



The  
ROMANCE  
of  
MEN'S HATS

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*The*  
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# The ROMANCE of MEN'S HATS



Hats as the symbol of the Egyptian gods, between 3500 and 5000 years ago.

## THE ROMANCE OF MEN'S HATS

Men's hats to-day are such well known acquaintances and so thoroughly conservative that few of us realize what a romantic past they have had. The fact is, however, that right in the most civilized countries, they have been identified with the most amazing customs, and were long of the utmost significance in court, church, tribunal, and society. Most of us have laughed at the ponderous German professor, who, when a student came to him to learn the secrets of the universe, started him on the muscles of a frog's left hind leg, but it is no exaggeration to say that a thorough knowledge of hat history would go far toward disclosing the evolution of government, religion, and the whole social fabric.

### In Ancient Egypt—the Hat a Symbol

The earliest evidence concerning hats, or perhaps we should say headgear, comes from Egypt. When civilization first sprang up along the Nile with the 4th Dynasty at Memphis, 5,000 or 6,000 years ago, the Egyptian kings, nobles, and priests began to picture in their tombs the most important scenes of the civil, religious, and every day life of the time. These pictures are a mine of information concerning the customs, and, along with them, the headgear of that almost prehistoric age.

Throughout the whole era of ancient Egypt the headgear was distinctly a symbol far more than an article of practical use. All the hundreds of Egyptian gods, for example, were pictured with distinctive headgear to denote their authority and attributes, while in many cases the kings themselves were given the same headdresses or crowns to signify similar powers.

Where such a multitude of headdresses are involved it is possible to represent only a few of the most important. Several of these are included in a picture which looks like a procession of the gods.

# The ROMANCE of MEN'S HATS

But this by no means exhausted the list of the crowns worn by Egyptian royalty. Another consisted of a high oval cap profusely embellished with jewels. An even more interesting type was the uraeus crown, which was a flat hat surrounded by representations in jewels of serpents' heads.

Now the significance of all this lies in the fact that the crown and the hat were in the beginning identical, that the headgear was, in other words, a symbol of worldly and religious power. While we do not know enough about the beliefs of the ancient Egyptians to grasp the meaning of each detail in these headdresses, it is easy to catch the significance of the deadly serpent, the swooping vulture, and the threatening horns, all of which denoted physical might. So the towering plumes, which gave added height, symbolized majesty on the same principle that the Egyptian artists depicted their kings twice as large as ordinary men.

In contrast with such glorious headdresses of royalty, the ordinary Egyptian commonly had his head shaved and wore a wig of short curled hair without any hat whatever.

The absence of any pictures showing a hat with a brim is all the more remarkable considering the great heat of the climate, and the fact that parasols were already invented. It gives added emphasis to our statement that in Egypt the headdress was a symbol rather than a convenience.

## In Ancient Western Asia—The Cap a Helmet

Good evidence that the cap was, to begin with, a protection in war, is found in the earliest remains from that other cradle of civilization, the valley of the Tigris and Euphrates.



King Darius of Persia and his Councilors. Note the variety of headgear.

# The ROMANCE of MEN'S HATS



Hercules in the lion's skin suggesting the origin of the cap. From an archaic Greek vase.

An archaic picture which throws considerable light upon the origin of the cap is the "stele of victory" by Naram-Sin, ruler of Agade, about 2600 B.C. Here the king is pictured climbing a mountain at the head of his troops. On his head is depicted a cap or helmet with two curved horns. There is little doubt that in the beginning the skin and even part of the skull of the animal with the horns embedded in it were worn as a helmet, and that later horns were retained as a symbol of power.

The early Chaldaeans, however, progressed much further in the evolution of the hat than such helmet-like caps, for a number of ancient cylinder seals show genuine hats with brims.

The introduction of the brim, which requires a certain stiffness in itself, suggests that felting had already been invented, at least we know that in Western Asia this process went back to time immemorial.

The circular close fitting hat was likewise worn by the ancient Jews, though the high priest might be distinguished by a golden tiara.

The headgear of the Persians also was ordinarily a cap more or less pointed on top, and variously embroidered. A picture of Darius illustrates caps which have a shape evidently patterned after an animal skin.

## In Ancient Greece

The suggestion that headgear was originally an unaltered skin is corroborated by several remarkable archaic Greek pictures. Perhaps the most interesting shows Hercules and the three headed dog, Cerberus. Here the skin is thrown over Hercules' head in such a way that his face

# The ROMANCE of MEN'S HATS

appears through the mouth of the lion, the skull of which acts as a helmet for his head.

The Greeks of the classic period usually went bareheaded both indoors and out, except when especially exposed to inclement weather or a very hot sun. Thus voyagers, warriors, hunters, fishers, and farmers are sometimes pictured with hats and sometimes without them. Occasionally the hat is merely slung over the shoulder ready to be put on if required. Both hats and caps were known, the hat being called a "petasus," and the cap a "pileus."

The origin of the hat band is indicated in a Greek picture of girls playing ball, where it appears as a cord laced through the crown to tie it around the Psyche knot of the hair.



Ancient Greek hats, taken from various sources.

## In the Days of Ancient Rome

The early Romans wore caps and hats even less than the Greeks, as may be judged by the fact that they adopted the name for hat directly from the Greek. They were nevertheless worn by the surrounding peoples of Italy, and as these were conquered one by one, were made an adjunct of the Roman costume.

The slaves at Rome seem always to have gone bareheaded, for, when one was given his freedom, it was signified by presenting him with a



# The ROMANCE of MEN'S HATS

conical hat. This suggests that in the headgear still lingered some indication of the rank of the wearer.

Under the Emperor Caligula, the Roman senators were specifically authorized to wear hats at the theater or circus when too much exposed to the sun and weather.

We are used to thinking of men's hats in comparatively sombre colors, but, in that classic period, they were not only black and white, but red, yellow, green, and violet, with a border often of a different color.



French hats in the Eleventh Century, A. D., of the ancient Phrygian type. From a manuscript miniature.

## In Mediaeval Europe

After the downfall of the Roman Empire the costume became a compromise between that of the Romans and their barbarian conquerors.

Cloth and fur for a time almost entirely took the place of felting. The very process was so nearly forgotten, that it was fabled to have been rediscovered by St. Clement, who found some rabbit's fur, which he had placed in his sandals, to have become felted. That the process was ever entirely lost, however, is incorrect, for a knowledge of it was retained unbroken in the East, and, even in the West, the word "filtrum" meaning felt appears in a glossary of 1000 A.D.

# *The* ROMANCE of MEN'S HATS

In England before the Norman Conquest headgear was likewise worn only when necessary. The Anglo-Saxon pictures of nobles, saints, and workmen, usually show them bareheaded, but at times we find them wearing caps with the point turned forward in the old Phrygian style. Few, if any, genuine hats with brims are delineated in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts.

The more general use of hats seems to have been introduced into England with the Norman Conquest in 1066 A.D. The Bayeux tapestry, which depicts in embroidery the scenes of the conquest, proves that the Normans shaved the backs of their heads, and wore both hats and hoods.

An illustration of a feast held by William the Conqueror introduces us to a custom which is certainly astonishing. Every guest at the table is still wearing a hat or hood.

In the 13th Century hats with brims reappeared. Matthew of Paris, who wrote his history of the English about 1235 A.D., portrays them, together with caps and hoods, being worn in the English court in the presence of the king, as well as on laborers in the fields.



An entertainment in Italy about 1420 A. D. with graceful hats made familiar by Raphael and the other great Italian masters.

A few pictures indicate that at that time in England and elsewhere, hats with brims were worn principally for protection against extreme weather, for they are shown slung over the back to be put on only if needed, as was done in ancient Greek times. In such cases they were even worn over the cap or hood.

It is interesting to note that in 1245 Pope Innocent IV authorized the cardinals to wear the hat which still distinguishes them.

The first Mediaeval pictures of hats with feathers or plumes appear about this time.

# The ROMANCE of MEN'S HATS



Edward III and the messenger of Robert Bruce, 14th Century. Only the two addressing the King have their hats off.

at balls, at dinner, when meeting ladies and in their company, and, in fact, in almost every conceivable place where etiquette to-day demands its removal. The best evidences of these customs are the pictures of the various periods, and in following the development of styles in hats, we shall select those which at the same time illustrate these practices.

Our examples may be drawn from all of the most civilized countries. A tapestry of 1420 illustrating a gala scene at Florence depicts hats on not only the guests but on even the musicians. A miniature of Louis XI about 1475 shows him playing chess in his private apartments with a hat

## Surprising Customs

In the 14th Century hats and caps were in such vogue that they were worn in many places where we should never expect to see them.

