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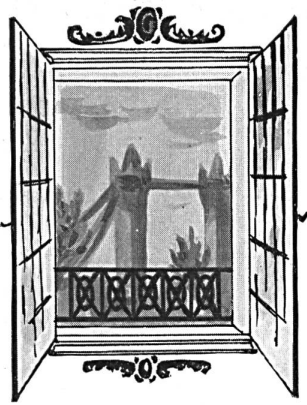
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London Letter

**L. ABRAHAM & CO. SILKS
LTD., ZURICH**

Rayon and wool (15%) mixture.
Model by Roter Models Ltd., London



Photo John French

Every so often I try to view the trends of fashion from as objective a view as possible and although I never really succeed I find myself amused and intrigued. Amidst alarums, flashing camera bulbs and smoke-

reeked salons designers strive to win new customers, catch the popular imagination and stage a new look for a season or two. Wholesale manufacturers and buyers of stores periodically hope for something new but in the

main trust that the line will remain virtually the same and so leave the making and selling uncomplicated. And the general public, of course, awaits with some degree of impatience for news of the latest line before buying the new season's outfit and then promptly proceeds to get something very similar to what was bought some two or three seasons ago because it is more practical and fits in better with some of the existing garments it will have to go with. So everywhere in London you can now meet manufacturers who have reluctantly produced some models with longer skirts; buyers of major stores and shops who have regretfully been compelled to buy a model or two and a few women whose position is such that they consider it necessary to show they are conversant with what is the height of fashion, whether it suits them or not. Admittedly the longer skirt length can be delightful and very feminine but for the modern business or career woman it is not sufficiently practical. Even for evening wear or cocktails the preference is definitely marked for ballerina length skirts — particularly with younger women.

Another thought which crossed my mind during my present objective thinking concerns the names given to colours. After one of the wretchedest summers in history and hundreds of articles since the war in the various magazines stressing the need of clear, bright colours for

psychological well-being for Autumn. The most tantalising, I think, is « leaden sky grey » followed by « electrifying gay black » both coming from Paris. Another is « feuille morte » — poetic and descriptive no doubt, but isn't it a trifle depressing! ... and while I am grateful to Paris and respect its unending ingenuity I am baffled by the thought in the mind of one of its Couturiers, who described his Collection as containing « violent opposing harmonious colours ». Maybe grammatical nonsense can be excused by artistic licence.

By setting against this entertaining background the hesitation of the longer skirt and the wavering waistline which wanders from the Empire bustline to the hips — or is not there at all — one can perhaps be excused for having momentarily tried to view objectively some odd few aspects of our trade and then be mercifully allowed to return to take part in and enjoy its own bizarre cacophony.

As far as the British market is concerned the main style indications for the coming Spring and Summer are—

- (a) A continuation of the Empire inspiration in slender-line sheaths.
- (b) Bigger and better skirts with attached well-made petticoats for the younger wearers.
- (c) Greater emphasis on the materials than style.
- (d) Dresses with « something extra », i.e. in chiffon; with capes etc.

It's abundantly clear that the younger set will again favour cottons with full swirl skirts and attached bouffant petticoats for both dresses and separates. The « A » line which proved so popular two years ago is being echoed in many of the spring ranges now being shown but the main interest is transferred from style to the many excellent print designs and good colours. The behaviour of fabrics is rapidly becoming an important factor, upon it depends much of the ultimate sales. Fabrics and cottons in particular, which until quite recently found sales by virtue of their being crease-resisting now require the additional advantages of needing no or little ironing and of being well-nigh stainproof.

To contrast with the crisp cottons, most manufacturers' ranges contain models in supple rayons and mixed fabrics which consequently express a softer look with draped bodices, swathed waists sometimes with cummerbunds and graceful straighter skirts with well-balanced unpressed pleats. An obvious advantage of these softer-look dresses is that they are suitable not only for normal daywear but also for the more informal occasions. Chiffon, which is making its reappearance this autumn in higher-priced evening wear, will be reaching a wider



**L. ABRAHAM & CO. SILKS LTD.,
ZURICH**

Pure silk with blue and grey roses printed
on black background.

Model by Roter Models Ltd., London



Photo George Miles

METTLER & CO. LTD., SAINT-GALL

Flame coloured cotton satin Mocamba.

Model by Suzan Small Ltd., London

public by next spring. I have little doubt that it will prove popular though it will probably be regarded by the public as a « type » of fabric rather than as a specific material. Most of the synthetic sheers have in fact a remarkably fine « silken » soft handle.

The most original ready-mades from Switzerland for next spring will unquestionably be knitted cotton dresses and two-piece ensembles (by Achtnich). With printed paisley, floral or striped motifs they possess a wonderfully soft full texture, which I believe is completely new

**L. ABRAHAM & CO. SILKS LTD.,
ZURICH**

Rayon and cotton mixture (50/50)
with a fine matt surface.

Model by Roter Models Ltd., London

Photo Eugene Vernier



to cotton and which will provide a great deal of interest. Fortunately the retail prices will be modest and fully competitive with other imported cotton garments. At present the principal Swiss ready-mades in the London stores are ski-wear (obviously), knitwear and raincoats. Two interesting ski-suits now in a famous store are styled on the wartime siren-suit and are made of «stretch-nylon»! One had wide, full-length sleeves nipped in at the cuffs with a normal revers collar, while the other has a sleeveless tunic top. Some ski-jumpers in small two-tone checks were particularly well-designed in proofed poplin and with effective tucks in the ribbed collar and cuffs.

They looked purposeful and felt completely right when I tried one on! The same full textured material was used by the same manufacturer for unlined rainwear — the design was gay suggesting that it could be fun to be out in the rain and the cut was roomy and easy though in no way bulky. Tartans are exceptionally popular this season, so that one occasionally becomes a little weary of seeing more but I also liked a three-quarter length jacket in proofed poplin and fully lined. Classic in style but with a rakish low belt at the back which gave the garment a delightful individual character.

Ruth Fonteyn