

FIRST~AID AT THE TAILORS

*Some Points on Ready~Made
Clothes for Men*

By De Gaumont



I WAS at a tailor's the other day, looking over materials—it was a large place, where one may buy clothes ready-made or have them made to order—when an old friend came in: a middle-aged, untidy-looking man, who had attained prominence as a lawyer in a Middle-Western town, and, becoming mixed up in politics, had just got into Congress.

I had not seen him for some time, but, interested to see what he would order, I remained in the background.

"I want some suits," said he to the salesman. "A couple of business suits, and a dress suit, and a Prince Isaac or whatever you call it—you ought to know what I'll need for receptions and dinners and things."

The salesman was not really bad at heart. But it was part of his business to clear out "dead" stock

when he saw a chance. So he brought out a check suit such as you sometimes see in vaudeville. It would have lit up the darkest night.

Mr. Senator, however, did not shy at it. Meekly he let the man put the awful thing on him. The coat reached almost to the knees, and the shoulders were constructed on the railroad-embankment principle.

"Might have been made for you," murmured the salesman, smoothing down the folds in the back. "Shall I have the trousers fixed up?"

That was too much. I stepped up and touched the senator on the arm. "Hullo, Bill!" I said, "are you going into the show business? Where do you open?"

"What do you mean—'the show business'?" he asked, after an exchange of friendly greetings and inquiries.

I indicated the offending garment.

"You don't like it? What's the matter with it, outside of being a bit bright? I don't know anything about clothes, anyway. I didn't want to buy 'em in the first place, but Maria—well, you know how it is. What ought I to get, then?"

I pondered a moment to look him over.

"It's as easy to dress well as dowdily," I said. "Just now, if you don't mind my saying it, you look a bit dowdy." He shrugged his shoulders, and I went on. "You've a decent build. Why smother it under a lot of padding and loose cloth?"

The salesman, having hidden the offending garment, broke in.

"Something in blue, sir?" he queried. "We have a couple of very good English models—soft roll lapels, natural shoulders——"

"All right," I said, "but one or two sizes smaller than that other thing. You might bring something in dark brown, too.—You ought to wear dark things," I told the senator; "being blond yourself, light colors make you look sort of dusty."

The suits were brought, and he tried them on. They really were excellent. They had the clear, distinctive lines that fitted the figure, because they had been cut in just the right way. The sleeves, unadorned but for two or three plain buttons, were rather narrow, springing from unpadding shoulders. The lapels



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were soft and rolling. The waistcoats were cut rather high, and the trousers hung straight, being neither very tight nor very baggy, and without any of that clumsy, peg-top effect about the hips. They were essentially comfortable, yet trim.

"These things will do for mornings," I replied, "or any time when you're at home alone, or when you're traveling. For formal mornings and afternoons you'll need a cutaway, and the things that go with it—such as patent-leather buttoned boots, and a tall hat. You can wear gray striped trousers, or trousers of the same material as the coat, whichever you like better. Personally I rather favor the plain ones. Then you'll need dress clothes for dinners and receptions. After we've tried on the suits themselves, I'll talk to you about the little details."

BEFORE I go on to those details I want to call attention to the drawings on this page. They all depict well-dressed men. The sack suit, with its slim, shape-giving lines and patch pockets, is a good one. The picture at the top shows the cutaway. With regard to the men in evening dress, you will notice that their clothes illustrate the point I tried to make the senator understand. "The essential quality to look for, especially in evening clothes," I told him, "is a snug fit, obtained by correct cutting. Any one can pad and mold a coat into

some semblance of shape. It takes a good tailor to cut it to look right."

That's why I advise people whose purses will not allow them to have their clothes made by an acknowledged first-class man, to buy them ready-made at

some shop that carries an up-to-date line of goods. Because it is evident that a large firm, making hundreds of garments, can afford to employ competent designers.

From the clothing department I piloted the senator over to where haberdashery was displayed.

There were a good many little things to buy, for he wanted to start afresh with a new wardrobe.

"Let's begin with waistcoats," I suggested. "It's permissible nowadays to wear either a black silk waistcoat with full dress or a white one. But only with full dress, mind you; with a tuxedo always wear black. Gray has been used, but black is better. Of course, your tie should never be anything but white with full dress, and black with a dinner coat. As to shirts, I like the plain, old-fashioned stiff kind myself, but many men prefer the soft, silk, plaited ones. I leave that to you. But your collars for evening wear, whether with a swallow-tail or a tuxedo, should be either this straight-up kind or those with small wings—never the fold-over."

We bought gloves, socks—black silk for evening wear—and hats—a soft one, as shown in the picture, large enough to come well down on the head, and a silk high one for formal occasions. I mentioned canes, but the Senator gibed. So I took him off to a shoe-shop to buy pumps and patent-leathers.

Next month I will tell you in detail about hats, shirts, pumps and patent-leathers.