Such pictures bring up the whole question of hat customs in the later Middle Ages and Early Modern Period. It is a subject full of surprises, and worthy of far more complete investigation than our space will permit. The evidence seems to show that for several centuries it was the custom to wear the hat indoors, in the presence of the king, in the church, at funerals, in the law courts, at the theater,



King Louis XI of France playing chess, about 1475. Note the hats on in the presence of the King.

# The ROMANCE of MEN'S HATS

on his head and that of his opponent.

The same rule seems to have held good in the courts of justice as illustrated in the trial of John, Duc d'Alencon before Charles VII in 1458. Other court scenes show all present except the prisoners with their hats on.

A number of the scenes from this century demonstrate that plumes on men's hats were in fashion.

The expression "another jewel for his cap" had in those days, and long afterwards, a practical as well as a figurative meaning, for it was the custom to adorn the cap with precious or semi-precious stones, depending on the station of the wearer.



Francois I on the throne of France, about 1540.



A settlement of accounts, 1466. One of the hats is a beaver.

## The Guild System of Industry

But it is time that we say a word concerning the hat industry itself at that period. The use of beaver in hat making had come in before 1400, for we find Chaucer writing of the merchant who had, "Upon his heed a ffloundryssh Beuere hat," or "beaver hat made in Flanders."

At that time the industry was organized on the guild system. Hatters' guilds begin to appear about 1200, and were the basis of the industry for practically four centuries. In this method of organization the master hatters and workmen of a city were all in one guild. To enter the guild, a

# The ROMANCE of MEN'S HATS

boy first served an apprenticeship of seven years, during which time he received only his keep and a few shillings a year for spending money. After his apprenticeship was finished, he became a journeyman. As such he could go from one master to another and receive the wages prevailing in the craft.

In 1400 the wages of such guild craftsmen amounted in England to about 9 cents a day at a time when wheat was worth 18 cents a bushel. Thus it would have taken him two days to earn a bushel of wheat. The hours of labor at the time began at sunrise and did not end until dark, which means that in summer they ran as high as 14 hours a day.

In order to become a master workman, the journeyman had to pay a considerable sum into the guild. As a master he was expected by the rules of the guild to pay the same price as the others for materials, and to sell similar products at the same rate. The hats were, of course, made and sold in the same shop, over which the hatter customarily lived, together with one or two apprentices and perhaps a bachelor journeyman who boarded with him.



The earliest known picture of a hat store, 1505 A. D.  
Note how the hats were hung on pegs.

## In the 16th Century

At the beginning of the 16th Century a hatter's wages rose from about 9 cents to about 12 cents a day, which was probably due to the opportunities offered by the new voyages of discovery. The price of wheat remained about 18 cents a bushel, so that the skilled hatter could have bought about 4 bushels for his week's work.

The earliest picture of a hat store seems to date from about 1505. The stores at that time usually had no glass windows, but only openings at the front which were closed on Sundays with wooden shutters. The hats were often sold over a counter at the front, while the work was

# The ROMANCE of MEN'S HATS



Hats at the deathbed of Henry II of France, 1559.

going on in the back of the shop. Most of the sales were still made on the basis of barter. The guild organization of masters, journeymen, and apprentices remained in force throughout the century.

The custom of wearing the hat in all sorts of places continued throughout the 16th Century, as is proved by the pictures of the time.

An illustration of the House of Lords in the time of Henry VIII depicts the members with their hats on, as is in fact the custom to-day.

Hats were still kept on even at death beds and funerals. A scene of the death of Henry II of France in 1559 shows round topped hats and hats with plumes on the heads of those assembled. At the funeral of the Bishop of Ely in 1581 those attending were described as "sitting in the quire to hear the funeral sermon, and having their bonnets on."

## The Hat in Shakespeare

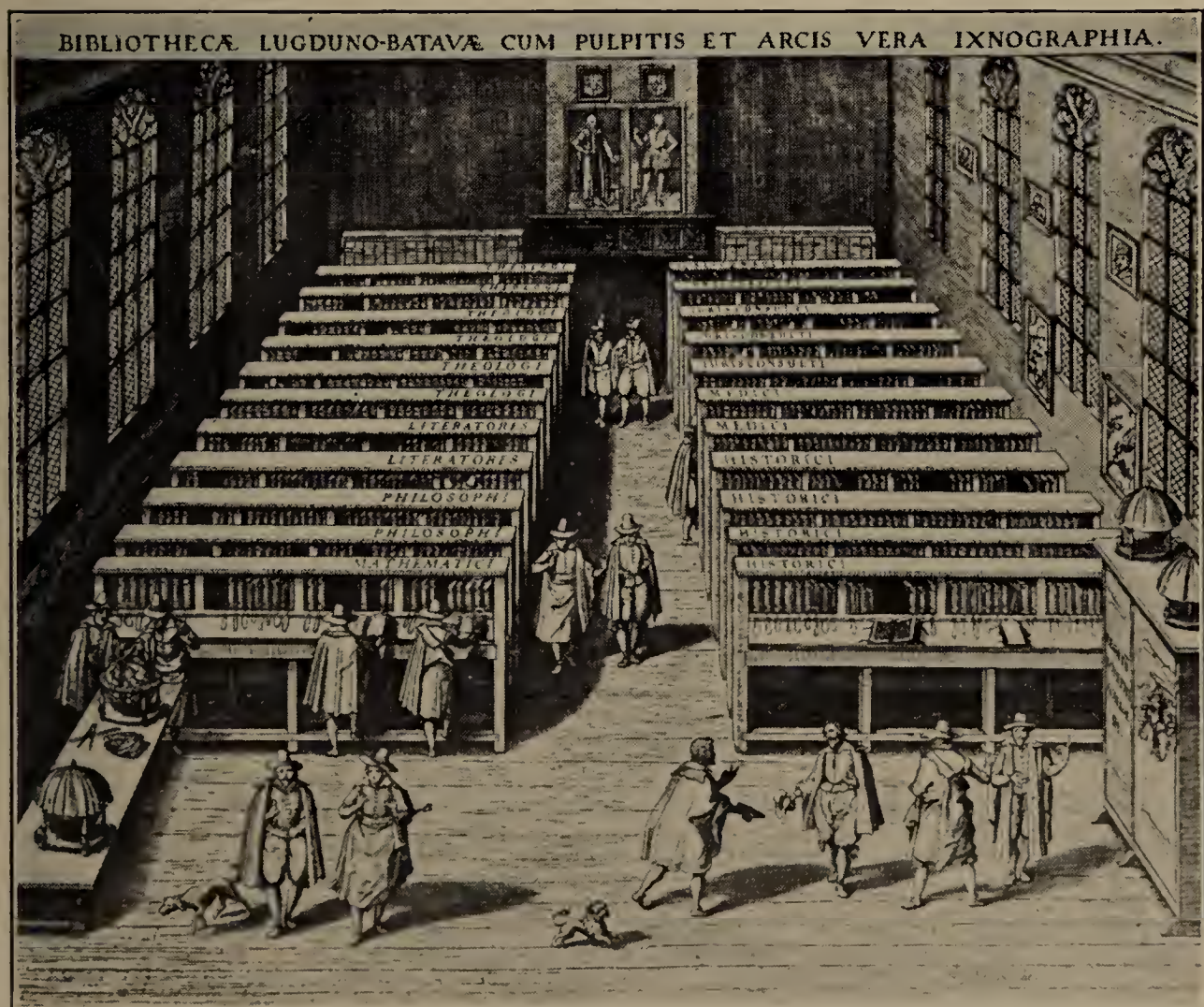
By 1600 the hat had become of sufficient significance to be specifically discussed in the plays of the immortal Shakespeare. The playwright, who is an excellent recorder of the manners of the moment, is proof that the fashion was coming in of taking off the hat while grace was being said. He wrote in part in the "Merchant of Venice" II, 2,

# The ROMANCE of MEN'S HATS

“If I do not put on a sober habit,  
Talk with respect, and swear but now and then,  
Wear prayer-books in my pocket, look demurely,  
Nay, more, while grace is saying, hood mine eyes  
Thus, with my hat, and sigh, and say ‘Amen,’  
Use all the observance of civility,  
Like one well studied in a sad ostent  
To please his grandam, never trust me more.”

Apparently, according to “Much Ado About Nothing,” if a man kept his hat in condition, he must be in love:

“If he be not in love with some woman, there is no believing old signs.  
A’ brushes his hat o’ mornings; what should that bode?”



Men saluting in 1600, in the Library of Leyden. Note the chains on the books.





