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London Letter

We have now seen the fashions from all over Europe, and what is striking is not the difference but the similarity of clothes designed almost simultaneously in Paris, Spain or Italy, Switzerland or London. It is as though the germ of an idea were sown, and the seeds carried right across the continent, so unanimous is the contemporary feeling in fashion. How else are we to account for the snowstorm of white, in street as well as party clothes, in every country; for the ubiquitous prevalence of pleating, for the foam of crisp organdie and silk organza and the drift of flowers in prints or encrusted embroidery? Flower motifs and the romanticism of organza are perhaps the most internationally beloved of all the new trends; and this promises to be a spectacular summer for Swiss textiles. For, in delicacy of fibre, variety of weave and beauty of design, the soft muslins of our great-grandmothers have been metamorphosed into something rich and strange, and yet adaptable to every phase of the summer's day.

In London, as elsewhere, we already see the acceptance of these dominant trends — a high tide of white, or black-and-white; lots of pleating, the ideal for lingerie or for casual travelling clothes when the pleats are permanent. Coronation summer will be remembered, I think, as the summer when every other dance dress was filmy organza.

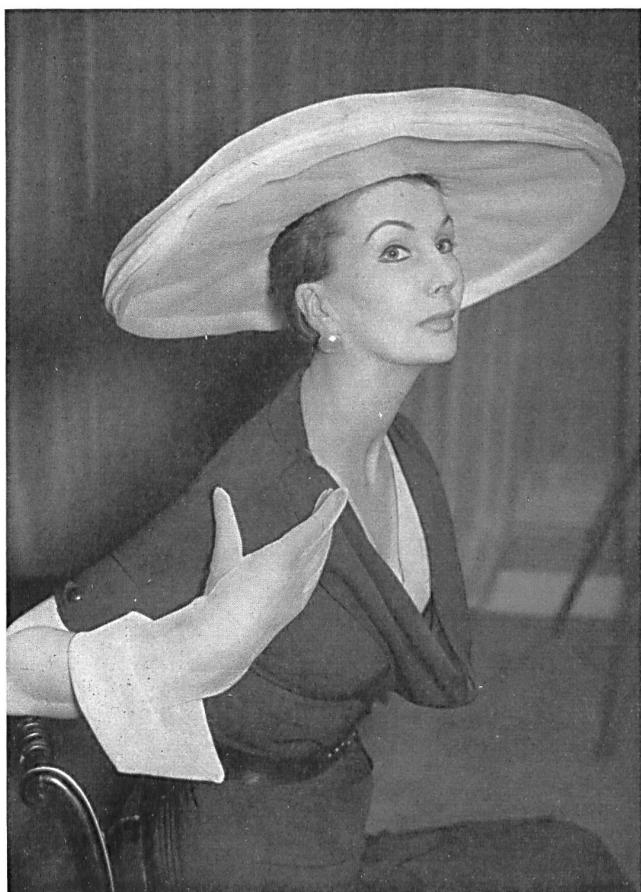
For street wear, we have noticed white corduroy jackets, white woollen jackets and skirts, heavy white lace for elegant tailormades, and white wool lace as well as white linen, silk and muslin dresses. Susan Small also uses wool lace for an off-white cocktail dress, and Matita shows a beige afternoon dress of the same fabric. Black and white is also popular: a white piqué double-breasted jacket, with a black collar and worn with a black skirt; a deep fichu in white organdie almost covering the bodice of a dark dress.

Evening dresses, particularly those designed for this year's debutantes, are absolutely ravishing. Roecliff

RAHVIS

White Swiss organdie cartwheel hat, with gloves to match.

Photo Mirrorpic



RAHVIS

The fashion for white, in a soft, summer tailleur of white Swiss linen.

Photo Keystone





Photo Keystone

RAHVIS

Ball dress of white Swiss organdie draped with primrose yellow chiffon and ornamented with white doves. White organza gloves.

was charming. We especially admired a crisp circular petticoat of stiffened lawn edged with two rows of embroidery, and some pretty flowing negligées of silk-striped cotton organza. As for evening dresses, there was a crop of romantic, ethereal creations in flowerlike shades of blue, in polka-dotted white and, loveliest of all, a bouffant ball gown of white organza.

Another exceptionally beautiful evening dress we have seen was by Rahvis — a full-skirted white organdie, draped Winterhalter fashion with yellow chiffon, and decorated at the bust and on the skirt with pure white doves.

In all the excitement of Coronation parties, and the summer holidays which will follow this most glamorous of seasons, we are not forgetting that there will be many friends from abroad coming to London for the ceremony, and we shall want our houses as well as ourselves to be looking their best. Women who are having rooms done up and furniture re-covered, snatch at Swiss furnishing fabrics when they can find them in the stores — not only the famous, filmy curtain materials, but also the glazed cottons which are so practical and pretty for loose covers. Harvey Nichols have had a particularly good selection of these.

Ann DUVEEN.

SUSAN SMALL

Skirt of white grosgrain Majestic by Heer & Co. Ltd., *Thalwil*, embroidered with black guipure lace, to match the black guipure blouse.

& Chapman have one in flower-flocked organdie, with a wide whirling skirt and a fichu to cover the strapless top, and another in grey organza appliquéd with white flowers. Rima showed a lovely pink organza, the tiers of the skirt edged with pink and silver, jewelled embroidery. And the afternoon dresses are just as pretty: Frederick Starke has a cool, striped nylon organza pleated all round, and Julian Rose a summer frock of embroidered Swiss organdie, with three-quarter sleeves and a Quaker fichu collar.

Although organdie is the favourite, one also sees a lot of Swiss guipure. For instance, Hartnell's elegant princess dress for garden-parties in heavy white flower-patterned guipure, and Susan Small's casual outfit of a black guipure blouse and a white grosgrain skirt ringed with black guipure to match.

Harrods lately staged the most exciting show of Swiss fashions we have seen for some time, ranging from dance dresses, lingerie and little summer frocks to beach clothes that were particularly original and gay. There were garden-party dresses, too. The lingerie

