he was in the hospital and as there were no kilts for him to don when better, he just refused to get up until kilts were provided.

DO Canadian women favour conscription? It would seem so if the Daughters of the Empire are representative. But that applies only to men. The Germans have enforced regulations that will affect women more nearly, for they have adopted

a decree prohibiting the importation of luxuries, including silk, silk or lace-trimmed clothing, fans, hats, jewelry, etc. In Munich the Commandant issued an order giving power to the police to arrest ladies who are conspicuously and wastefully dressed. Within two hours after the issue a lady belonging to one of the best military families in Bavaria was arrested, but was released after being detained a few hours, but warned to dress in a more simple fashion.

SHALL we give up our imported luxuries voluntarily or must we wait until we are forced to do so by law? Toronto boasts of her patriotism and spends \$15,000 for 24th of May fireworks. The clothes worn on the opening day at the races were quiet, for the day was cool, and the papers commented favourably on simplicity in war time, but on the twenty-fourth, the sun shone brightly. Simplicity had vanished, Economy stayed at home. Ye Gods, what clothes!

For War Workers

OF course some women will tell you that thick soles hurt their feet, that flat heels make their back ache, that silk is just as warm as wool, and anyway, one shouldn't wear wool when it is needed so badly for the soldiers. Also that they never feel dressed without their earrings. But when they begin to do serious war work in agriculture or munitions, their ideas undergo a change. An overlong skirt cost a girl her life on the London Tube not long ago. There isn't much room for coquetry in a pig-stye, and when there is no one but

will only be solved by those who have a sense of the fitness of things.

THE question of clothes has been most satisfactorily answered for the Red Cross Nurse, whose uniform is universally becoming yet practical as well, and other women may well emulate her in selecting costumes where neatness, suitability and durability are combined. Let us condemn eccentricities of fashion as utterly unsuitable for women whose countries are at war and cease to buy costumes which Paris designers have labelled "fashions for neutrals." The old saying, "What you lack in your head you make up in your heels," has acquired a new significance in connection with the spectacular boots now in vogue, and women of sense will now take a firm stand in the question of clothes.

Personalities

For the Red Cross

MRS. EDGAR D. McCALLUM, formerly Miss Alice Lanigan, of Winnipeg, is an accomplished musician and an expert chauffeur. She hopes to drive a Red Cross motor in England when her husband leaves. Her husband was Hon. Secretary of the Saskatchewan Provincial Branch of that organization, and it is due to his efforts that Saskatchewan took second place in the Dominion in the list of provincial donations, in December. Unfortunately for the Society, Mr. McCallum is now transport officer with the 195th, of Regina.

Something New in Antiques

IT was indisputably a case of giving the public what it wanted when Miss May Loucks took her plunge into the Sea of Commerce. And fortunately for her, she has that Sea pretty much to herself. One might say there is practically no competition in her "line" in Ottawa. In case she resents this statement, let it be known that the dealers who had gathered together antiques in the old way, soon gave way before the cleverer methods of a woman, and before the more attractive articles she had to offer. She started moderately, collecting odd pieces of walnut, mahogany, Sheffield, prints, engravings, and so on. Then she opened The Old Curiosity Shop, which belies its name to the extent of being not a shop at all, but a suite of beautiful salons. By the end of her first season, she had to make a trip to England and the Continent to replenish her depleted wareroom. On her last visit to the old country, she bought according to previous calculations sufficient goods for two years' sales. But this spring she has to go across the perilous ocean once more. Not the least reason, perhaps, for her amazing success, is the interest—the most gracious interest—Their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Connaught have taken in The Old Curiosity Shop. They not only commanded the Royal insignia to be placed upon the door, they not only pay frequent unofficial visits to the rooms, and buy generously, but they recommend such distinguished guests at Government House, as Their Excellencies the Russian Ambassador and his wife, to visit the salon. It is no small feather in Miss Loucks' cap to realize that some of her favourite pieces of silverware will some day grace the Ambassador's table in far-away Petrograd.

Some of the best known dealers in antiques in our large Canadian cities are women, and it is a business peculiarly adapted to them, for artistic taste and diligent study must be combined with good business methods. Personality also counts, for there is an atmosphere about an antique shop that tempts one to linger, and lingering to buy.



Miss May Loucks, of The Old Curiosity Shop, Ottawa.



Miss Florence Munsie, of Victoria, who is to marry Lieut. Brown, of the Royal Berkshire Regiment.



Mrs. Edgar D. McCallum, Regina, zealous in Red Cross work.

the forewoman to see, the pretty munition-worker becomes reconciled to leaving her hairpins at home and braiding her hair with ribbons. No metals may be carried where explosives are made, consequently not only jewelry must be left outside, but hairpins, boots with nails in them, buttons with steel fasteners are all prohibited. The girl acetylene-welders in dark blue pinafores and fearsome goggles don't look very beautiful at work, but they make such good wages that they can afford to make up for it after hours, and the former parlour-maid who now earns £4 a week dresses better than her late mistress.

A Canadian lady just returned from England was amazed to see the latest extreme fashions worn here by women of good families. In London there is only one class of women who wear such clothes.

WHY shouldn't the woman chauffeuse make the most of her oilskins, and the tram conductor glance in the mirror to see if her cap is on at the most becoming angle? Women think of their looks whether they drive a motor lorrie or deliver letters. Dress crops up in everything, and the adaptation of women's clothes for their manifold new activities