## The ROMANCE of MEN'S HATS

The hatters bought their materials where they could, and had the work done at contract prices. The hats themselves were sold at open fairs, and at other places where the monopoly of the guilds had been broken down.

Probably on account of the continued exploitation of the New World, all wages and prices rose during the century. The skilled hatter's wages increased from about 12 cents a day in 1500 to about 24 cents a day at



Man in his glory; men's hats in a ball room, 1650.

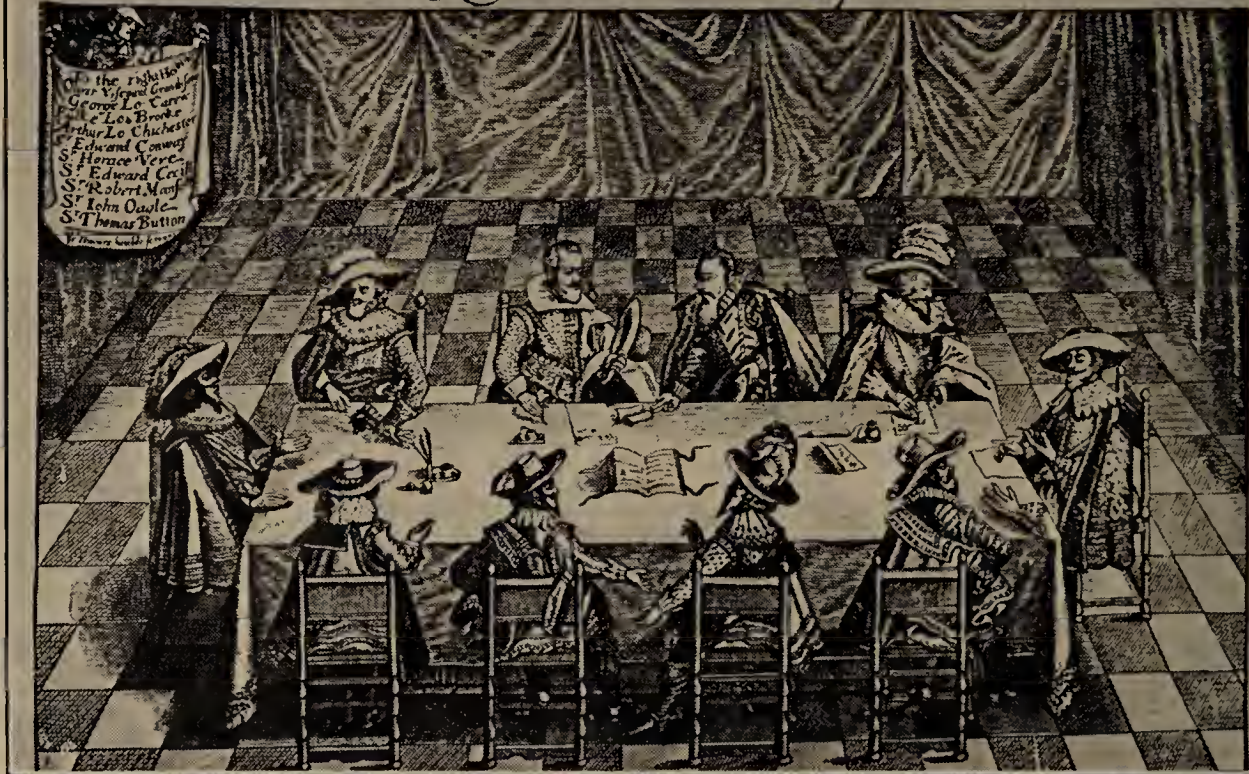
the end of the century. Wheat in the meantime rose from about 18 cents a bushel to practically 72 cents a bushel. Thus although the hatter's wages had doubled, at the end of the century he could still buy only three bushels of wheat for his week's work.

In the first half of the century the custom of keeping the hat on indoors remained more or less generally in force in the highest social centers of Europe.

A picture of the feast of the knights of St. Esprit in 1633 at which Louis XIII was present shows all with their hats on. The king is also pictured with his hat on at dinner in 1643, the year of his death.

# The ROMANCE of MEN'S HATS

## Greate Brittaines Noble and worthy Council of Warr



Hats at a council of war, 1623, England.

The custom of hats on at dinner also held good in England. John Denison wrote, in 1631, "At civill banquets, being at Table with men of Worth, it is Civility to put on our hats." Pepys, the world famed diarist, wrote in 1664, "Home to bed; having got a strange cold in my head, by flinging off my hat at dinner, sitting with the wind in my neck." The "Rules of Civility" translated from the French in 1673, said of the guest, "When he is sit he must keep himself uncovered till the rest sit down, and the person of quality has put on his hat. . . . If one rises from the table before the rest, he must pull off his hat."

In churches and religious ceremonies the French still retained their hats, but in England some of the clergy were making an effort to have them removed. We read that in 1620 at church "Cranfield sat with his hat pulled down over his eyes, . . . the king just over him."

A French picture of a Capucin preaching shows various members of the congregation with their hats on, some of them even over wigs. In 1646 John Evelyn wrote from Geneva, "On Sunday I heard Dr. Diodati preach in French, and after the French mode,—in a gowne with a cape and his hat on."

An effort, however, was being made to have the men in the congregation remove their hats, but in 1661 it was as yet far from successful, for

# The ROMANCE of MEN'S HATS

Pepys wrote, "To church and heard a simple fellow . . . exclaiming against men's wearing their hats on in the church."

The first step toward taking the hat off in church seems to have been to remove it to cover the eyes during prayer, though it was put back on immediately afterwards. As late as 1689 King William still wore his hat in church, or if he removed it during the liturgy, clapped it on again as soon as the preacher began his sermon.

## Old Customs Change

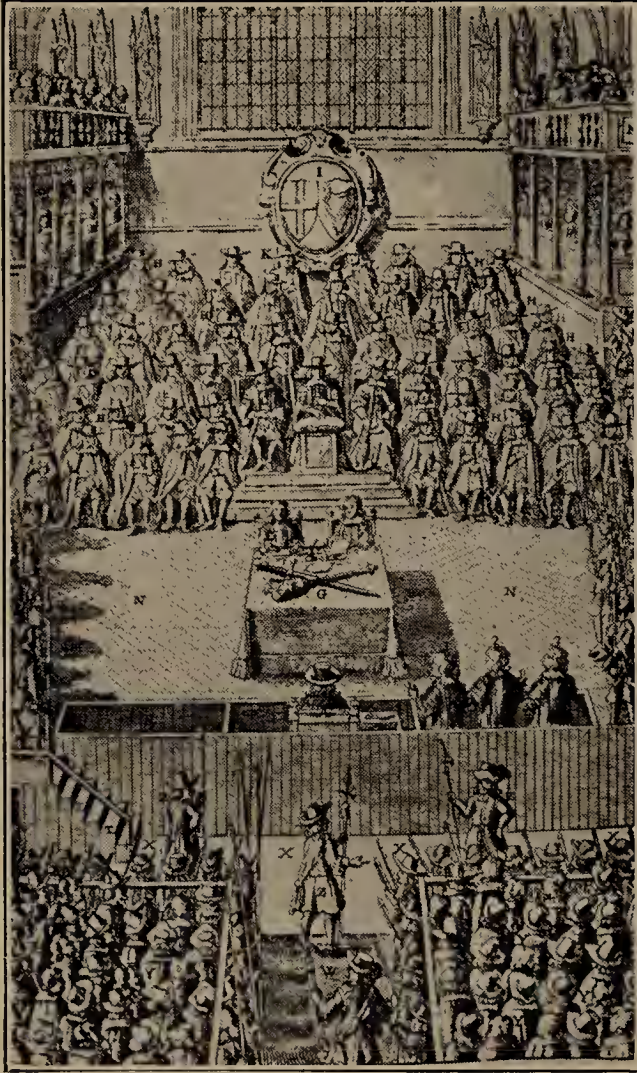
These hat customs, which had lasted more than half a millennium, are not easy to explain. At the beginning of this period the hat was apparently a prerogative of rank. It was worn because a man had a right to wear it amongst equals everywhere, in the presence of superiors unless there was great disparity of rank, and even then except when definitely acknowledging superiority or on analogous occasions.

What overthrew the custom of wearing the hat at all times was probably the introduction of the wig. False hair had long been known



The hat and the church, from an English political broadside, 17th Century.

