

American Dressmaker Says Queens Are Badly Dressed



Queen Wilhelmina of Holland



Queen Alexandra of England



Queen Regent of Spain

If you say a girl dresses like a queen you may mean to praise her, but, according to the testimony of perhaps the greatest dressmaker and authority on dress in the United States, you are "knocking." The queens of the world in this day are declared by this authority to have execrable taste in the selection and wearing of clothes, bad judgment of color schemes, and they go among their subjects attired in such dowdy style that a shop girl would give up her cherished trip to a picnic rather than wear such ill-fitting, badly chosen clothes.

Wilhelmina is the worst, according to this critic of royal garments, and Edward's queen is but little better, for, although she chooses clothes fairly well (or has them chosen for her), she does not know how to put them on or wear them, does not know how to wear her hair, or what to wear upon her head.

The dowager Margherita alone of all these crowned heads knows clothes. Some of them, according to the dressmaker critic, cannot even wear their crowns becomingly, and make their robes of state look like hand-me-downs from a bargain counter, while their every day clothes, placed on them by scores of maids, look as if they had been thrown at the wearer and alighted haphazard.

That England's queen manages to dress even as well as she does is because she has made a chum of a well-dressed American woman who has shown her how to shop and something of how to wear clothes.

Queens Indicted for Poor Taste.

The indictment of bad taste brought against the female royalty of the world by this American dressmaker, who has gowned scores of American queens of fashion and finance, contains the following counts:

"There is no such thing as the queen's taste, or if there is, it is apt to be bad taste, indeed. To be dressed like a queen means to be dressed a great deal worse than the average rich American woman who goes to the capitals of the world to get her clothes. In fact, the American woman did years ago what most of the queens of Europe have failed to do even yet—she grasped the fact that the whole secret of dress is to make women look young. This was the idea that got into the head of the great men dressmakers and which made fortunes for them because of the good taste which has made Americans and other rich women of the world recognize their achievements in this line.

"This kind of taste, queens, that is most of the queens of the present, are not blessed with. They not only haven't any taste, but they are pigheaded. Take Wilhelmina for instance. Was there ever anything more absurd than the way she has dressed ever since she has come to the throne? She is not yet much out of her teens, and yet she wears the most costly brocades and satins. It is not that Queen Wilhelmina does not have a Parisienne dressmaker, as she patronizes a house which is probably considered perfection by the elderly women of the Faubourg St. Germain quarter. It is not one, you may be sure, patronized by the younger generation. But Wilhelmina has no idea, apparently, of the great masters of the Rue de la Paix, or that this matter of making women look young by the choice adopted is the important thing with these great houses. There are secrets which they practice which it would hardly be expected that the young queen would have mastered, but if she acted upon the advice of the more fashionable of her relatives, the Grand Duchess Vladimir, for instance, she would probably have chosen more wisely.

Wilhelmina Tears Up Dressing Room.

"The young queen, however, has decided ideas of her own about what she wears. She tries to be fashionable and spends a great part of her time upon selections and in devising ways and means for making herself attractive. After she dresses her woman in waiting says that her rooms show marks of the fray, which indicate that the young queen has more than once changed her mind about what she is to appear in. Gloves, coats, hats, and gowns are strewn around by the dozen, with here and there a whole 'shoot' of them, as the waiting woman expressed it, turned over upon the floor. When she is through, however, the chances are that Wilhelmina will go out looking as no American girl of taste would think for a moment of doing. For one thing she wears things at the most remarkable times. Not long ago she went in a close carriage to inspect a warship. It was raining heavily, and, instead of improving her opportunity to wear some fetching nautical costume, she rolled along in her coach dressed in a trained white gown.

"Another thing where she is woefully off in her reckoning is her choice of colors. For all of her beautiful clear complexion of milky whiteness, she is fond of dingy neutral tints and affects gray, yellow, brown, blue, and red. She also seems to think it is her duty to appear in the

richest silks and velvets and the most heavily embroidered robes that can be manufactured, upon every possible occasion. The trouble is that she gets her ideas from her mother, Queen Emma, who is still more hopeless in her taste and who came from a tiny court, where fashion in the Parisian sense was not known. She has no sense of the fitness of things, and is liable to wear a picture hat with a walking costume or a little round felt hunting hat with a trained velvet gown.

Alexandra's Hair a Fright.

"The women of the Dutch court do not go to Paris and the ideas that would be absorbed at once by an American even if she was only from a mining town, are entirely passed by with Wilhelmina. This little queen is far from being the only one who does not live up to her opportunities. A great deal is said about Alexandra's perfect taste, and it is true that she has a keen sense of the fitness of things. Her passion, however, for simple and plain gowns, is carried to too great an extent for her rather military air, and the plain bodices that she wears sometimes give

her an appearance of frumpiness. Her hair also is atrocious and for many years the desire to copy royalty has kept English women with an unbecoming mop of hair on their foreheads when Americans and Parisians were wearing it in graceful and becoming ways.

