

# AS SEEN FROM OLD LONDON

## Heraldic Misdemeanors Stir the Rebukes of the Learned

LONDON, England, Feb. 15 — In these days of increasing traffic perils the injunction "Watch Your Step!" is registered on the minds of most Britons, and certain recent happenings in these isles would indicate that this safety first advice can be followed beneficially as well in many other respects. For example, the authorities of the small town of Spilsby, Lincolnshire, have just been reprimanded by the Home Office because their predecessors forty years ago failed of choosing a crest for the town. At last the necessity arose of communicating with the Home Office, which deals with infractions of the regulations governing the use of crests, and an eagle-eyed official spotted the Spilsby crest, which to make the situation worse, included the Crown, which is a royal prerogative. At any rate, Spilsby "got away with it" for the best part of half a century, but if the city fathers of earlier times had obtained the sanction of the College of Arms for the crest, their successors of today would not be placed in such an embarrassing position.

Even individuals who are entitled to a coat of arms must pay a license fee to make use of it. If displayed on writing paper or visiting cards the yearly impost is the equivalent of 5.25. If the crest is emblazoned on the door of a carriage or an automobile the fee rises to \$10.50. As the majority of those entitled to armorial bearings do not desire to risk prosecution for their unlicensed use the State rakes in approximately \$200,000 annually from this source. It is contended by sticklers for rigid observance of the law that the revenue would be appreciably increased if the government tapped all possible sources of revenue in this connection, for it is asserted that the college student who uses stationery bearing the crest of his college should pay a fee, as should the member of a club when the writing paper is embellished with a crest. It is argued further that any one wearing a tie or a sports blazer adorned with a crest should pay a fee of \$5.25 a year.

But even where fines are not risked for non-observance of the "watch your step" warning, there is safety in keeping those three words in mind, as for instance in matters of custom usage, tradition and prerogative. A London magistrate a few days ago refused to listen to a solicitor in court because the solicitor appeared minus his gown. On several occasions in recent months judges have admonished barristers

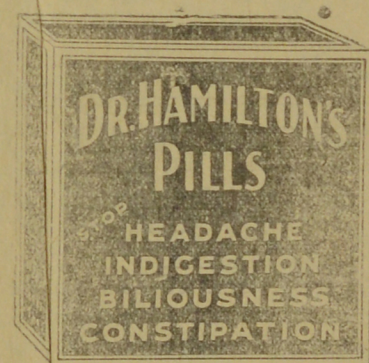
with the words, "I don't see you" or "I haven't heard you", when they came into court without their wigs. As a result of severe criticism by judges of witnesses who have appeared in court in open-necked shirts or sports clothes, it is a hardy individual who will these days attend as a witness in informal attire. Because of its usages and regulations the House of Commons is a place where watching the step is the better part of wisdom. No member of spectator is supposed to immerse himself in a newspaper in its precincts, and a member will be called to order if he refers to the Houses of Lords as such, for accepted usage requires him to refer to the upper Chamber as "in another place". There are reasons also to be exceedingly careful about the use of the designation "Right Honorable" when Lord Mayors are being addressed. It has surprised the residents of several big cities in Great Britain to learn of late that the Lord Mayor of such places is not entitled to this prefix. In fact, in only six of the twenty-five cities in Great Britain where the chief magistrate is a Lord Mayor are such factotums entitled to be thus addressed. They are the Lord Mayors of London, York, Belfast and Dublin, and the Provosts of Edinburgh and Glasgow. Incidentally, the title of Lord Mayor did not come into general use until near the middle of the sixteenth century. In the charter

granted to the City of London by William the Conqueror, the chief magistrate was described as Portreeve. Subsequently holders of the office became Bailiff, and then toward the end of the twelfth century the title Mayor displaced Bailiff.

To believe some of the authorities on flag-flying etiquette it is only the indulgence of the King's ministers which saves many of the King's patriotic subjects from dire penalties. If in a all were such sticklers for proper observance as the Lord Lyon King of Arms of Scotland there would, however, be pressing necessity for watching the step. On several occasions the Lord Lyon has strongly condemned the unauthorized display of the Lion flag of Scotland, which is of yellow and bears a red lion rampant. He contends that it is the Sovereign's flag, and certain learned authorities declare the Lord Lyon to be as "right as rain" at least, academically speaking—when he says it is usurpation to fly the Lion flag without the King's consent, and that a royal warrant of Mary, Queen of Scots still exists instructing the Lord Lyon to put to death all persons who usurp the royal arms.

On the occasion of the wedding of the Duke of Kent to Princess Marina of Greece there were protests, too, from Scottish heraldic authorities about the number of inaccurate representations of his Majesty's royal banner as King of Scotland in the streets of London. Even the accurate banners it was asserted, should not have been flown from flagpoles except in the presence of his Majesty or his warranted deputy. The heraldic authorities of England have not been so fiery in their wrath as the Lord Lyon over the misuse of flags, but they regard as bad manners any indiscriminate display of the Royal Standard and contend that the Union Jack should not be flown from flagpoles on churches. They suggest a general use of the Cross of St. George so far as churches are concerned. As a result of the alterness of the Thames Conservancy Board there is not now nearly as much unwarranted use of flags on the Thames as there used to be.

Judging from the increasing volume of exports of canned fruits and vegetables and the improved quality of the products, Canadian canned fruits and vegetables have become prime favorites with consumers in the British Isles.



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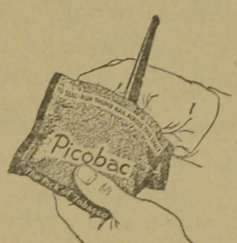


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