# The ROMANCE of MEN'S HATS



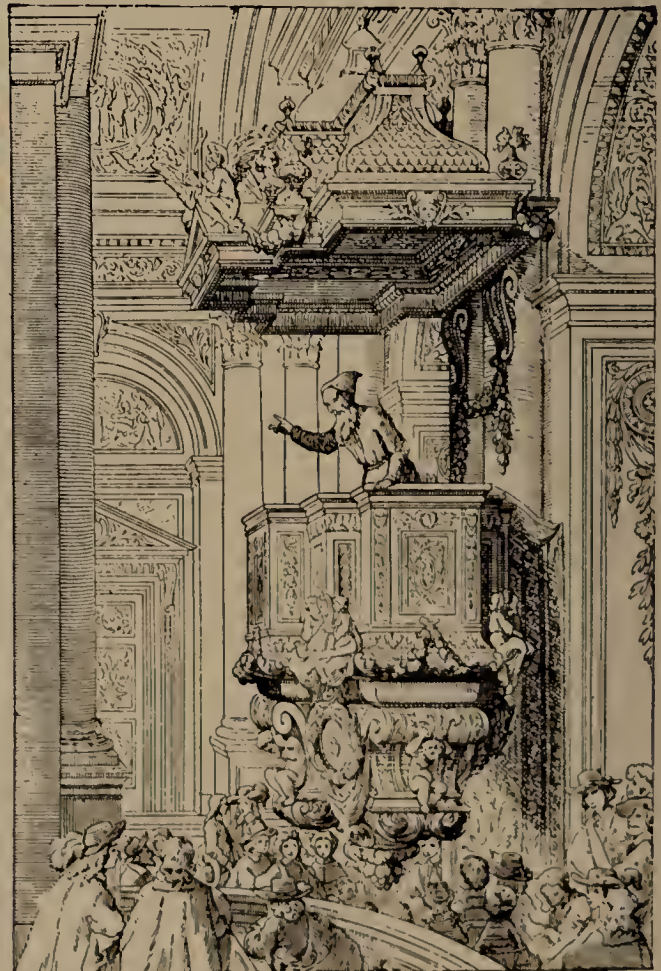
Trial of Charles I of England, 1649.

imitate them. But in 1670 even the king took up the peruke.

It was difficult to keep the hat on the head over the wig, and it mussed the curls. For these reasons large hats with plumes went out of style, small flat or cocked hats came in, and the fashion was developed of wearing the hat only when necessary. Instead of wearing it indoors, they went to the other extreme and often carried it in their hand when out of doors.

and worn more or less to cover up actual baldness, but in the 17th century complete wigs became a necessity of fashion and not merely an aid to nature.

The custom started in France. In 1620 the abbe La Riviere appeared at the court of Louis XIII in a wig imitating long hair. Four years later the king, who was prematurely bald, likewise adopted the wig and established the fashion. Louis XIV was proud of his own long curls and wore them at first rather than a wig, but his courtiers merely changed the style of their wigs to



A sermon by a monk, France, 17th Century, the hats still retained in church.

# The ROMANCE of MEN'S HATS

In England the Puritans continued to wear their own hair and round hats to go with it, but in the world of fashion there and on the continent the wig and the soft hat to carry in the hand remained in vogue until the era of the French Revolution.

The contrast between the old Puritan customs and those of the court is brought out in Bramston's couplet:

“So Britain's monarch once uncovered sat,  
While Bradshaw bullied in a broad brimmed hat.”



In a theatre, Paris, about 1800. The custom of donning the hat between the acts is still in vogue in Europe.

The fashion in the middle of the 18th century is indicated in the lines:

“A pretty black beaver tuck'd under his arm:  
If placed on his head, it might keep him too warm.”

The round hat at times came back into favor for morning wear, but only for brief periods, and the most frequent change in the style of the hat between 1670 and 1789 was in the way in which the hat was cocked. This was more or less expressive of the position and character of the wearer. As Douglas Jerrold wrote, “Be sure of it, everything in life depends upon the cock of the hat.”

## The ROMANCE of MEN'S HATS

Right up to the year of the French Revolution men's clothes were as elaborate as a lady of fashion's. They wore cocked hats trimmed with gold braid and jewels, powdered wigs, long queues, bright colored coats, embroidered waistcoats, striped silk pantaloons, two watches, immense chains, and innumerable seals. As a climax to which, they painted their faces.

But the French Revolution changed all this. Wigs went out, and the round hat, more or less identified with the Puritan Revolution in England, came back. Gold lace and embroidery were swept away, and the clothes became sterner in cut and hue. Another typical Revolutionary style was the bell crowned hat, which was developed from the cone-shaped crown of the Puritans. Sometimes, however, the cocked hat was retained with the brim turned up straight across the front.

With the crowning of Napoleon in 1804, dress became once more extravagant, but, naturally enough, very military. The most impressive hat of the period, outside of the martial uniforms, was evolved by having the brim wider than the height of the crown, and folding the sides so that they met above the top of the hat. Viewed from the side, this formed a crescent. These hats were usually immense in size, and



Hats and velocipedes, about 1810. Note the contrast between the sport hat of that period and today.

# The ROMANCE of MEN'S HATS



French hats at the time of Napoleon I. Note the hats with the folded brims both on the head and under the arm.

lent a pageant-like magnificence to the wearer. Sometimes only one side of the brim was turned up, mounting higher than the crown and laced to it so as to be kept in place.

The most distinguished addition to hat styles during the Restoration period, which began in 1815, after the Battle of Waterloo, was the high stove pipe or bell crowned hat, which was made of either beaver or silk. Beaver had been used for hats for centuries and silk plush had been tried as early as 1760 in Florence, while the Revolutionary hats in part approached the shape, but the combination had not yet come into vogue. In London the first silk hat was worn in 1797 by John Hetherington, a haberdasher, and created such a riot that he was compelled to give bonds for 500 pounds to keep the peace. The high beaver seems to have met with no such opposition and for some decades remained the hat for formal occasions. Breeches, by the way, were just being lengthened to the ankle.

## The Hat Business a Century Ago

Probably the most definite and interesting details of the hat business in America a century ago are contained in an old account book of William Connett, the great grandfather of E. V. Connett, Jr., and E. R. Connett, of the hat manufacturing concern of E. V. Connett & Co.

William Connett, who was born at Union, N. J., was established in the business of manufacturing and retailing hats at Rahway, N. J., at least as early as 1815, from which date a beautiful brass die of his is

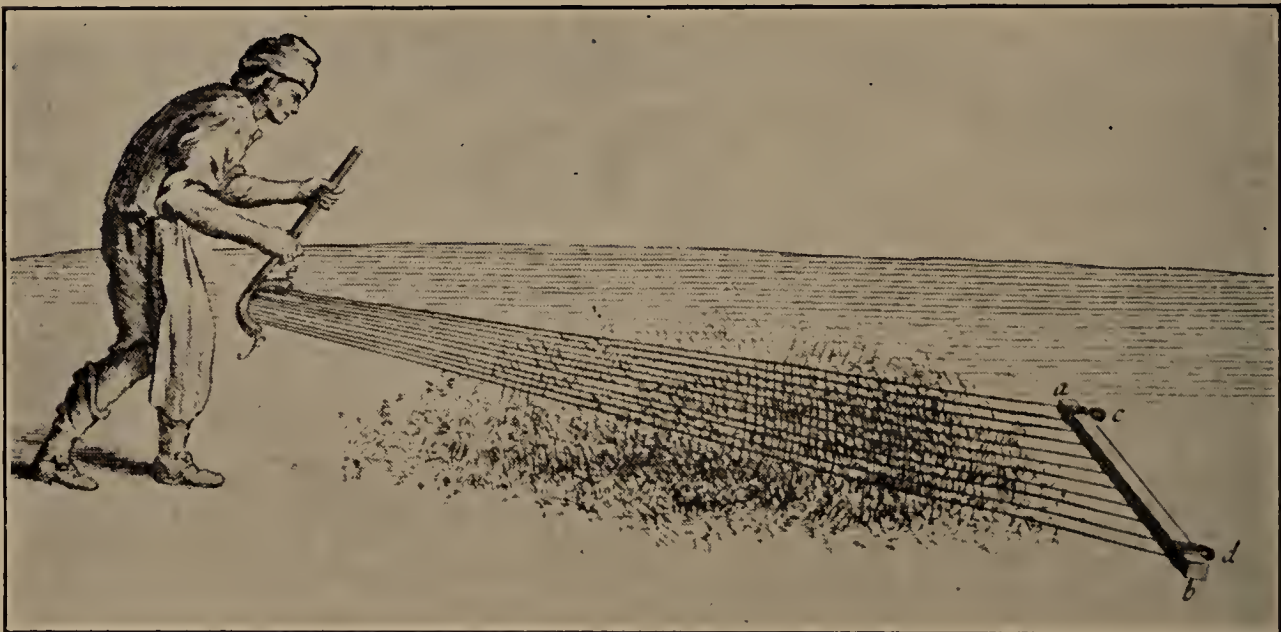
# The ROMANCE of MEN'S HATS

preserved. A ledger of his, dated 1822 and kept by D. B. Connett, has recently been rediscovered amongst old family records, and embodies the most curious and amazing facts illustrative of the hat industry at that time.

