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Paris



A WINDOW IN PARIS...

The great masters of the art of dressmaking have always delighted in accelerating the cadence of the seasons: they speak of spring in winter, of summer before we have exhausted the pleasures of spring; in August they are ready with the first winter models. Perhaps they do this in order to make us dream, so that our reverie may increase and multiply infinitely the temptations we visualize. This season, the enticement is more piquant than ever before!

Late last spring, we witnessed the couturiers' most recent discovery: the coat-frock... The success achieved by this vogue may be due to the originality of the cutter who, breaking away from the severe classical tradition, has become so emancipated and so bold, that he somewhat frightens us! The short, flared jacket will have much to do to hold its own against so dangerous an adversary!

Truth to tell, the coat-frock is only recognisable by the fact that it is worn without a coat... It is intended for street wear and retains a certain air of staidness, complying with the exigencies of the New Look without submitting to some of its capricious exaggerations.

The recondite art of cutting, finesse of detail: nothing is spared to render these frocks not only seductive, but also — irresistible!... There is a certain reticence in the lengthening and widening of skirts. Our hemlines are stationary this summer at 11 1/2 inches from the ground and, though full skirts are still in favour, preference is shown for soft, supple gored styles. Taffetas and failles

are not proving so successful as anticipated, except for « special occasions » which demand extreme elegance... Grained fabrics, light woollens and dog-tooth designs have been handicapped by rainy weather. Laces and embroideries have been a pronounced success, combined in those thousand and one dainty accessories which froth and billow on bodices and below skirt hems.

But it is definitely cottons, muslins, organdies, crisp linens which have won the day this summer.

Lucien Lelong adopts two colours for his ensembles. The same scheme prevails with Maggy Rouff and Lanvin who have not, for all that, renounced the charm of stripes, wide and narrow. Skirts are widened with the aid of narrow insertions, by pleats rather than flares. The silhouette is straighter now, the waist-line slim, accentuated by a wide band of pin-tucks, the « wasp » effect being stressed by fullness over the hips obtained by a labyrinth of puckers and gathers. « Apron » effects are reminiscent of Dolly Varden styles, with draping at the back, in some cases suggested by a double skirt; this rather sophisticated bustle « movement » is not over-emphasized, however. Marcel Rochas has studied a very full « Princess » style, idealizing the feminine silhouette. The creator of the modern « wasp waist » has remained faithful to this line: the waist is stressed and emphasized by slenderizing pin-tucks. Neck lines are very broad, usually square and with shoulder straps. Long pointed collars have been inspired by fashions of Directoire days and Peter Pan collars are adorned with large bows — all very youthful, feminine and charming.

For smart, late afternoon wear, muslins, St. Gall embroideries, organdie and piqué trimmings stress femininity, lending women a slightly precious, idealized air. At Lanvin, hip-lines are rounded by panier-like gathers. The new Lelong models are intended for the cocktail hour and the casino. Robert Piguet has adopted short boleros with enormous sleeves, adorned with St. Gall embroideries and quaint arabesques of black plumes in featherstitching. At Marcel Rochas, the keynote is black or white... the hour and the circumstance decide the choice... Pierre Benoit presents a gown in coarse off-white guipure worn over a yellow foundation and belted with black... And lastly, Maggy Rouff causes the gardens of the night to flower with dreamlike printed gowns, so vaporous, so ethereal, that they might well have been brought to life by the touch of a magic wand and, Cinderella-like, vanish on the stroke of midnight.

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