

# CINTRA, REAL ANARCHIST OF WORLD OF FASHION, SAYS WOMAN, NOT MODE, SHOULD DICTATE STYLE

### The Hon. Mrs. Fortescue Comes to the United States With Her Radical Views on Costuming Which Have Startled Staid London

### SHE MAKES GOWNS WHILE HUSBAND WRITES VOLUMES UPON HISTORY OF WORLD

### Wife of Librarian to King George Declares Answer to Short Skirt Problem Rests With Limbs of the Wearers

CINTRA hurls the padded brick at the glass of fashion and laughs to see the broken pieces.

She is the fashion anarchist, on her own statement; she is the evangelist of individuality in clothes, regardless of the dictates of Paris.

She also is the wife of the Hon. John Fortescue, librarian at Windsor to the King of England, and historian extraordinary.

Both have just arrived in America. And Cintra will show America how an Englishwoman can be a good wife to a great Englishman and at the same time a busy artist in feminine apparel.

She took up a "trade," to the perturbation of her friends and relatives, because she found it necessary to help pay for the family bread.

She took up a "trade" because her husband has given his life to the writing of a monumental history of the British land forces, which brings him, by and large, about a "ha'penny a line"—scarcely enough to keep the growling wolf from any door.

#### Husband Gains Fame Cintra Gets Dollars

This history is a classic. It runs now into eleven published volumes with four more to go. Its authority is unquestioned, and it is doubtful which Cintra enjoys more—her husband's success or her own.

A few moments' conversation with Cintra—which is the trade name she has adopted—reveals a number of significant facts.

First. That she is supremely happy, happy in her husband's work and in her own.

Second. That her attitude toward her work is that of the artist and not that of the merchant.

Third. That she must be active, on the move, every minute of the day.

She and her husband are staying, while in New York, at the residence of Mrs. Francis Rogers, on Sixty-second street, off Park avenue. An appointment was made to interview her at 2 o'clock one afternoon this week, but it was impossible for her to keep it.

"The busiest woman I know," explained Mrs. Rogers. "At this moment she is detained at the Plaza. The gowns she brought over with her to show us demand her immediate attention. She is very sorry. Come tomorrow at quarter after 9. She will be happy to see you then."

"Tomorrow" dawned dark, cold and foggy—the sort of morning which couldn't possibly make any one happy to see any one. The drizzle in the air left one uncomfortable, irritable.

"No, Mrs. Fortescue isn't up yet," said the maid at the door.

"But there was an appointment—"

"Yes," interrupted the maid, "but Mrs. Fortescue retired so late. However, just wait a moment."

After a while she returned and smiled in the fog of the entry.

"Mrs. Fortescue will see you in the study."

#### "Lovely Interview" Held Out as Promise

But Mrs. Rogers was in the study, and not Mrs. Fortescue.

"She will be here shortly," said Mrs. Rogers. "Cintra has been so late, but she will see you even before she has had breakfast, and you mustn't keep her very long. She really needs some one to watch her. The dear child is so careless she never thinks about her own discomforts. And she gives perfectly lovely interviews."

The wait proved to be not a long one, though it was not a hopeful one. "The weather," the occasion of interrupting, perhaps, slumber—you see, the prospect wasn't one to rave over.

When Cintra, however, entered the room one thought of the poet and his lady fair who carried her own brand of sunshine around with her. Animation spiced the grace of her long, gliding stride; enthusiasm and good nature were revealed in her smile.

Mrs. Fortescue is a tall woman, young and of striking features. Looking at her, one pictures those tall, well-formed, "classic" women of Julius Caesar's day.

She was clothed in brown, with a brown scarf or broad ribbon about her head. Ribbon or scarf it made an exquisite morning low-cut. Mere casualness might be called, meant to ask, and then neglected to. Around her neck and pendant to her knees hung a string of heavy beads.

"Won't you have some breakfast?" asked Mrs. Rogers solicitously.

Cintra. "The gentleman will gladly."

"Breakfast?" laughed Cintra, as if she had and it long ago. "I'm not hungry."

#### Madures Put Verve into Spirited Talk

"You must eat!" said Mrs. Rogers, you know, I can't get over it."

"I don't eat," said Cintra, when she had finished her chair. She did not sink down on the edge of it, making

ing graceful half-gestures while she talked. "I've been working and working over these gowns, and I haven't had a moment to see New York, but I feel its activity. You are so alive, in America. Last night I couldn't go to sleep. I had to write about it all. I composed letters until 2 o'clock this morning."

#### She "Met Her Man" and Knew it at Once

"My family was not a wealthy one," began Cintra.

She is the daughter of the Rev. Howard Beech, rector of Great Beldings, Suffolk, and her name is Windsor.

