

times during the first half of the war he entertained the foolish idea of mediation; and Palmerston himself had to tell him that this could not be till the North was prepared to welcome it. There can, however, be no doubt that in this he was actuated by no hostility to the North, but at worst by an uncalled for solicitude to stop, if he could, the flow of American blood. For the errors, though unquestionable, which so originated, his countrymen are not going to be ashamed.

Something comparable may be taken place to-day. The British Empire in the very act of making further strides in the path of peace, freedom, and justice, is to some extent exposed in America to misunderstanding, and exposed to calumny not less unworthy than that which associated the North with Fugitive-Slave Laws and the traffic in hippopotamus-hide whips. It would not be well that we should reciprocate with exaggerated, or limited, or mean views of what takes place in the United States; a commonwealth as singular and as complex even as this, to some Americans, unintelligible England, and by no means less full than our own of people whose outlook on the world is generous and lofty.

[*The Athenæum*]

OLD CLOTHES

BY ORLO WILLIAMS

SINCE the war we who were in khaki—the men more easily than the women—have been living in the old clothes which, in 1914 or thereabouts, were enthusiastically or regretfully embalmed and laid to mature in wardrobes or old trunks. It is melancholy, indeed, to reflect how many of these suits, carefully folded and redolent of camphor, waited in vain to drape once more the limbs whose shapes they

knew so well, now wrapped in the ultimate garment of all mortality. As for the clothing of the hereafter, I find it hard to accept the revelation of *Raymond* that the forms of the departed are clothed in the emanations of defunct earthly suitings; I prefer to imagine the disembodied freed from fleshly fetters, and not bound in their higher state to the daily adjustment of spiritual braces and celestial suspenders.

The physical bliss to be found in this existence, of nude reveling on a strand lapped by summer waves, fanned by a zephyr and warmed by a bland sun, is surely a premonition of a more perfect state in a less constricted life. Be that as it may, it is with the survivors that we are here concerned. If there was any joy among those old clothes at their disentanglement by a familiar hand, the joy of their owners at this resurrection, as they consigned their khaki without unction to the grave, was at least as great. Not only was there affectionate recognition of familiar things all but forgotten, not only was there promise of ease after stiffness, and variety after monotony, but there was assurance of wealth—varying, it is true, with the richness of the half-remembered hoard, but wealth real and tangible, a definite and ridiculously enhanced value dwelling in every single article.

Happy indeed was the man who had been extravagant before the war, who counted his shirts by the dozen, who had full measure of socks pressed down and running over, and numbered to every coat two pairs of trousers. If he had been exposed to reproach in earlier days for self-indulgence and vanity, he now proves to have been a wise investor whose investments had appreciated at least one hundred per cent. His many suits, his cupboard full of boots and shoes, his store of ties, were now so much fine gold, promising him

for years immunity from the extortions of after-war clothiers and bootmakers, who, for all their triple charges, could not give him the quality of the days when garments, 'as it appears to our saddened minds, cost but a song.

Yet he who had been more modest in his acquirements was not unhappy, for who can regard with discontent even half a talent which has brought forth two or threefold, though buried? The one preoccupation of us all, well or sparsely provided, has been to reckon how long our old clothes would last, whether they would carry us on till a restored world-trade and, perhaps, an increased earning capacity in ourselves would make the replacement of them a less inconceivable undertaking. Our firm determination has been that we will wear these old suits to their last thread, let the boots crumble to dust upon our feet and the shirts fall in shreds from our backs before we would face the prospect of equipping ourselves anew.

There is nothing to be ashamed of in such a determination; no moral issue is involved in the clothing of the body, save in deciding how much may legitimately be spent on it. But on clothing the mind there is no limit to legitimate expenditure, and a moral question indubitably arises in the consideration of mental old clothes. A parallel may, in some sort, be justly drawn between the effects of the war on our bodily and our mental wardrobes. The putting on of khaki had certainly its counterpart in the refurbishing of the intellectual and emotional self in a war outfit. In this respect there was no distinction between men and women, or between those who fought and those who remained at home. It was an inevitable process for every man and woman, bewildering by its novelty, disconcerting in its effects. Mr. Bernard Shaw in his

preface to *Heartbreak House* submits the material of the mental khaki in this country to a ruthless dissection from which, in his judgment, it appears a hideous blend of madness and false sentiment. To Mr. Shaw himself it was a shirt of Nessus. 'I can answer,' he says, 'for at least one person who found the change from the wisdom of Jesus and St. Francis to the morals of Richard III and the madness of Don Quixote extremely irksome. But that change had to be made; and we are all the worse for it, except those for whom it was not really a change at all, but only a relief from hypocrisy.'