William Connett not only manufactured, wholesaled, and retailed hats, but as will be seen was forced, in order to dispose of the goods he bartered them for, to become practically a general storekeeper.

One mill he rented of Henry R. Lee for \$300 a year, and paid for it entirely in feed, meal, flour, grain, and sundries, for which he had exchanged his hats, together with the transfer of a few accounts. There was practically no money changed hands.

He got his materials from the same firms in New York to which he wholesaled his hats, so that here also there are but few cash items. From



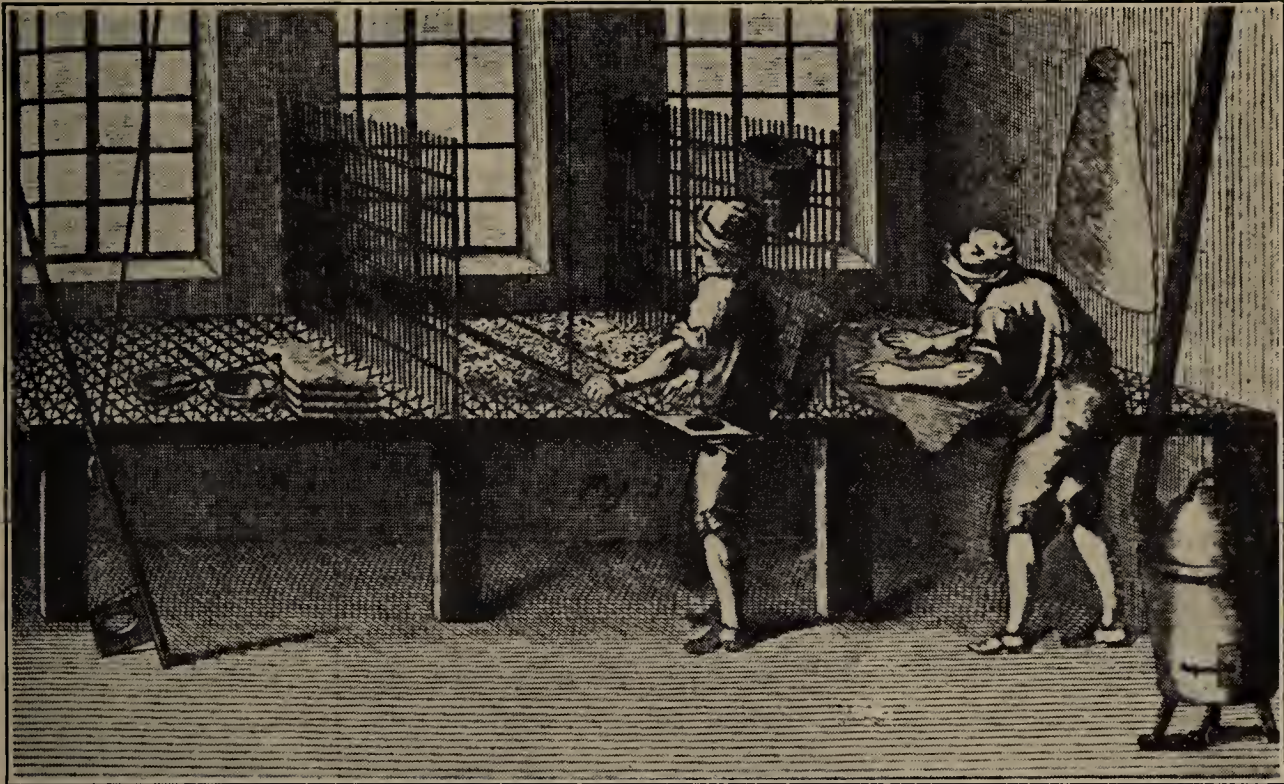
Separating and mixing the fur before bowing, 1750.

E. & H. Raymond, for example, he obtained nutria fur at \$6.00 a pound and muskrat skins at fifty cents each, which is a small percentage of the prices today. To them he sold 72 rorum hats for \$130.50, 42 ladies' hats for \$57.75, 10 drab water proof hats for \$17.50, and 28 youths' hats for \$42.00.

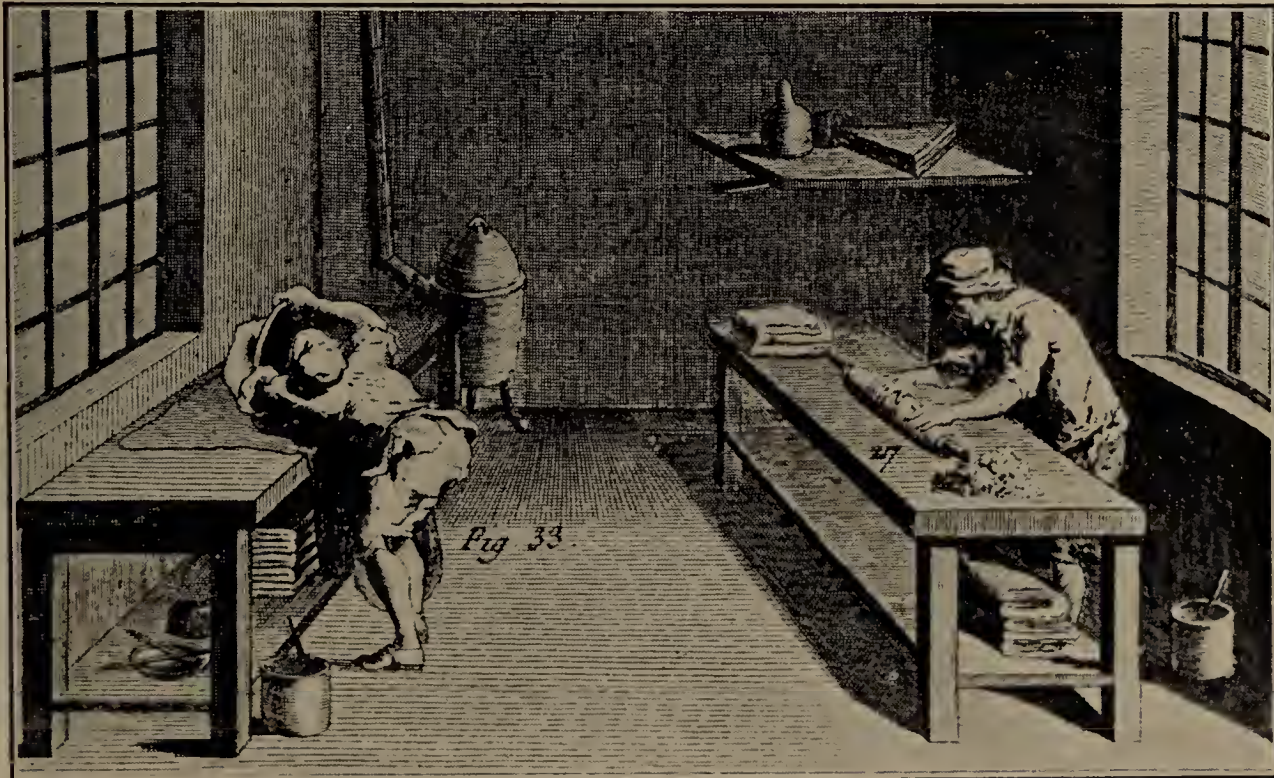
In running his factory, he credited his workmen with their wages, but paid them almost entirely with the supplies for which he had to barter the hats they produced. To Abraham M. Williams, for instance, he paid \$5.00 a week, which were the regular wages of the period, and sold him among other things a beaver hat for \$5.00 and a rorum hat for \$3.00. Thus it took a skilled workman at that time a full week's



# The ROMANCE of MEN'S HATS



Bowing the fur, to separate the fibres, and forming the two halves for hat bodies, 1750. The separating of the fur is now done in blowing machines. The forming is now done over a perforated copper cone by air suction. These two processes revolutionized hat manufacture.



Looking through a hat body for "dags," and hardening it before the shrinking process, 1750. These methods have scarcely changed at all.