"It seemed to me that I ought to go to work. This was, of course, before my marriage. My tastes led me to the



Mr. and Mrs. Fortescue

theatre. I studied under Sir Frank Benson, and soon was able to begin my work on the professional stage.

"One day I went down to Dorset, and there I met my man!"

John Fortescue was a man of middle age at that time, distinguished looking—as he is today—with little pleasant "crow's" feet at the eyes.

He had entered the room only a moment before Mrs. Fortescue. He seemed cordial, though with an air of abstraction.

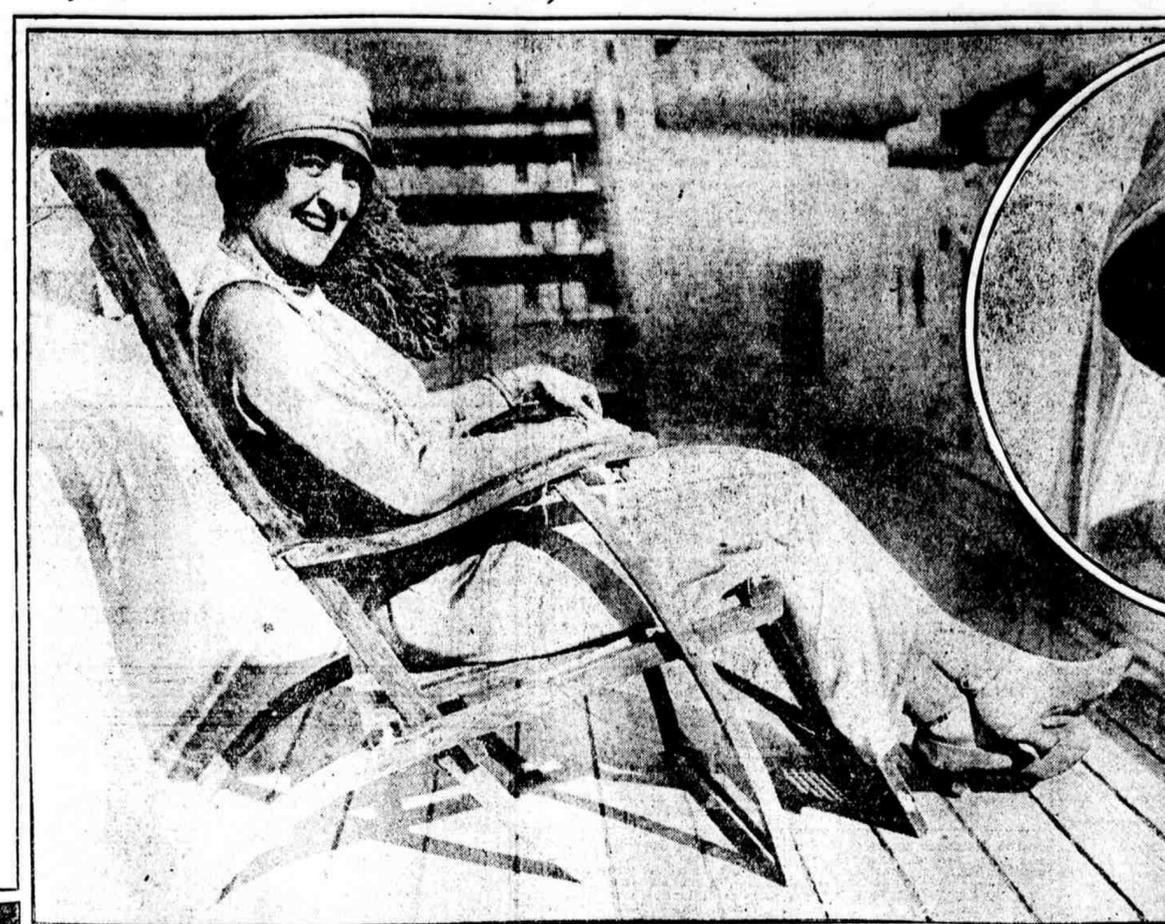
"He loves people to work for their own bread, and he was happy to know that I was interested in business. But he loved home life, too."

#### Short Stage Experience Aided Later Career

"You see, my husband is busy all day, and when he would be ready to leave the study I would be ready to see each other much. We felt that such an arrangement wasn't feasible. Wouldn't work at all. So I decided to give up the stage. That was in 1913. In 1914 we were married."

Mrs. Fortescue is happy for her experience in the theatre.

"It gave me the dramatic instanc-



"Cintra"

#### The Hon. Mrs. John Fortescue

"Cintra's place" and it was pleasurable successful.

"But the strain was rather great. Besides, I did my husband's secretarial work—as I still try to do. And it soon developed that it would really be wiser to give up the flat and open up a place in our own home at Hampstead. That caused something of a flurry, too, among my friends. 'What, trade in your very home?' They couldn't believe it."

