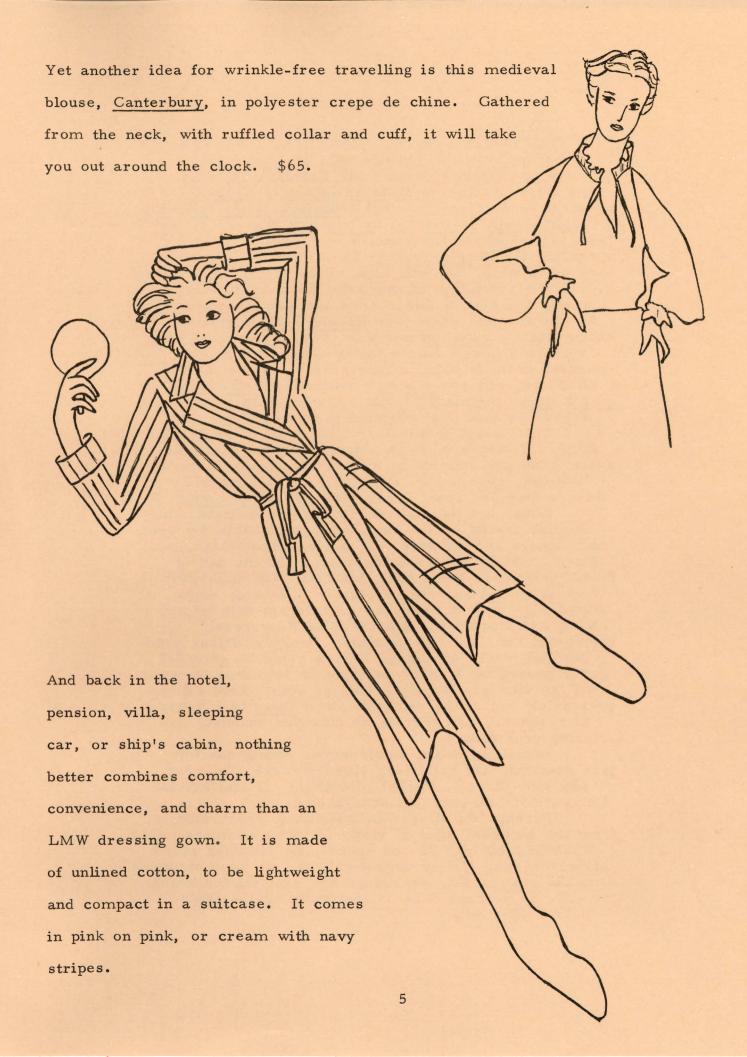


Fully orchestrated in pale and slate blue, dark and pistachio green, black, natural, pale grey, and brilliant orange.



FOR THIS TRAVEL ISSUE, WE EXTEND HEARTFELT sympathy to all of you who will hear over the P.A. system at Heathrow Airport (or Frankfurt or Rome or Los Angeles) that owing to an industrial dispute (or impaired landing gear or fog) departure of the following flight(s) will be delayed by one half hour . . . and who will subsequently languish in a plastic chair reading the Herald Tribune from cover to cover and back again while that half hour miraculously encompasses a whole revolution of the large clock-hand, and a second, and even a third. And yet deeper sympathy for the moment when your Herald Tribune finally, unequivocally, runs out and your aching eyes encounter a graphic design on the facing wall which might interest geometricians or serve as a test for colourblindness, and you suddenly realize that this could go on for days. Sympathy made more poignant by the knowledge that this suffering is preventable.

That is not to say that flight delays are preventable. If they are, it is merely in some academic sense. We are doomed to wait in airports. Airports, however, need not be the places of psychological torture they are now. They need not be so boring.

Chess boards could be installed. Billiard tables.

Jogging tracks on the roof, with track-suits for rent and lockers and showers. It wouldn't cost much, and there could be a reasonable charge for the use of these facilities. If shrewdly planned, they could turn out to be net sources of revenue. Indeed, there seems less risk of being too extravagant than of not being extravagant enough. A modest proposal: casinos in the departure lounges. In jurisdictions which prohibit public gambling, licence could be extended under provisions similar to those of duty-free shopping. All the vice you want, as long as your moral decay goes safely out of the country! Now there is a source of revenue. And there's no cure for boredom like risking your money.

Swimming pools, arboretums, string quartets, jazz quartets, art galleries, video viewers. . . but why stop there? Parks! Beaches! Quaint hotels! Dance-floors strewn with orange-blossoms!

Perhaps the danger in instituting these reforms, from the airlines' point of view, is that customers might cash in their tickets and spend their holidays at the airport. Yes, that is undoubtedly so; we have stumbled on the real reason why things are kept uncomfortable for us. So perhaps it is as inevitable as the flight delays after all.