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Autor: M.S.
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Embroideries, Laces, Handkerchiefs

«Embroidery» — the word has almost the power of an incantation. «Laces ... embroideries» — both words incarnate the most feminine element of fashion, its most graceful and ethereal qualities.

«Embroidery!» Do you not at once think of Penelope, of Queen Matilda, consort of William the Conqueror, and her ladies working at the splendid Bayeux tapestries, and countless other queens of fact and fiction whose oft-sung virtues include the delicate art of needlework.

Poetic imagination thus helped to idealize embroidery until it became in the eyes of men a luxurious, regal fabric fit, not for humble mortals, but only for fairy-tale princesses. Even in our modern days, most people seem to think that the fine-spun tracteries of St. Gall fabrics are suitable only for vaporous evening gowns, dream-like in quality, a poem of feminine charm...

And yet, other fabrics like chintz, tulles and nets, crêpes, muslins, embroidered organdies, are perfectly suitable for evening gowns. Why should not embroideries, therefore, be equally suitable for other styles and purposes than evening wear?

In point of fact, couturiers are greatly attracted by the innumerable charming potentialities of embroidered fabrics and, realizing that the times we live in are not conducive to extravagant or luxurious styles, have sought to put these fabrics to practical, every-day use.

In their recent collections, leading Parisian couturiers presented a series of models which fully testify to the practical, decorative value of embroideries.

No need for yards and yards of these delightful materials, as will be seen in the illustrations on the following pages. A simple application edging a neck-line or a cuff, for instance, suffices to stress the femininity of a little afternoon gown. Or again, an embroidered and drawn-thread stitched tailored collar serves to enhance the sombre hue of a velvet two-piece. Or, side by side with sumptuous crinoline styles for gala wear, one finds a smart little embroidered wool frock, both practical and easy to wear.

Of course, one should also mention the many uses to which embroidery is put for lingerie and exclusive models. Is there anything more becoming, with an autumn suit, than a delicately embroidered blouse, or a sober shirt blouse trimmed with Alençon point insertions? What more gay and alluring than a bow or application of St. Gall embroidery on a coquettish little hat?

Paris, the city of great dressmakers, of refined elegance, of women with a keen practical sense — Paris, the hustling city where the feminine world is both hard-working and smart — Paris has realized the value of embroidery.

And we should be grateful to the women and couturiers of that great city for having shown us, by their sureness of taste and feeling for what is right, how any woman can use embroidery, that feminine touch *par excellence*.

M. S.