

Detroit Men Who Wear Hats Which Cost More Than Many a Woman's Easter Bonnet

It is the Panama hat craze that has brought with it a new era in the history of the Panama hat. Not that it is a new hat, but it is a good hat, a good hat.

"I wish I had only known," said Dr. E. T. Tippet, of 23 Adams street.

The Tappet is sporting a brand new Panama, and he made this remark when informed that it took his eyes that he discern the difference between a "Panama" and the real thing made by a native in a good hand, and put on the market at 25 cents.

Why the Panama hat craze has blown back into its time-worn popularity about the middle of June, and there it will probably stay for a decade or more.

The crowd up and down Woodward avenue some evening and see the Panamas. They range in price from a dinky little thing that looks like a monkey cap to a balloon-shaped creation the size of a clothes rack. You will see them floating on the heads of cab drivers, clerks, and men of woe for the rich man who went down in his pocket for 25 cents for his piece of headgear. Detroit's Panamas have indulged in a little excess!

A Mistake.
A few days ago a plainly-dressed man wandered into a Woodward avenue hat store, and feeling weary, he laid his modest \$1 bonnet on a showcase.

A moment later a man with a \$40 Panama did likewise, and as the young man left first he by mistake put on the hat with the other customer's hat. He didn't intend to steal, but there wasn't two cents' worth of difference in the looks of the two hats.

Take A. L. Stephens's Panama, for instance. To look at it you wouldn't think for a minute it was worth as much as a good horse. Yet it is. It would pay a workingman's rent for nearly a year. It would be safe to wager a gold watch against a 5-cent cigar that he didn't pay a cent less than a hundred dollars for it.

"How does a Panama feel, colonel?" I asked of Col. Hecker. "Everybody knows Col. Hecker, but they might take more interest in him if they knew about his hat. Col. Hecker's hat is of the haute noblesse—the king of Detroit's Panamas, the real thing from the Cuban jungles, and old enough to vote.

Col. Hecker's Hat 27 Old.
"That hat was 27 years old when it was given to me," said the colonel. "You couldn't wear it out from now to the day of your death, my boy! I've had it cleaned seven times, once a year."
Think of a hat worn 27 years! But the colonel has a new one now, which

he has had cleaned five times, and he looks upon it as almost new. George H. Patne has a hat that would send an invalid to California and back.

To a man who wears the real thing in the line of Panamas there is now left no avenue of escape from the attacks of his wife upon his pocket-book. The cost of the rim of a high-priced Panama would buy one of the prettiest creations of flowers and fashions on Woodward avenue.

A Woman's Opinion.
"I think the old joke of the husband, the wife and the bonnet is about as new," said one Jefferson avenue society lady. She is a star in Detroit's 400, called, for years, the most beautiful woman in Detroit. Her husband wears a Panama, and she insisted that her name should be kept out of print.

"But notwithstanding their great durability and lightness," said the expert hatter, "the Panama hat craze is dead again. Just so soon as it made its appearance it began to be imitated, until now it takes an expert to tell the difference between a \$5 imitation and a \$200 fact. In Chicago and in all the big cities throughout the country, men who bought real Panamas early this summer are now discarding them for the hard straw hat, for almost everybody on the street today has an imitation Panama."

Real Panamas.
"Are there many wearing the real thing?" The best hatter in Detroit figured for some minutes. "Well, I should judge there were about 2,000 Panamas worn in Detroit. There are thousands and thousands of imitations."
"Do I think there are many high-priced hats in the city? Take all the men in town that wear hats that cost over \$20 apiece and you could get 'em in an omnibus. I don't believe there are more than 10."

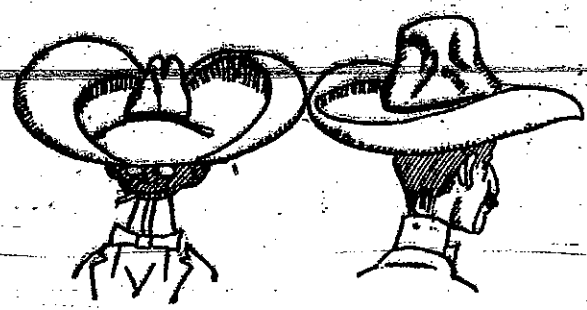
Some of the Panamas in evidence in Detroit—most of them in fact—do look mediocre, as was illustrated by an amusing incident the other day. A man from the country who had come in with two or three friends, in the course of their sight-seeing perambulations paused in front of a fashionable Woodward avenue hatter's to admire a very large and a very fine Panama hat.

Finally they went in, and the countryman suggested that it was hot weather, and that he was hunting for a hat that would be good and cool in the fields.

"Bill's hot days for cultivation," he said. Then he pointed at the beautiful Panama. "How much?"

"Forty dollars," said the clerk.

Working on the Hats.
Work upon the hats can only be done in the early morning hours or late at evening, when the atmosphere



is damp, as the heat of the sun makes the fiber brittle and tight, and the evaporation. In some places it is said the work is continued throughout the day by weaving with the hat under shade.

It might be said that the hat is hung out in the open air, where it absorbs the dew, and in the next day again in a condition to be worked. Men, women and children among the natives of Peru and Ecuador are engaged in the weaving of hats. To the children is entrusted only the making of the coarser grades, and the youngsters become more skillful from year to year, and in time become experts, capable of making the exceedingly fine hats.

When one takes into consideration the fact that a broken straw, or a knot showing, makes the hat defective, it will be realized why a perfect one costs from \$75 to \$200.

None of the Panama hats are made in Panama. The great majority of them are made in Peru and Ecuador and find their way to Guayaquil, whence they are shipped to Panama, and after crossing the Isthmus, are shipped to Colon. Many of these made in Colombia come from Cartagena and Savannah.

J. OLIVIER CURWOOD.

Came for Something Else.
S. D. Faust of Cleveland, while on a visit to this city a few days ago, in company with a Philadelphia, decided to go to Atlantic City. Before buying the tickets the Philadelphia proceeded to show his greatest improvements along Delaware avenue. Sitting on the edge of the wharf was a typical street Arab, fishing. Just as they were about to leave they were startled by a splash, and discovered that the boy had tumbled overboard. After some trouble he was drawn out.

"How did you come to fall in?" inquired Faust.

"Ah, gwan," said the boy. "I didn't come to fall in. I come to fish."

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