# The ROMANCE of MEN'S HATS

work to earn his Sunday hat. This was of course due to the slowness of production by hand labor, and the meagerness of results, in spite of the fact that the hours of work still copied those of the neighboring farms, which were from sunrise to dusk.

Living expenses were low as far as mere necessities were concerned, and as for luxuries, the only ones they had would be thought necessities now, but were very high in comparison with wages. Connett boarded Moses B. Martin, who seems to have been a journeyman hat napper, for \$2.00 a week, but on the other hand broadcloth was \$4.00 a yard, muslin 34 cents a yard, and a pair of calf shoes \$1.93. Sugar was 12 cents a pound, tea \$1.25 a pound, and molasses 34 cents a gallon. Oats were 50 cents and wheat \$1.00 a bushel, at which prices a skilled workman could have earned only five bushels of wheat or ten of oats for his week's work.

The guild organization of industry, which had been superseded in Europe in the previous century, had probably never been established in America, and no signs of it appear in the Connett ledger. The apprentice system, however, was still in force. An apprentice of Connett's was John Sandford Swaime, to whom we find credited the highly interesting item: "Salary for 3 years 10 months & 20 days—\$58.18." There are also credits in his favor for "over work." There is no indication that



Shrinking or sizing hat bodies, 1780, with wood fires under the kettles.

# The ROMANCE of MEN'S HATS



The dye room of a hat factory, 1780. Also carding and shaping brims in boiling water.

Swaine received his board also, but as his wages are figured by the year and the boarding of apprentices was the regular custom, it is probable that he did.

From the figures we judge that the wages of the apprentice were about \$15 a year and that the period of apprenticeship had been reduced from seven years as formerly to three. The ledger shows that Swaine drew several small amounts for spending money, but that he received the most of even his scant allowance in articles partly for himself and partly for his father and others. When he needed something from some other shop, he seems to have got it and had it charged to Connett. For example, he is charged several times for work by P. Gage and others in "soaling" boots or shoes, the cost of which work seems to have been 68 cents.

When we look over the operations that Connett found necessary in retailing, we have no doubt as to the original meaning of the word "tradesman," for in those days a merchant certainly swapped goods rather than sold them. There is nothing in present day American life comparable to the bartering, and rebartering, and still further exchanging and swapping

# The ROMANCE of MEN'S HATS



A retail hat store, 1780. Note the absence of shelves and cases, and that the hats were made with full brims, which were turned up to suit the fancy of the buyer.

that was required before the goods reached the real consumer. It was more complicated than a four cornered deal in baseball players.

In addition to illustrating the methods of doing business a hundred years ago, Connett's retail accounts are also valuable records of the prices of the period.

Out of such a mass of material, we can select only a few of the most interesting or significant items. From Thomas Morris, for example, Connett took pigs at \$2 each, turnips at 43 cents a bushel, and wood at \$5.00 a cord, and to him sold rorum hats at \$3 and youths' hats at \$2 each. With William E. Meeker he traded a beaver hat worth \$6 for the painting of a gig. It reads curiously to find Capt. Freeman Force receiving only a dollar for a day's work, and the same amount for hauling 600 brick. From Samuel Force, Connett took in cider at about \$2 a barrel, beef at five cents a pound, and veal at the same price, to balance which Connett traded a horse at \$25, goggles at \$1.25, and several hats. To Henry Campbell, Connett gave a \$5 castor or beaver hat for \$5 in accounts with other persons, which makes one realize that the

# The ROMANCE of MEN'S HATS

general store was in that day an exchange for the liquidating of small debts.

Wages in other trades were apparently even lower than in the hat industry, for Simeon Thatcher was credited with only a dollar for making a pair of pants, 87 cents for making a vest, and five shillings for making a coat, Connett, of course, supplying the materials. Making a frock coat, however, cost \$4.00.

To Henry Osborn, Connett sold six rorum hats for \$24.00 and took in payment two headstones.

Weaving at that period was often done in the home, for Connett credited Marsh Noe with a shilling a yard for weaving 29 yards of carpet, and Ezra Frazee with \$1.77 for weaving 17 yards of cloth.

The most fashionable hat in America, and in fact the world, at that date, was undoubtedly the napped beaver top hat which we find so often mentioned in Connett's ledger. It was even taller than the silk hat of today, and the nap, which was of beaver fur instead of silk, was more in evidence. Long pantaloons were well established, but the coat for



The sizing "battery" in the time of William Connett, 1815.

# The ROMANCE of MEN'S HATS



daytime wear still approximated in cut the full dress coat of the present era, though usually in bright colors. Cut-away-coats, however, which had been introduced in England about 1750, were still common there, though not so much worn in France.

For theaters, balls, and official occasions, the hat worn was very often the *chapeau bras*, so called because it could be folded and carried under the arm. It was merely a variant of the three cornered hat of pre-revolutionary times, or the crescent shaped hat of the Empire period. The etiquette of the court still required along with it the old knee breeches and silk stockings.

For ordinary wear persons who made no pretence to strictly fashionable attire were satisfied to seek comfort in a soft felt hat with a more or less rolling brim.

Hat customs at that time seem to have been in a transition state. Even in the days of wigs, the Quakers and certain old-fashioned persons had persisted in wearing their hats, instead of carrying them in their hands, and, after wigs were discarded, the custom of wearing the hat outdoors and sometimes indoors came back. Pictures of the interiors of cafes show men seated at the tables with their hats on, even though ladies are present. An illustration of a reception at Frascati's, the most

## The ROMANCE of MEN'S HATS

fashionable of the cafes of Paris, depicts the men with their hats off when seated at the tables with the ladies, but with their hats in most cases on their heads while walking with the fair ones about the room.

A further interesting instance on this subject is given in Capt. Jesse's biography of Beau Brummell. It proves that the irreproachable dresser, who for years set the fashion in London, differed widely in what he considered etiquette from modern standards.

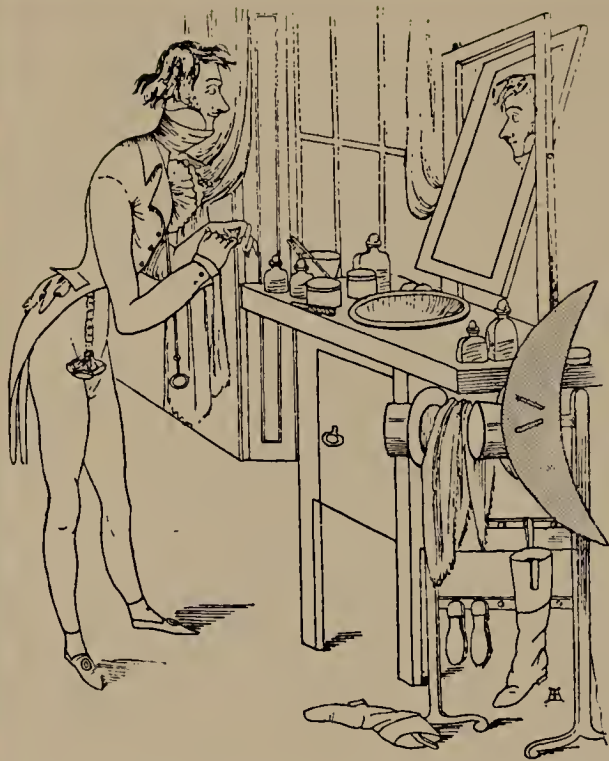
"In the street," wrote Jesse, "Brummell never took off his hat to anyone, not even to a lady; it would have been difficult to replace it in the same position, for it was invariably put on with great care and at a prescribed angle; added to which, his wig might have been disturbed,—a catastrophe too dreadful to be wantonly encountered. In fine weather the salute of his associates was acknowledged by a bow, or if on the other side of the street, by an extension of the arm and a slight movement of his fingers in the air. In muddy weather, as there were no *trottoirs*, he was too much occupied with his lower extremities to think of noticing anything but the unequal paving stones."

At that time Brummell was about fifty-four, and his wig may have been worn to hide his growing baldness, though it was no longer a prerequisite of fashion.



A shop for women's and men's hats, France, about 1800. At that particular date the style of women's hats seems to have been more masculine than the men's.

# The ROMANCE of MEN'S HATS



The dressing room of a dandy, 1818. Note the hat with the immense brim laced up at the sides.

## In the Days before the Civil War

Daniel B. Connett, who we have seen kept the ledger of old William Connett, after learning the industry from his father, left home to be a foreman in the long extinct firm of Vail & Yates of Newark, N. J., and later went into business for himself. How small were the hand worked hat factories of the period may be judged by the fact that at one time he removed his to Bethel, Conn.

