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### THE PASSING OF THE SKIRT AND THE DETHRONING OF MAN

The war has brought about many changes in customs and fashions, but we are only on the fringe of the greatest revolution in female attire for many centuries. The high cost of living consequent on the war has curtailed at both ends the ladies' skirt or dress, till it is now but little more than a sash about the waist with shoulder straps to hold it up. This has paved the way for a greater change, for now we see on our streets of an evening, girls and young women, dressed in fancy bloomers and a midy, and it need be no stretch of imagination to expect that this will be the style or custom within a few years.

This may be news to some who have been away from home for a few weeks, or the thought of it may make some spinsters who have passed out of their girlhood 15 or 20 years ago, grind their teeth, but we would say, cheat the dentist out of a job and get about adapting yourself to the inevitable. You say, why so sure? Because of the scarcity of male help, females have been called to many callings formerly filled by men. It is not only farmerettes who find it safer, more convenient and cooler to abandon the skirt at their daily work; well, then, do you expect these people to keep up two distinct suits. What would become of the scuffed skirt? Can't afford to throw it away!

You will notice that necessity governs the working people (and we are all supposed to be that now). Yes, in a very short time the cumbersome, expensive, unnecessary skirt will find its place in the attic or museum, alongside the once fashionable and much-prized crinoline.

Another change that might be suggested would be the shortening of the hair. It does not need an old person to remember when at least half the young ladies had their hair "shingled," and to say that it was cooler, more convenient and looked neater than the present style of pulling it down over their eyes and ears like a Skye terrier, is putting it too mild. Neither is the hair needed to pin the hat to, as few are worn. Anyway, a hat (not a head decoration) will stay on a woman's head as well as a man's.

On the other hand, man is coming to a great change, too. His dress may not be changed much, but he is going to mind the baby if there are any (then) and many other jobs he is not thinking of just now. He is going to be taught not to stand on the street corner or elsewhere and puff his obnoxious, ill-perfumed, offensive tobacco smoke into people's faces. He will not be permitted to spend his earnings in the barroom or pool-room and hand his wife his empty pay envelope to try to exist on, and many other needed reforms are not far away, because women are going to have the upper hand in law making. If you disbelieve this, just pick up the last issues' list of East Flamboro and you will find there the names of seven hundred female voters, where a few years ago there was not one. This is nearly half the list, and the men have all the soldiers' names counted in their favor too. Man has had his earnings, now for a change.

### Entertaining Epitaphs.

In a search for the unusual, one would scarcely expect to come across it on a tombstone. But full justice can in some cases be done to a deceased in a single word.

There is a stone in Leamington Cemetery dedicated to the memory of one J. T. Burgess, who before laying aside the trammels of this mundane sphere edited the Leamington Spa Courier. His career and end are adequately summed up in one word—"Resting."

A departed auctioneer who lived in the city of Worcester had inscribed on his memorial stone as an epitaph, "Gone." Brief, economical, and retrospective. In a Sussex graveyard may be seen a stone on which are chiselled after the name and date of death of the deceased, just two expressive words—"He was." Surely a sermon in a nutshell.

But two of the strangest as well as the briefest epitaphs are to be found on stones in Cane Hill Cemetery, Belfast. On one of them, erected to the memory of a lazy fellow by one who evidently knew him well, are the words, "Asleep (as usual)." On the other, "Left Till Called For." A certain photographer has this inscribed over his grave, "Here I Lie, Taken from Life."

### A SIGN OF VICTORY.

Letter on Oat Leaves Impresses the Farmers.

Among the list of munitions of war, which are vital to victory, there is none more important than the oat crop of Canada, the food for man and beast and one of the most valuable of the farmer's field crops, and in the oat plants themselves this year many people profess to find a portent of coming victory for the Allied arms.

For some weeks, observant people in the agricultural districts, have pointed out a curious phenomenon in connection with the structure of the leaves of the oats, which many claim was observed the year the British arms triumphed in South Africa. The sign or portent is to be found on the flag leaf of the oats. The sign can be variously interpreted as the letter "B" or the figure "8" some of the leaves looked more like the one and some the other.

Does it mean that "victory" is coming to the British arms in 1918? Such is the interpretation given to the phenomenon by the superstitious, who declare they looked in vain for the sign last year and the year before, remembering the portent of victory in 1902.

The sign may be seen by anyone. It is to be found on the flag leaf, which is the leaf nearest the head of the grain. To find it, pull the leaf, in doing which it is unnecessary to injure the grain, and spread the lance-shaped frond flat on a table under a strong light. It makes no difference which side of the leaf is uppermost as the mysterious sign can be seen on either side. About one-third of the distance, from the place where the leaf joins the plant to the tip, there is usually, but not always, an appreciable narrowing of the leaf, and right at this point, impressed through the leaf, as it were, as though with a large type, is the letter "B" or the figure "8," plain to the eye.

One of the persons interested in the phenomenon, said recently: "They are all talking about it all over the country, they say that at the time of the Boer War, the letter 'V' which presages 'victory' was observed in similar circumstances on the oat leaves."

Some say it is a "B" and some say an "8" and many believe that it means 'victory' for 'Britain,' he said. "A farmer pointed it out to me yesterday and it's there all right."

Another explanation of the sign which finds favor with some, is that it is connected with the new star, for many people believe that astral visitors have a special influence on crops. The grapevine is supposed to be peculiarly susceptible to the influence of comets, and wine produced in the years when comets, in the course of their erratic orbit, pass the earth is supposed to be better than in other years and the supposition during last century has been proved on many occasions, commencing with the visit of Halley's comet in 1811. "Comet Port" was especially sought by connoisseurs of wine.

And comets themselves, whether or not they can influence the growing crops, are believed in many lands to presage war. An old Scotsman now in the city, who remembers the Crimean war, remembers also the visit of the comet that year.

The strange part of the appearance of the sign on the oat leaf this year is that it should be this year. With the portent of victory in South Africa in 1902 it may safely be assumed that eager eyes scanned the leaves last year and the year before and people there are who see in the sign the interpretation of the recent war despatches which tell of the defeat of the German arms and the discomfiture of the Crown Prince's forces.

Stories of the discovery of the sign are not confined to any one field or any one locality, but are widely scattered over the farms of old Ontario.

### Spruce for Planes.

So great is the demand for airplane spruce by the Allies that eastern as well as Sitka spruce is now being used. Canada has large resources of eastern spruce, which has hitherto been used mostly for the manufacture of pulp, paper and lumber, and the British War Mission is at present trying to secure in Eastern Canada as large an amount as possible of the grades suitable for airplane manufacture.

Eastern spruce has for some time been used for airplane construction in the United States, although only a very small percentage of this timber is sufficiently clear for this purpose. Tests made by the United States and Canadian Governments show that where material of suitable quality can be found, this species serves admirably for airplane construction and may be expected to supplement the supplies of Sitka spruce from the Pacific Coast, which are only now beginning to approach adequate proportions.

### Pick Wild Berries.

The Canada Food Board calls upon people at summer resorts and residents in suitable areas to make an immediate drive on the wild berry patches. Small fruits in general are scarce this year, but the wild berries are as abundant as usual. The main argument for gathering the wild berries freely is the shortage of butter in Europe. During the winter of 1918-19 jam must be used extensively on this continent as a substitute for butter, and the finest flavored jam in the world is that which is made from wild berries.

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