As might have been expected, he fails to notice in this abhorrent material certain strands which were brighter to look upon, and might well earn their place in any future textile of the mind—the strands of self-sacrifice, of fortitude, and of enthusiasm for a common end: nevertheless, the war covering of the mind, though there were times when it seemed too familiar ever to be changed, became as intolerable as khaki to the temporary soldier. True, we have shown a greater reluctance to consign it to the lumber room than he his uniform, but with greater reason, since the spiritual conflict has exceeded in length the physical; even now, with the peace ratified, it is hardly over.

It is high time, however, to deck our minds once more in the ordinary garb of peace. The question is whether our old clothes that, in 1914, were metaphorically snatched off our backs by terrific circumstance will do as well for some years longer as the serges and worsteds which the returned warrior is now happily unearthing. No doubt these familiar suits of ideas will fit us just as easily as they did. We can slip into them as smoothly as into an old Norfolk jacket, stretching our mental limbs luxuriously, like tomcats by the

fire, in ecstasy at so much comfort after so much stress. We shall not, most of us, have grown out of them, a melancholy commentary on the inches which we supposed the physical and bayonet training of war had added to our mental girth. Even if we find certain of them slightly threadbare, our affection for them will make light of such deficiencies.

Our old political fancy waistcoat, party-colored, how neat it looks! Those stout boots of social prejudice, why, they will last for years. Surely it would be madness to throw them away. Besides, it would be extremely expensive to lay in a complete new outfit. The outlay of time and energy would be almost prohibitive, and our personal command of these resources seems to have diminished as surely as our personal incomes, for we can hardly meet the demands made on either. The temptation certainly is strong to pop on one or two of the most becoming vanities, as we linger before the admirable figure which we cut in our own reflections, and to put the rest of the dear old things away in their accustomed drawers, thus saving our time for pleasanter, or, as we think, more necessary, objects, and serving the interests of economy and comfort.

Those who succumb most easily to the temptation will generally be the ones who would be particularly improved by a new outfit. No two individual cases will be entirely alike. Some—the author of *Heartbreak House*, for instance—have only to take their sage's robe out of camphor and ensue wisdom as before; others have been stripped so naked that, whether they will or no, they must acquire a new covering, be it only one of sackcloth; others, again, whose war garments were as offensive as those they wore in peace, will swagger imperturbably in them to the tomb.

But the average man, if he devote some graver moments to the survey of his mental wardrobe, is bound to be assailed by some misgivings regarding the durability of the things he put away in 1914; or, if they are still in good condition, they may appear too far behind the best fashion of to-day to warrant their retention unaltered. He will not even put his khaki away without reflection, lest he should bury some component of more than transitory value. And he will almost certainly come to the conclusion that modifications are necessary, if he is to cut a decent figure in the world, unless he is content to wrap himself in the old cloak of self-satisfaction and have done with it. The worst of it is that, whatever is necessary to be done, he will have to be his own tailor: the stitching and darning, the taking in and the letting out will have to be performed with the intellectual needle of each Sartor Resartus, for there are no wholesale or retail purveyors of new costumes for the spirit. Let us wish him the sartorial eye of a Poole or a Paquin, so that he may combine simplicity with exquisite taste and perfect workmanship, and fit himself without too many tryings-on.

[*The Times*]

THE PASSING OF MRS. HUMPHRY WARD

THE good which we are bidden to speak of the dead must be free of the insult of flattery. To flatter the memory of Mrs. Humphry Ward by saying that *Harvest** is worthy of her would be to insult *Robert Elsmere* and *David Grieve* and *Helbeck of Bannisdale*. It is a plain tale of a fine-natured woman torn between love and the fear of revealing her past; and it ends in a cut-

* *Harvest*. By Mrs. Humphry Ward. Collins. 7s. 6d. net.