In the course of this period, Panama leaf hats were first introduced into America in 1826, and in 1834 Gibus of Paris began to make an opera hat which opened with a spring.

In the thirties and forties the folded or three cornered beaver was still worn at court receptions, but in general the most stylish hat was the tall beaver. This was worn in grey or white in the daytime, and often in black at night. Sometimes the crown was straight, sometimes tapered into a cone, and again flared like a bell. The shape of the Derby appeared in 1842, but it was still of napped beaver.



A napped beaver made by William Connett, and still in existence.



# The ROMANCE of MEN'S HATS

One of the best known American authors of that era, Oliver Wendell Holmes, the famous poet and novelist, has several delightful passages concerning the hat. In the "Autocrat of the Breakfast Table," after mentioning that the old gentleman had been made sport of for mounting his white beaver too early in the season, Holmes went on to remark:

"Shabby gentility has nothing so characteristic as its hat. There is always an unnatural calmness about its nap, and an unwholesome gloss, suggestive of a wet brush. The last effort of decayed fortune is expended in smoothing its dilapidated castor. The hat is the *ultimum moriens* (the last-dying spark) of respectability."



The first locomotive built in America in a race with a horse car at Charleston, South Carolina. Evidently the speed did not necessitate holding on the hats.

In his poem, "A Rhymed Lesson," written in 1846, Holmes give some advice on the hat that every man should still give heed to, and every hat store frame in gold:

"Have a good hat: the secret of your looks  
Lives with the beaver in Canadian brooks;  
Virtue may flourish in an old cravat,  
But man and nature scorn the shocking hat.  
Does beauty slight you from her gay abodes?  
Like bright Apollo, you must take to Rhoades.—  
Mount the new castor,—ice itself will melt;  
Boots, gloves, may fail: the hat is always *felt!*"

## The ROMANCE of MEN'S HATS

Another famous poet of that era who wrote verses about the hat was Thomas Hood, the lyrical humorist. In one of his poems, which is entitled, "All Round My Hat," he speaks of the hats of the various professions, his squib concerning the quakers' head-gear being particularly clever:

"The quaker loves an ample brim,  
A hat that bows to no salaam;  
And dear the beaver is to him  
As if it never made a dam."

Further on in the same poem, Hood wrote of his own head covering:

"As yet, my hat, you've got a crown;  
A little nap the brush can find;  
You are not very, very brown,  
Nor very much scrubbed up behind.  
As yet your brim is broad and brave,—  
I took some little care of that  
By not saluting every knave  
All round my hat, all round my hat!"

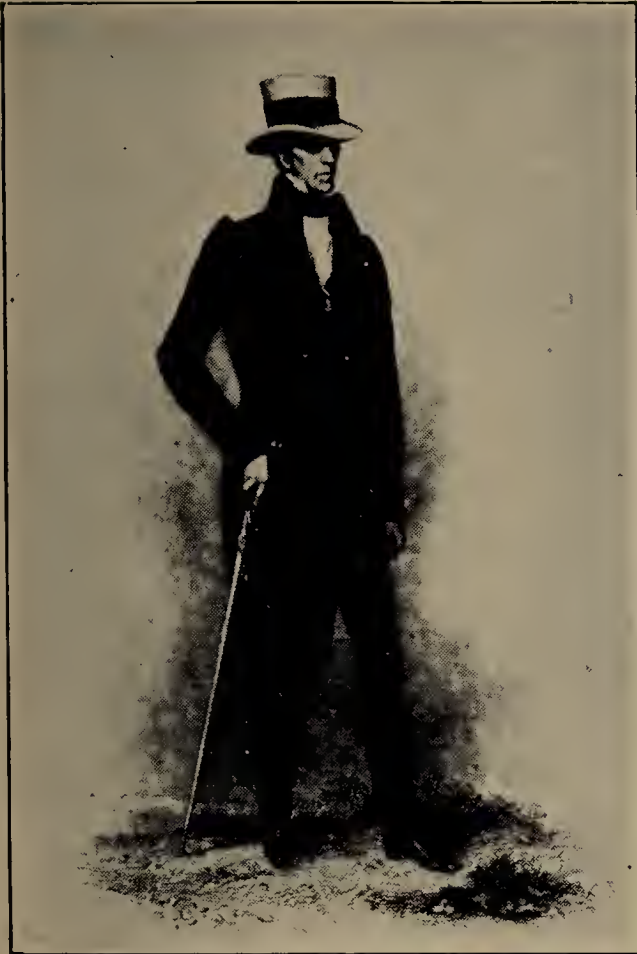
The last lines suggest that men still raised their hats to one another on occasion, as had been the case two centuries before, when they wanted to acknowledge superior rank or curry favor.

About this time an interesting change in men's dress was taking place, which in one way or another affected the hat.

In the reign of William IV, 1830-1837, the well-dressed man had regularly worn a green or plum colored cut-away or dress coat in the daytime, with trousers gaitered at the bottom under the boot. In the evening the coat was commonly blue, though sometimes black. With these highly colored costumes the tall beaver was still the favorite for daytime, while the *chapeau bras* was still in vogue for evening.

In 1837, however, Victoria ascended the throne, and three years later married Prince Albert. He almost immediately established the coat known by his name as the correct cut for afternoon wear, and along with it increased the favor of the top hat of silk rather than of beaver. Both the Prince Albert coat and the silk hat looked dignified in black, and day clothes as well as evening dress gradually assumed more sedate hues.

# The ROMANCE of MEN'S HATS.



General Andrew Jackson, "Old Hickory," with his favorite beaver hat.

tion, the court dress of the American ambassadors abroad had been a blue dress coat lined with white silk, a straight standing cape, white knee breeches, white silk stockings, a sword, and a three-cornered soft hat, often of velvet, to carry under the arm.

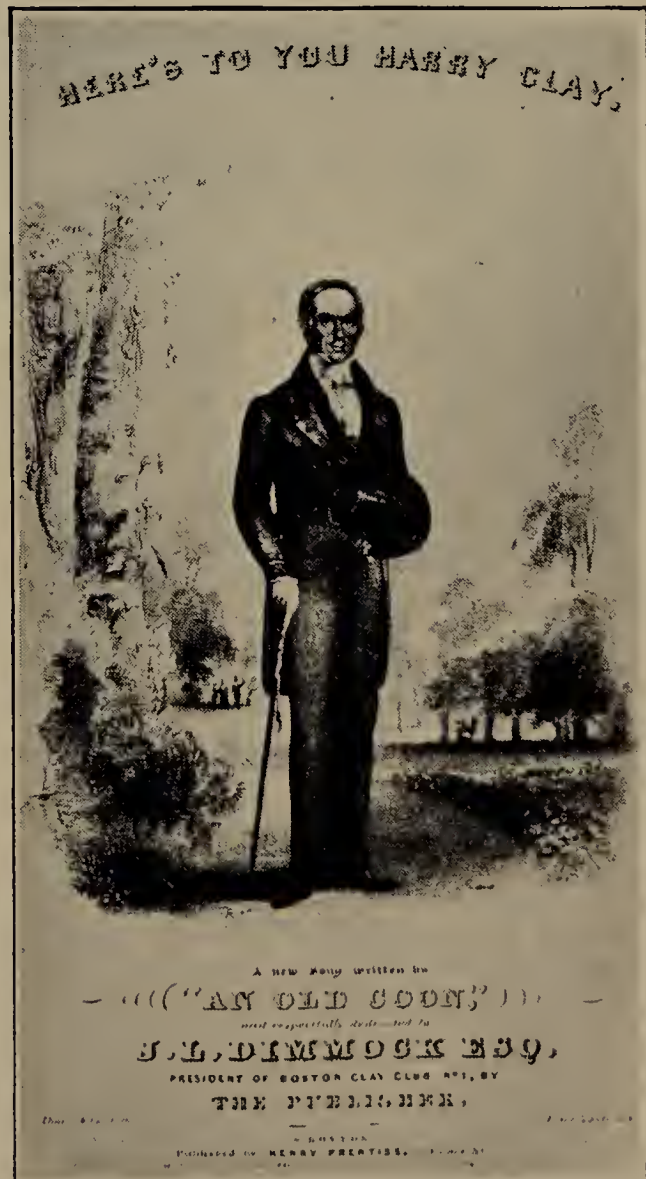
On gala occasions this *chapeau bras* was also adorned with an ostrich plume.

President Jackson had suggested that the coat might be black and the breeches white or black, but retained the dress cut to the coat, the knee length for the breeches, and the *chapeau bras*. Finally in 1853 William

In the summer time, however, Prince Albert frequently wore a drab felt hat in the morning.

