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Daily Fashion Hint for Times Readers.



EMPIRE COAT.

These empire coat wraps are very useful for dressy wear, the model of the one illustrated being of silver-gray cloth trimmed with embroidered bands and gray velvet. The little pointed vest was made of these embroidered strips. An embroidered band also formed a straight collar, which is hidden in the illustration, by the

ermine scarf. The coat was laid in plaits at the shoulder, the shoulder seam being strapped across with gray silk cords and buttons. The revers were finished by a folded scarf of gray velvet, and at the point of each revers was attached a large gray silk tassel. The sides of the coat were slashed and held together by rows of gray velvet buttons and cords.



EMPIRE MODE IN CARACUL.

That caracul is to prove far and away the most stylish fur of the season is already an adopted fact, a foregone conclusion. One sees it everywhere, in all sorts of conjunctions and fashioned into garments of every conceivable style, shape and size that may find a place upon the current category of fashion. White, gray and smoke-brown—a curious combination of gray, brown and yellow this latter shade is, and one that really defies a verbal description—are much used; but the black dye, with which we are more familiar, really makes for the richest effect. The short-waisted Empire effect is employed to delightful advantage in this glossy and irregularly marked fur. The body part is loosely fitted, and one is

Crossingham slowly drank a glass of claret. "One for certain, the other two only vaguely."

"There is no one within hearing," said Perigord, "you might whisper names." Crossingham leaned forward, and the others instantly drew up their chairs. "Have you ever heard of a man called Bosa Grauci, Conti d'Attala?" he whispered softly.

Perigord stared at him blankly and shook his head, but a second afterwards a gleam came into his eyes. "Stay, let me think!" he muttered. "Is he a very old man?"

"Yes, very old." "I know him, then. I met him years ago in the Casino of Monte Carlo. He lost half a million francs, after three times breaking the bank with a system which he had invented. I marked him at the time as the best and most passionate gambler I had ever seen. He lost that vast sum without appearing to mind in the least, and gave a brilliant supper next evening on his yacht to which everyone of any consequence was invited. I was, however, unfortunately unable to attend, for I was called away suddenly to St. Petersburg."

"Pardon me," said Crossingham, "you said 'unfortunately.' In my opinion, you were very lucky for that accident probably saved your life, that is if you were at the time engaged in this—or—business. Were you?"

"I was." "You may take your oath then that he had marked you and gave that supper simply on your account. That man is one of the cleverest on earth, and at the same time the most unscrupulous scoundrel I believe the world has ever mistaken for a gentleman. He is?"

"He is? He is? You mean?" "But Crossingham arose. "Take me where we may converse in perfect safety and I shall soon relieve your curiosity. Ha!" he gave a sudden little gasping cry and dropped as though he had been shot, pulling the table cloth and its contents over at the same time with a wild clatter to the floor. When he arose his face was smeared thick with a black mass of treacle, behind which his features were absolutely unrecognizable. He then spluttered out hoarsely in fierce Italian to his companions' utter amazement: "Corpo di Bacco! My leg was asleep and gave way under my weight. Sapristi! this stuff is choking me. Quickly, signore, lead me to a bedroom. I am blind, I cannot see."

"Excuse me, my Lord, I fancy neither of us have breakfasted. Had we not better postpone the story for a while?" "Well, if you don't mind I'm sure I don't. To tell you the truth, I'm rather keen to try what feeding myself feels like after being trussed up in that fashion for so long."

"Come then, we'd better go to a hotel." "Excuse me," said Crossingham, "there's a little matter I'd like to settle before we leave. This officer has a parcel of jewels belonging (at any rate temporarily) to me, which I'd like to recover possession of."

Perigord smiled. "I have them in my bag. Very fine stones they are, too. I did not think you were a gem collector. I must congratulate you on your taste, my Lord. Well, if that is all?" "Quite."

Perigord took the young man's arm and led him from the palace. He occupied the drive with an account of Colonel Elliott, whom Crossingham was delighted to learn had, in spite of the decrees of medical science, been restored in a measure to health and to full possession of his mental faculties. The old gentleman, it appears, had however lost the use of his lower limbs, and finding himself of no use to Perigord had returned to London, and was there anxiously awaiting news of his daughter whose deliverance his unhappy state compelled him to entrust entirely to others. Half an hour later they were seated with Oeljen at breakfast in the dining hall of the Hotel d'Europe. Crossingham made a very good meal indeed, but the others ate little, and although they courteously endeavored to converse on ordinary topics of the day it was patent to the Englishman that both were expiring with curiosity and keenly anxious for him to make haste. With pardonable malice he disobliged their expectations and ate as slowly as possible. Finally Perigord seemed able to stand the suspense no longer.

"You said, my Lord, that you heard the Three, the Three, decree a certain thing?" he muttered.

"I did," replied Crossingham, filling his mouth with bread.

"You saw as well as heard?" "Plainly."

"Then you know them; you would recognize them again?" "Perfectly."

"You perhaps know where they are now?"

Everyone in the room stared and laughed in amused astonishment at the ludicrous figure he cut, but Crossingham seized with one hand the arm of Oeljen, with the other an iron grip. "The Prince," he muttered, "he must not see me," then resumed his Italian oaths and dragged his companions swiftly from the room swearing like a trooper.

But Prince Carlos, who had just entered by another door, accompanied by two Austrian naval officers, hurried after the trio and caught them in the passage. "Mr. Perigord, I want you," he cried.

"My dear Prince, kindly wait for me a moment," said Perigord. "My friend, Signor Carrega has met with an unfortunate accident, and I really must attend to him."

The Prince nodded. "Very well, I shall be in the reading room."

As soon as Oeljen's bedroom was reached, he wiped the sticky matter from his face with a sponge and turned to his companions, who stood watching his operations in expectant silence.

"That was a narrow escape," he remarked coolly. "The Prince is one of the three Nihilist chiefs. If he had recognized me, heaven only knows what might have happened, for he knows I know, although he believes I was drowned a week ago. But go down to him, Mr. Perigord. Do not keep him waiting; he might get uneasy."

Perigord surveyed the young man with a glance of open admiration. "Really, my Lord," he said frankly, "you must return to the diplomatic service. England needs the services of men like yourself. Oeljen, attend to your friend while I am gone. I shall not be long." From the door he made a peculiar sign to his secretary, which however Crossingham remarked.

For some minutes the two friends watched each other in silence, then Crossingham said: "What did that sign mean, Oeljen?"

"Really, Crossingham, I can't tell you." The Count's face flushed and he looked a little ashamed.

"Well—I guess it, will you?" "Please! I'd do as much for you."

"I think I may. Indeed I shall." "Good. It meant: Watch him carefully! on no account allow him a moment from your sight! Am I right?"

Oeljen nodded. (To be continued.)

Miss Julia H. Elliott returned Saturday from New York and Boston.

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