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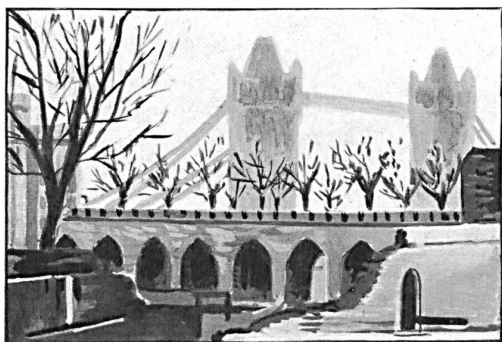
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London Letter

Long, long ago, when our medieval forefathers tried to forget some of the bitterness of Winter, they used to sing a plain chant entitled "Summer is icumen" (Summer is come); but now, in this enlightened Age of ours, the old order is changed and it is we women who seek consolation by flocking to the stores and shops during the

first few days of January to buy Summer cotton print dresses; maybe this is what our modern psychologists would call a balancing factor. When I was little, our mothers found it hard to resist a New Year Sale for fear of missing some unparalleled bargain, the merits of which have remained unrecognised by all other women;

Frederick Starke Ltd., London
Cotton brocade in lavender and
grey by:
Brocart de coton bleu lavande et
gris de:
Rudolf Brauchbar & Co., Zurich

Photo Zanton



Werner & Edgar Ltd., London

Rayon Georgette blouse embroidered in Switzerland. Embroidery by:

Blouse de georgette de rayonne brodée en Suisse. Broderie de:

Jacob Rohner S.A., Rebstein

(London Agents: Styles, Son & Chanter Ltd.)

Photo Peter Clark



the same is still true to-day but some time ago an enterprising London Store found that Summer dresses could be successfully offered at this time of year. It was also found unnecessary to include these dresses within the Sale itself and not only was the stock cleared but repeats had to be made with a request for prompt delivery! Had the stocks been held back for another three or four months, it is quite possible that they would have sold very much more slowly and may even have been cleared only through a Summer Sale. After all, it requires a woman's unerring intuition to appreciate the merits of saving money by buying something which would never have been bought had it not been for her feminine intuition! It stands to reason that it is better to have Summer dresses ready (and hope that the opportunity would come to buy other and maybe better dresses) just in case Summer does put in an appearance.

This year has opened with yet another stage in the battle of sizings but with some modifications. British and American sizings have, of course, been adapted by the various manufacturers for some considerable time but the position still is that the same sizes produced by different manufacturers can vary quite considerably

so that some annoyance and confusion occasionally arise. I know of a manufacturer specialising in outsize garments who, bearing in mind the sensitivity of the larger woman, marks his 44" models with a 42" hip label, and even on some occasions with a 40" hip label. At the other end of the scale, the small women have won their major battle in sizings within the inexpensive ranges, though there is still too much tendency to "lift from the waist" when alterations have to be made in the more expensive ranges. This, of course, can completely shatter the line of the garment. Now the tall girls have come into campaign for their own rights and they have in fact formed an Association, entitled "The Association of Tall Women". A new development in this battle of sizings has just taken place, in which a well-known British concern has now introduced a new range of suits made in multi-fittings confined to a limited size range and from which both the small and tall women have been excluded. Although the idea is new to this Country, it has been quite successfully developed in the United States and is certainly particularly suited for suits and semi-tailormades and should go a long way to give a more individually tailored look. This process means



Photo David Olins

Susan Small Ltd., London

Dress and matching tailored jacket in pure silk. Fabric by:

Robe pure soie et jaquette assortie.

Tissu de:

Ostertag, Hausamann & Co., Zurich

that the number of minor alterations at the retail end will be reduced but from the manufacturers' aspect the number of operations is obviously increased with the need of careful checking at each stage to ensure a high degree of accuracy throughout. The interesting question which this raises is whether the public will appreciate

the wider range of fittings within a smaller selection of styles and sizings or whether they will still prefer a wider choice of styles at the expense of more precise fittings.

