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LITERARY DIGEST
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VELVET THE NEW QUEEN OF ELEGANCE

Material Sweeping Nation as Year-Round Favorite Material

Who won the election?

Neither Roosevelt nor Landon won the one conducted by America's style arbiters from California to Southampton. Velvet won it.

A new crush-resistant, non-wrinkling, packable, ultrafashionable velvet which is sweeping the country, last week was crowned "Queen of All-Year Materials."

And if there had been any doubt as to the outcome, Hollywood's unanimous vote turned the tide.

For filmdom's designers, who use tens of thousands of yards annually in motion-picture productions filmed the year round, there was no other fabric.

"The flattery and refinement of velvet is supplied by no other material," said Travis Banton, of Paramount Studios.

"The urge to velvet is a sign that this season is to be a glamorous one," agreed Royer, 20th Century Fox designer.

"Velvet is the epitome and symbol of elegance," added Walter Plunkett, RKO's head designer.

"No material is more effective than velvet, on or off the screen, because it absorbs light, has mystery in its depths and suits all moods," chimed in Orry Kelly, Warner Brothers stylist.

Presidential Note—But tho the fabric poll had nothing to do with politics, there was a distinct Presidential note to the *finale*.

When the stage of the Waldorf-Astoria's elaborate gold and flag-draped ballroom was transformed last week by the Executive Committee of the Velvet Ball and Débutante Election Cotillion into the famous Blue Room of the White House, New York's modish matrons posed and pirou-

etted in authentic velvet reproductions of the original inaugural gowns worn by America's First Ladies from Martha Washington to Lou Hoover.

Chosen for their beauty, grace and charm, Mrs. George B. St. George enacted the rôle of Martha Washington; Mrs. Leonard Cushing, Dolly Madison; Mrs. W. A. Irvin, Mary Todd Lincoln; Mrs. James V. Forrestal, Julia Dent Grant; Mrs. John H. Amen, the former Ruth Cleveland, represented her mother; Mrs. George U. Harris, Chairman of the Ball, the stately Edith Roosevelt, wife of Theodore Roosevelt; Mrs. Roy L. Atwood, Helen Taft; Mrs. Alex H. McLanahan, Edith Bolling Wilson; Mrs. W. R. K. Taylor, Grace Coolidge, and Mrs. Edward L. Tinker, Lou Henry Hoover.

All-American—Patriotism went further than the red, white and blue cotillion costumes worn by fashionable débutantes, for not a foreign frock appeared at the party.

The old-fashioned dresses were made by Helen Virginia Meyer, while ten leading New York creators of the mode designed the "trend gowns" inspired by them. Rose Adado executed the modern interpretation of Martha Washington's gown for Emily Stevens, a lineal descendant of Mrs. Washington; Bergdorf Goodman, the Dolly Madison trend for Eleanor Young; Bonwit Teller, the modern Mary Todd Lincoln frock for Rose Winslow, and Stein & Blaine the Julia Grant trend for Vivian Dixon.

Wendy Inglehart and Mrs. Preston, the former Mrs. Grover Cleveland, wore Hattie Carnegie's butterfly gown inspired by Mrs. Ruth Cleveland's inaugural costume. Frances Clyne did her version of Edith

Roosevelt's gown for Mrs. William T. Wetmore; De Pinna, Helen Taft's for Nancy Adams Rumson, and Consuelo Villa, daughter of Count and Countess Villa, wore Jay-Thorpe's present-day idea of Edith Bolling Wilson's inauguration gown. Peggy Stevenson was the model for Milgrim's trend, and Mimi Richardson for a Saks-Fifth Avenue frock in the manner of the Hoover régime.

Orchids—As Honorary Chairman of the occasion, Mrs. Frank A. Vanderlip summoned the crowned heads of American royalty to assist her in this annual undertaking for "sweet charity." Diamonds and orchids ran second to sartorial skill and beauty of face and form. Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt distributed Cotillion favors, and dashing debs sang campaign songs, waving banners bearing quips from celebrated columnists.

A modern orchestra revived old melodies of the Presidential régimes from 1789 to 1933, as silver spoon-born scions of the Social Register cast their first ballots in a mock election to see which way the White House winds were blowing.

But the ballots that really counted were those cast for velvet. Scarcely a gown in the crowded ballroom was not made entirely of or lavishly trimmed with velvet.

The Persians, as far back as 2000 B.C., started the vogue for velvet, and from them the Arabs at El Fustade, near Cairo, took up the art of weaving the royal material. They passed it on to the Spaniards of Granada who traveled northward through Sicily into Italy in the sixteenth century, and then to France, where, to-day, in the *Musée Historique de Tissus* at Lyons, is one of the greatest collections of velvet in the world.

Anticipating the Coronation of King Edward of England in May, thousands of yards of new summer velvets are stocked and in readiness. Fabrics may come and fabrics may go, but apparently velvet goes on forever.



Osgilaw-Frederick

At Velvet Ball society displays inaugural gowns and their inspirations of the modern mode: (left) costume worn by Mary Todd Lincoln (1861) and its 1936 version; (next) Grace Coolidge's gown and its modern interpretation.

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