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London

ROYAL CLOTHES

The most discussed event in London is the visit of our King and Queen to South Africa. Accompanying them is Princess Elizabeth, 20 year old heir to the throne, and her 17 year old sister, Princess Margaret Rose. Both of them are going abroad for the first time. * For all young girls such an event looms important, is eagerly looked forward to, and none the less for these two young members of the Royal family. The preparations for the journey have marked a milestone in their lives, as it is the first time they have ever been able to buy an extensive trousseau. Like most girls the Princesses are extremely fond of pretty clothes, but growing from childhood to girlhood during the war years, and sharing to the full exactly the same ration restrictions as their subjects, they have had to «make-do» their old clothes with only occasional annual additions of a new coat or dress. * On the occasion of this important State visit to South Africa, however, the London dressmakers working for the Royal family have been granted extra materials by the Government. For the first time since the war the Princesses have a wardrobe of new dresses of real silk, linen, satins — materials cool to wear which will stand up well to the warm climate. * I was privileged to see some of the lovely models designed for them in London by Captain Molyneux and Norman Hartnell, (who also designs the Queen's clothes), and it is easy to guess the excitement and happiness these simple but lovely dresses will give the two young Princesses.

Each will have a number of well-cut washing dresses of linen, rayon or tussore silk, in plain pastel shades, but often with contrasting organdie or linen collars and cuffs on the short sleeves. The predominant colours are blue for Princess Elizabeth and pink, apricot, or white for Princess Margaret Rose. To top these dresses on a cool day Captain Molyneux has designed simple, collarless two buttoned coats of mastic coloured rayon linen. * Each Princess will take with her a number of new evening dresses — many of them in lace, net or chiffon.

One beautiful dress designed by Captain Molyneux for Princess Elizabeth is in white chiffon with a gold thread woven to a medium plaid design. For State functions they will wear satin or sequin embroidered silk net. * Before leaving Mr. Hartnell's salon I saw his workgirls happily embroidering pearls and copper motifs on a magnificent oyster satin reception gown for the Queen, with a crinoline under the quilted skirt. Her Majesty will also take with her specially designed cool summer dresses in white, periwinkle blue



Black and white check fine cotton voile ensemble from N. Hartnell made for H. M. The Queen. Skirt and jacket are bordered with white piqué; the belt is black leather.

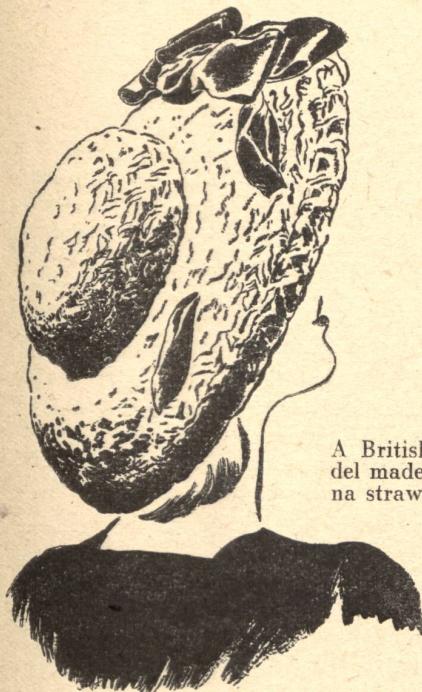


Summer evening dress from N. Hartnell made for H. R. H. Princess Margaret Rose; white embroidered organza with inset panels of eyelet embroidery threaded with china blue satin ribbon.



Afternoon ensemble from N. Hartnell made for H. R. H. Princess Elizabeth. Navy blue and white surah silk with touches of white piqué.

and apricot. Navy and white also figures prominently and pique collars and cuffs appear on many of the models.



A British «Reslaw» model made of Swiss Rami-na straw.



A British «Webflex» beret model made of Swiss Remaillé straw.

SWISS STRAWS AT LAST

I am happy to be able to report that the first fancy straws from Switzerland imported since the war are now appearing in some of the milliners in Britain. They will be eagerly sought, as women here are thoroughly weary of having to wear felt hats at all seasons because no straws have been available for six years. Alas, the quota of imported hats and straw from Switzerland is very small this year and there will not be enough to fill the huge demand. But we are thankful for even small mercies these days, and I, for one, intend to search the milliners' shops until I find a lovely, new Swiss straw hat to accompany my summer dresses. * When I visited the London representative of a well known Swiss firm, he told me that the demand for Swiss fancy straws from hat manufacturers is overwhelming. Women insist that they must have them — and all colours and weaves are popular.

... AND HANDKERCHIEFS

Hats do not constitute the whole Anglo-Swiss story I am glad to say, because during the first weeks of the New Year a gentle flow of beautifully embroidered Swiss handkerchiefs has come to Britain. They will soon be seen in the leading department stores throughout the country. There will be very few to begin with — about one-fifth of the number imported before the war — and women no doubt will have to get up early in order to buy them, but judging by the samples I saw in the offices of a London agent of a number of St. Gallen manufacturers, these beautiful, fine handkerchiefs will be looked for and treasured. * Only travellers who have visited Britain since the war can fully realise how starved women here have been for fine materials, and how so many accessories, once bought in quantity as a matter of course, are not high luxuries to us.

A SHOE STORY

Walking down Bond Street a few days ago I saw yet another harbinger of good things to come. In the window of a well-known shoe store there was a small display of real Swiss shoes! Like Wordsworth when he saw the first daffodils of springtime:

«I gazed, and gazed — but little thought
 «What wealth to me that sight had brought.»

Now the shoes I looked at were no extreme luxury types. There were no fancy wedges, no bright colours, no special leathers. But there in front of me were beautiful, well-cut and supple court shoes with high Louis heels. I remembered with a shock that for years we have been wearing, by Government decree, plain, straight heels no higher than 2 inches, and that our shoes, though good and substantial, were no longer light and supple. Also displayed was a flat heeled Court shoe with a lovely broad tread that is a newcomer to England and which will look well with our longer hem lines this year. * So there is much to be grateful for in this restricted land, now that Switzerland once more is contributing, be it ever so little, to the sadly depleted wardrobes of British women.

Enid Grand.