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John Wildberg Presents Bill Robinson in Memphis Bound: a New Musical Comedy with Avon Long

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What the Man Will Wear ---

HOW may a man feel as gay as a lark in garb as black as a crow? Since time whereof the memory of living man runneth not to the contrary, to wax Blackstonian, black-and-white have been one-and-indivisible with ceremonious evening dress. This basic union of colors is the legendary badge of "ye verray parfit gentil knight" squiring his "ladye fayre" to all the carefree, whoopee affairs of knights and nights. Now it is bruited about that the master minds of emancipated fashion are resolved that black-and-white must go. The effect, they declare, is stodgy, unmodern and cramps one's style. So, let black-and-white pass out, and, departing, be consigned to the mortician as a sort of livery of his sombre calling. All of which is boldly meant and forthrightly planned but doesn't cut enough ice to cool a cocktail with Englishmen after whom formal fashions are patterned and, probably, will continue to be. A leading periodical of London tailors speaks with the noli me tangere authority of Savile Row when it says: "The ceremonious evening kit will remain unchangeably black-and-white no matter how faddists, cultists and crackpots for color may beat their breasts and clamor for so-called dress reform." This refers, of course, to the tailcoat, not the dinner jacket which has taken on almost every color in the spectrum and has forfeited nearly all semblance to old-time formality. Each world war has turned fashion upside down and inside out and let color glow like a neon sign. Will World War Two give the time-honored black-and-white theme of evening dress a kick in the coattails? Quien sabe?

[[image: line drawing of a man in a double-breasted business suit]]

MORE tosh and slosh is poured out about men's fashions than about any subject under the blue bowl of heaven. Have you met a typical fashion tipster? Seeing him, you'll laugh so hard that your spinal column will break up into paragraphs. There is one international stylist who through decades has held the respect and won the admiration of every practitioner of the Fine Art of Dress. His Royal Highness, the Duke of Windsor, in unacademic language, knows his stuff. While he has tossed many a fashion bombshell that exploded all over the world, he is also, like most Englishmen, an arch-conservative in dress. He sticks to the styles that he likes and that suit him unmindful of the seesaws and somersaults of fashion which most men follow and some men chase. The double-breasted gray lounge suit sketched in the first column shows the favorite jacket of the Duke with its two-button fastening, natural shoulders, peaked, deep-sweep lapels, tapered sleeves and a hint of waist-curve. The jacket is cut shortish as befits a man not over-tall. Be good enough to observe the characteristic neckdress of H.R.H. The white linen collar is sharply slanted and wide-spaced in front. The cravat with its double Windsor knot bears the familiar English block, dice or hound's-tooth pattern. On him it looks good, you say. That's the spearpoint of the thing. Mere fashion is the handle, not the stick; the binding, not the book.

WITH its swashbuckling air of un grande caballero the Panama hat, close-woven or open, is at the head in summer straws. The dusky cocoanut palm from the Bahamas is primarily for sportsmen and trippers, though the line which sunders town straws from country straws has been pretty well expunged. The sailor or boater straw remains the preferred town hat of the older, and this case, wiser set. Turning from head to foot, the sporting shoe sketched alongside is a bit novel in that the cap and uppers are tan or black calfskin whilst the saddle is white buckskin. The effect is smarter and more colorful than the stereotyped



tan-and-white buckskin. The sole is thick leather and the cap is perforated. -BEAUNASH
[[image: line drawing of man's shoe as described in text]]

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