"Our home at Holly Hill, Hampstead, is interesting. It is called the Romantic House, or the Admiral's House, after Admiral Berton, who built it during the reign of George III. Bits of it are 250 years old. The old admiral built this house as much in the manner of a 'fish man-o'-war' as was possible. It has a main deck and a quarter deck; his own room was constructed like a ship's cabin. My bedroom happens to be a shelter deck.

#### Flair for Designing Put to Good Account

"But the most gorgeous thing about the estate is the garden. There are a series of broad terraces, which descend to a kind of sunken rose garden. And the place is a riot of lavender, roses and foxgloves. It is a sweet-smelling garden, and perfectly beautiful."

This home of hers became the headquarters for a progressive business in interior decoration. And one day, as a pastime, she utilized some of the rare silks she had brought from abroad, and carried out a design for a Watteau dress.

Some time later Lady Violet Astor, sister-in-law of Viscount Astor, came in for a chat, and saw the Watteau

frock. She was enraptured by it, and insisted on buying it. She insisted, too, that Cintra had a flair for garment designing—and thereafter Cintra developed into one of the most successful designers of women's apparel.

Since she has designed gowns for royalty and for fashionable women all over the world, And Dolores, noted stage beauty, not long ago, not satisfied with what she found in Paris, rushed to Cintra for the trick of dressmaking which she is wearing on the streets of Philadelphia while she is playing here.

"I display my frocks in the beautiful rose garden."

#### Is Real Anarchist in Fashion's World

"You know," continued Cintra, "I am what I call a fashion anarchist. I believe the individuality of the wearer should determine the kind of dresses to wear. I preach individuality. I don't believe in the so-called styles. It is silly to have a season for short skirts, and then another season for long skirts. The length of the skirt should depend entirely upon the figure of the wearer. Tall women should never wear short skirts. Short women may wear them, but if they want to appear taller they ought to wear long ones."

"I don't draw my designs, I can't draw. I use very rare cloths, and most of the time they and the personality and the figure of the woman tell me what to do. I drape the material and change and change until I reach the most satisfactory combination. Besides, I have the most wonderful cutter that ever was—it makes it all very simple."

"What I like best is to take a

person right through, if you know what I mean. Some mothers send their daughters—debutantes—to me, and say, 'Here, do with her as you will.' So I fix their hair and then, with that as a beginning, I work out their frocks and their hats."

"I specialize, however, in evening gowns. And under no circumstances will I make short evening gowns—unless, maybe, the gown is for a small deb with small legs and small feet."

"I believe, too, that evening gowns ought to be viewed under artificial light. They've fixed up for me what they call 'Cintra's cave.' It used to be an old lumber room, very long. There are no lights in the room, excepting a few Persian encaustic lamps in the corners. I have had the walls painted black and the ceiling gold. The floor is covered with black carpet. Sunlight is shut out. And I find that almost any color is effective in this room. The gowns are laid over chairs and divans, and it is quite striking."

Mrs. Fortescue is especially emphatic in her resentment against too great a commercialization of her art.

#### Unbecoming Gowns "Immoral" to Cintra

"I think it is a form of immorality to let a woman buy something which doesn't suit her. It is shocking to see a beautiful dress on the wrong woman. I find that most women are opinionated. I find that they are willing to be shown that a hard-and-fast adherence to style is devastating to what-ever beauty they may have. I say to a woman who is intent on buying the wrong gown, I say to her: 'I can't let you have that. It doesn't suit me. It

doesn't suit you, and it won't suit you after you wear it for a while. You mustn't take that one.' And they usually don't."

"And, after all, I find it pays best to be frank, even in a business way. My work will be only two years old in November, but it has been amazingly successful. Any my chief joy is to see one of my gowns on a woman in suits, rather than to receive the money for it."

Of all women, Cintra is persuaded to say, American women give her the least trouble.

"They know exactly what they want. And they don't fight me. They don't try on everything in the place—and the American men are just like that. They have life and energy, and minds that know somehow just about what they want."

#### Talk of Fashion Routed Meal Thought

"But I'm not hungry," said Cintra. "A person's clothing," she resumed hurriedly, "helps a great deal to keep the mind young and healthy. If I were wealthy, I should wear a dress for every mood. It would be lovely! I should love it! I—"

"But you must get a bite of breakfast, my dear; you simply must!" interrupted Mrs. Rogers, and whisked her out into the breakfast room, leaving a mere male visitor standing there, thinking the heavens that no such desire troubled him.

"A dress for every mood!"

It seemed almost impossible for any one to have enough dresses, and, besides, think of the everlasting changing!

Of course . . . so active . . . perhaps her beautiful simplicity of moods would facilitate matters for Cintra, but for mere man-

Well, a clear, seemed better than clothes for moods!



"Cintra," her husband and Mrs. Francis Rogers, their hosts in New York