"The princesses are exact replicas of their mother in their way of fixing their hair, and both appear in the same stiff bang, which, in the case of the queen, is really a curled toupee. Other English women have given up following Alexandra in this respect during late years, however, and it is noticeable that the fashions of the queen are not nearly so often followed as formerly. If you think of it, they never have been in America, even in spite of her popularity here.

American Aids England's Queen.

"There are just two really good things that the queen has introduced, one being the high dog collar, which she has kept fashionable to this day, and the other was the jersey.

"This the 'Jersey Lily' was not responsible for at all,

although it was commonly attributed to her. The fact was that it was for the then princess of Wales that a famous London modiste brought out the glove fitting seamless waist. It pleased the 'Jersey Lily,' who took to it at once and ordered a duplicate. The modiste to her royal highness, however, refused to make it, and for a year the princess was the mistress of the jersey. After that it became common property and was greatly affected by the Jersey Lily.

"The queen also introduced the princess bonnet, which she wore with her close cloth gowns and which was good in its day. She has never shown any flexibility, however, and has never been seen in a Gainsborough hat or in any other style of headgear than some modification of her former favorite.

"Years ago the queen wore navy blue, white, and mauve and a great deal of cream color. Lately, however, she has worn only black, white, and gray, until even the king objected, to the point of getting an American woman, Mrs. Arthur Paget, to try to persuade her to put on more color. Alexandra likes Mrs. Paget's taste in dress and takes her shopping with her, and it was through her suggestion that the note of green in which she has lately been seen, was introduced into her costume. Queen Alexandra can recognize an accept good ideas from others, but she has not whatever vogue she once possessed for being an original dresser.

Kaiserin Looks Bad in Anything.

"The Kaiserin's husband, as everybody knows, interfered with her clothes, and it is said that when he did so, he tried that good woman to an even greater extent than he has by his other follies. He did not succeed, however, in making the Empress Augusta the fashion, and the truth is that for all she has wonderful gowns made for her and spends large sums upon her clothes, the empress has not the faculty of wearing her things effectively.

"Her hats are worn too far back upon her head and her hair is of the short and fuzzy order around her forehead, which is hopeless in these days of luxuriant locks. She makes the mistake of drawing the rest of it back skin tight from her face, and this is one of the reasons that she is never at her best in evening gowns.

"The Kaiserin has not many individual ideas about her dress and leaves the details to her dressmaker. Her good figure and the fact that her riding habit, which she wears her forehead in a way that suits her, makes her riding dress the most becoming that the empress puts on. The late tip-tilted down hats are also more suited to her than anything she has worn formerly, and have improved her considerably.

Dowager Queens Are Frumps.

"The dowager queens are, all of them, what a stylish American woman would call 'frumps.' Take Isabella, for instance. She gets herself up 'regardlessly' of course, and makes courageous efforts after stylish effects even now that she is of an advanced age. Thick applications of paint and powder are part of her plan. The result though is far from successful.

"Queen Christina is too near Paris not to be well tinged with some of the good ideas that come from that metropolis, but she wears her clothes with a stiffness which is distressing even in spite of the youthfulness of her slender figure. Like Alexandra, she emphasizes the long narrow face, which is a family failing, with a scraggly bang pinned close to the temples. Invariably, too, the costumes chosen both by Christina and her daughter, the Princess Mercedes, are of the extremely conventional type, which emphasizes the thin and narrow faced look which is peculiar to them. Queen Emma, on the contrary, who is dumpy, wears hair bunched out on each side and dons hanging off bonnets, which bring out her roundness to the greatest extent. Queen Margherita, of course, is the exception, as she dresses as beautifully as when she first swayed the hearts of the people of Italy by her wonderful laces and pearls.

Queen Helen Looks Comfortable.

"Queen Helen of Italy, in spite of her beauty, will never have the taste of Margherita. Although she appears in stunning creations upon great occasions, her clothes usually have more of the appearance of comfort than great smartness. She has odd notions, too, about wearing her gowns a great many times, which she will do if she happens to like one particularly. Not long ago some one remonstrated with her about the number of times she was seen in a violet frock, and she remarked that, as the king liked it, she did not see any reason for not wearing it. Queen Olga of Greece, beloved by her people as she is, has never shown great taste in her dress and has always cared more for comfort."



Queen Emma of the Netherlands

Queen Alexandra of England

Queen Olga of Greece