From the troublesome aspects of sizings and fittings I could perhaps pass over to some of the complex aspects

affecting H-lines or A-lines in mass production but, like all journalists, I like peace and order occasionally; so let me mention at random some one or two aspects regarding Swiss textiles.

My first visit was to Frederick Starke, a wholesale couture House, which has enjoyed the highest reputation for many years and which recently introduced a secondary and more moderately priced range of dresses and ensembles under the name of "Frederica". This House has frequently produced very fine models styled in Swiss materials and in their current higher grade couture collection I found some particularly interesting models. An exquisite ballerina length evening gown in a spot silk organza by L. Abraham of Zurich was the first to draw my attention. Though neither in H-line nor A-line the gown is truly delightful; strapless, perfectly cut over the bodice and with a full flowing skirt. This gown has in fact been featured in the English "Harper's Bazaar", together with a Summer coat of silk paper taffeta with elbow length sleeves and gathered in soft folds from the yoke. In the same collection and in material from the same suppliers (L. Abraham) I came across an afternoon dress, which, in my opinion, is one of the loveliest I have seen for the coming Season; its smooth quiet cut throws into relief a very fine embroidered bayadere motif on pure silk shantung.

Leaving the Summer fantasies and fineries I walked across the cold wintry streets of London to see if Messrs. Kircheimer Ltd. could show me any of their fabrics for next Autumn. This London branch, as some of you may remember, imports the finest materials from Switzerland, while its associate company, Kirra Silks, imports Swiss fabrics in the grey for finishing in this Country so as to meet the large demand for moderately priced goods. The London organisation has built up in a comparatively short time an excellent reputation and their ranges are very much in demand by the major wholesale couture Houses and the larger departmental stores.

One of the most successful Autumn materials imported by Messrs. Kircheimer is a Jacquard Rayon Taffeta with a delicate broché effect and wonderfully suitable for cocktail and evening wear. Another fabric in Jacquard Rayon with either a self-toned pattern or floral print will, as I see it, be particularly excellent for full-length evening wear.

Within the last few days both Messrs. I. & R. Morley Ltd. and Messrs. Ballito Hosiery Mills Ltd. have announced that they are now including ranges in Helanca Yarn. The first of these two Houses is one of the major concerns in this Country producing ladies' and men's underwear, stockings and socks; the second concentrates on the production of hosiery. Crimp or stretch nylon garments are already fairly extensively available — particularly for men's socks — but it is very satisfying to find many of the better known brands associating themselves with Helanca Yarn. I was particularly interested to find that Messrs. I. & R. Morley are producing a range of ladies'

slips and half-slips made from Swiss embroidered cotton and nylon; the slips are especially well tailored and certainly most attractive.

What must be one of the most unusual "Shuttle Services" — now operating in textiles — between Switzerland and England is that carried on by Messrs. Werner and Edgar Ltd., who produce some of the better blouses in this Country, and Messrs. Jacob Rohner of Rebstein who embroider the material sent over to them by the English Firm. I very much liked the results that I saw of this new "Entente Cordiale".

A little story is now going round the dress trade in London which, although it cannot be translated literally, may still retain some of its humour for you. Much comment has been made in the British Press about the large number of cars bearing C. D. plates (Corps diplomatique) and recently when a large Bentley car pulled up in the heart of dressland in London, a friend of the owner noticed the plates C. D. and G. B. He greeted his friend and asked why he was carrying these plates. "Quite simple" was the reply "C. D. — Coats and Dresses, G. B. — Gowns and Blouses".

RUTH FONTEYN

I. & R. Morley Ltd., London

Model wearing embroidered cotton slip and holding embroidered nylon half-slip. Embroidery by:

Mannequin portant un jupon combinaison de coton brodé et présentant un jupon de nylon brodé. Broderie de:

Jacob Rohner S.A., Rebstein

(London Agents: Styles, Son & Chanter Ltd.)

Photo Dennis Smith Hug Whites Studios Ltd.