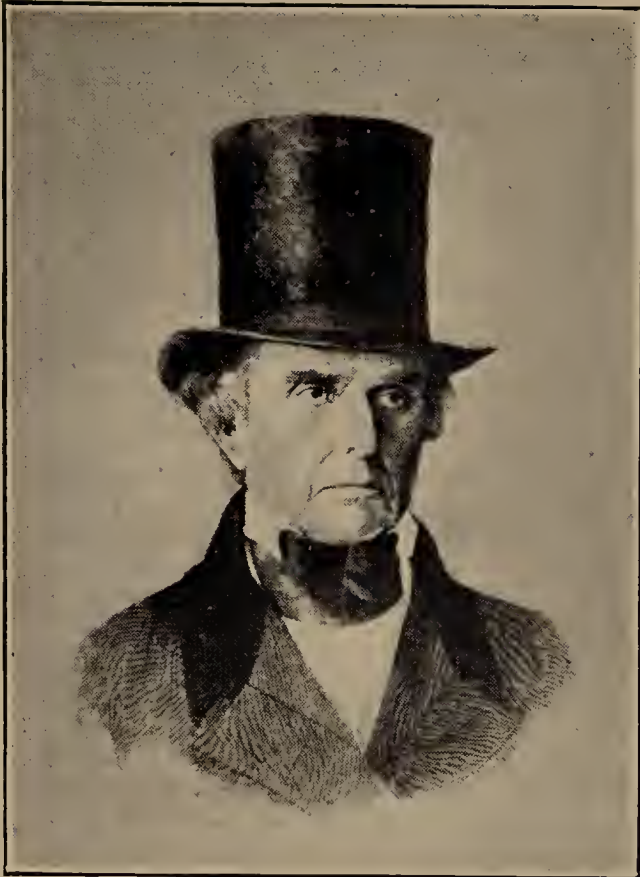
It was said, nevertheless, that Louis Philippe, the democratic king of France, would don nothing but a beaver.

An evidence of the changing styles appears in the revolution in the costume of the American ambassadors. Between 1815 and President Jackson's administra-



Henry Clay as depicted on the cover of a political song of 1844. The black beaver was still the statesman's favorite hat.

# The ROMANCE of MEN'S HATS



Daniel Webster with all the dignity of the hat and stock in vogue before the Civil War.

Marcy, Secretary of State under President Pierce, issued instructions to the ambassadors to "dress like American citizens," without specifying the details. This created a furor at the different courts, and came near being a matter of international importance. Perhaps the most sensible solution was found by Buchanan at St. James, who wore a white cravat and waistcoat, and donned a black sword to distinguish himself from the upper servants.

In America, though the Prince Albert was generally introduced and worn along side of dress and cut-away coats, the high beaver

held its own as against the silk hat until the Civil War.

For several decades before the Civil War, the cowboy and southwestern planter had favored a hat with a wide brim which was a modified form of the Mexico sombrero. It was a protection from the sun, shaded the eyes, sat easily on the head, and was remarkably picturesque. When the War of Secession broke out, this sombrero was slightly changed to the slouch hat and in different colors standardized by both North and South as part of the uniform of the officers.



Abraham Lincoln and his tall beaver.

# The ROMANCE of MEN'S HATS

## After the Civil War

E. V. Connett, grandson of old William Connett, after serving in the Civil War, first worked in the Condit Forming Mill at Milburn. The introduction of machinery for blowing the fur and forming the bodies was gradually changing hat making from a hand trade to a factory industry, and E. V. Connett kept pace with the development of the business. From Milburn he went to New York as a buyer for the furs and stock for Thompson, White & Co. At the end of the first year he was taken into the firm, which in 1873 developed into E. V. Connett & Co.

In the first years after the Civil War occurred several notable changes in hat styles. One was the passing of the beaver, due in part to the growing scarcity of the fur. Another was the introduction of the Derby, as a compromise between the silk and soft felt hat. The third was the triumph, especially in America, of the slouch hat.

In England the silk hat still held sway. It was characteristic of the Victorian era, which cared more for dignity than accomplishment and had a horror both of naturalness and action in every day affairs. It was in almost as great vogue in France, and for afternoon dress was not overthrown in either country until the present century. Englishmen even made themselves ridiculous by wearing their top hats while sporting and on other most unsuitable occasions.

In America, however, the slouch hat had been made famous by the Civil War, and when the war was over, it was still worn by the officers after they were mustered out. For a number of years Grant wore almost nothing else and his photographs made it known almost everywhere.



General Grant and the comfortable slouch hat which came into favor during the Civil War.

# The ROMANCE of MEN'S HATS

It was the favorite of the statesman, who feared the undemocratic air of the top silk, and was worn both morning and afternoon by all except the most punctilious dressers. In fact, in America, the silk hat was worn chiefly with evening dress or at church and on Sunday afternoons. Almost the only business men who assumed it were the bankers and financiers.

In those days the Derby was neither dignified nor artistic, and there are few pictures of prominent Americans at that time with it on.

One of the latest of the famous men with whom the slouch hat has been closely identified was Theodore Roosevelt. He had felt at home in



Roosevelt at Camp Wyckoff wearing the "Rough Rider" hat mentioned in the text.

the slouch hat ever since his cowboy days in the Bad Lands of Dakota, and it was no new sensation to him when he donned one along with the Rough Riders and the other soldiers of the Spanish-American War.

When the Rough Riders returned from the war to Camp Wyckoff at Montauk Point, E. V. Connett, Jr., was present, which led to an incident hitherto unpublished. Roosevelt, who had a good memory for faces

## *The* ROMANCE of MEN'S HATS

and names, called out "Hello, Connett!" and a general conversation followed which wound up with a discussion of the picturesqueness of the Rough Rider hat. Thereupon Connett suggested, "If you want to do something for me, Colonel, send me your old hat when you get through with it, and I will send you two of the finest mates for it that can be made to take its place." Roosevelt, who did not realize how near he was to national greatness, sent the hat as soon as he was mustered out, and Connett made him two hats but of different character.

Not long afterwards, however, Roosevelt wrote that he had got himself in trouble with his whole family by giving away his San Juan hat, and that while he didn't want to be an "Injin giver," he would put the situation up to Connett. So the hat went back.

But in the meantime Roosevelt had been drafted as the Republican nominee for governor, and in the whirlwind campaign that followed, it was one of these hats that was waved triumphantly from the rear platform of the train as it sped from town to town throughout the state.

During the long business life of E. V. Connett, he saw America transformed from a land of small shops to one of great affairs, and in line with this development, himself became widely known as a manufacturer, merchant, and business man of recognized standing.

He died in 1905, and was succeeded by the present members of the company, E. V. Connett, Jr., and E. R. Connett, both of whom have been in the business more than thirty years.

During the present century another great change in hat styles is becoming increasingly noticeable.

In the last decade or so of the 19th century, there had been worn in addition to the slouch hat, a soft hat with a rolled brim in models and colors which would now be considered suitable to middle age. It had a sedate silhouette, and was confined to black, pearl grey, and brown. It had none of the rakishness of the slouch hat, but was nevertheless more artistic than the Derby.

About the beginning of the present century, young men returning from abroad might be seen walking down the gang plank in soft hats in various shades of green or olive, and frequently with the brims turned down in front. As a usual thing, however, these picturesque hats were laid aside after the first contact with our more conservative atmosphere, and it was several years before the soft hat in this country began to be made in hundreds of different shades and with an infinite variety of shapes and finishes.

# The ROMANCE of MEN'S HATS

This has probably been brought about by the introduction of the automobile, and of golf and other sports. In a speeding machine a silk hat and even a Derby is kept on with difficulty, and either hat on a golf course is an abnormity. The same tendency toward discarding the more formal headgear is observable among the spectators at football, baseball, and tennis games, as well as at the various country resorts. As a consequence the felt hat has once more been enthroned as fashion's favorite even in the largest cities, for all except the most formal occasions.

There is little doubt that the hat is just entering upon a new chapter in its history. Whatever this may lead to, an establishment with a hundred years of experience in hat manufacture and hat styles, will be best fitted to give the finishing touches of fashion while preserving the essentials of quality. In the case of the hat, where so much depends on the knowledge, taste, and integrity of the maker, it behooves one to deal with a house that has a history, and in goods which have had a record for reliability throughout a century.

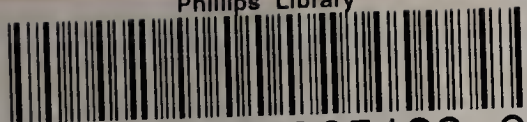








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