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London

LETTER FROM LONDON

Despite politics and the worst weather since the eighties, this summer in London has been the busiest and the gayest in post-war years, with the Olympics as the top of the season.

In London's social life, the departure of Monsieur and Madame Ruegger has left a sad gap, for they were much liked and Madame Ruegger's wide interests had won her a large circle of friends. We have welcomed the new Swiss Minister, Monsieur de Torrenté.

Objects familiar to our Swiss visitors are to be found in London stores just now: party frocks for small girls in shadow organdie with billowing frills, crisp spotted muslin blouses in blue or pink, delicious embroidered lawns and broderie anglaise in the same delicate colours or white, garlands of Swiss handkerchiefs, gay as posies, sprigged with floral or butterfly motifs. These dainty things from Switzerland are expensive, but they are in great demand and stocks soon disappear.

Before the opening of the Olympiad, all London's fashion trade had a busy time, especially for the preparing of the «Fashion Fortnight», Britain's biggest dress show. For two weeks, London became Britain's shop window. The show included the new autumn collections and those of more than two hundred fashion wholesalers. There is not a little speculation about winter fashions, but the leading wholesales houses have already revealed their trends for the coming season. Skirts still swing and swirl; pleats and folds, hip stiffening, rounded shoulders are still with us. One house is making great play with capes: our sketch shows a large check style worn with broad leather belt. Apart from the usual worsteds and tweeds, there is a great deal of wool in muted shades: edelweiss, slate blue, clear pinks and blues, tobacco and toffee shades. A great deal of silky or rayon fabric: tie-silks, taffetas, satins, crepes. Here is how a London designer has used grey Swiss moiré for a bell-shaped style.

Milliners and hairdressers co-operated this summer to prepare a big show at the Dorchester. The idea was to harmonize hats and hair styles. In London, as in Paris and New York, the feather-cut bob is very popular, but there are still «intermediate» styles for the women who hesitate to cut their hair really short, and yet wish to have a neat and sculptured appearance. The hats at the show were of all shapes and sizes, but berets and bonnets predominated. Fur hats appeared too, but feathers were flaunted conspicuously. There were feathers of all kinds, from whole birds to nests of multicoloured tropical songsters.

That Britain is taking fashion seriously is proved not only by the concerted effort of «Fashion Fortnight», but also by the fact that the Royal School of Art has appointed a Professor of Fashion in the person of Mrs. Madge Garland, a former editor of «Vogue» and, later, adviser to one of London's largest stores.

London, early August 1948.

Ann Duveen.

