

# London letter

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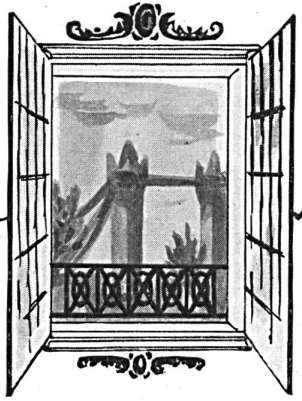
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## London Letter

August has long been regarded in the British Isles as the „Silly Season“, the newspapers filling their pages with accounts of the Loch Ness Monster or, more recently, with tales of flying saucers and other visitants from outer space. This year, the vagaries of the weather provided reporters with most of their copy, but they did however find time to squeeze in a description of the latest fashion fad — yes, believe it or not — for paper dresses and gowns priced at approximately £1 a time, and intended to be screwed up after one wearing and thrown into the waste-paper basket! I must confess that I would feel most apprehensive venturing forth in one of these disposable creations for the first time. What an admirable opportunity however for our menfolk to show their gallantry by being the first to take the plunge and wear such clothes in public!

But now to more serious matters and a brief review of the past retail season where the chequered pattern of good and weak trading figures indicates the trends in public reaction. Of course, the much talked about credit squeeze has been showing its effect though in varying degrees in the different departments of stores; the Summer Sales have been over for some time and their results are, of course, confidential but from some of the information available it is obvious that they have not been entirely satisfactory. This, in my opinion, is not entirely due to tighter money but to some extent to the ridiculously early periods at which these sales are held, viz: mid-June to early July. I realise, of course, that the object is to clear stocks and close the books by the end of July but judging by the recent years it is just then that summer makes its appearance — if it comes at all! Small individual shops are, of course, compelled to follow the example of the large stores and hold their sales at the same period but one London Boutique, which has been attracting quite a fair amount of attention, carried on with its normal trading until mid-August, when it held a small but genuine sale. The result in this case has been a highly successful season with goods sold at their right prices and a logical timing for a summer sale.

The young may be tempted to buy early and to start wearing cottons in April, partly because one begins to hope for better weather and partly because the colours are livelier and brighter. The fact that the most successful departments in stores or shops this season have again been those specialising in separates with lively and interesting styles and colours is indicative but the older woman, who is also influenced by the gayer colours and styles that she sees abroad, is left indifferent by a large quantity of good and well-made garments but which lack inspiration or individuality. It is obvious that where more imaginative styling can be found, the public is ready to buy but where the policy of „buying safe“ still persists, sales are lagging behind. I am quite sure we have now reached the stage where average woman is ahead of the trade; she wants to

METTLER & CIE S. A.,  
SAINT-GALL  
Woven Jacquards.





**RUDOLF BRAUCHBAR & CIE,  
ZURICH**

Gold and black lamé.

*Model by Frederick Starke Ltd., London*

Photo Zanton

be tempted to buy more exciting styles but the very real pleasure of buying and its stimulation is too often ignored, forgotten or overlooked by both manufacturers and buyers. Those who have been content to produce and sell „bread and butter” lines over the past few years are experiencing difficulty in selling their goods and unless they see the warning light, will finish on the scrap heap. Perhaps this seems to be rather unkind but the fact remains that clothes mean much to most women and although this is so widely acknowledged it has become an almost tedious platitude and an international source of male humour. Nevertheless, the basic truth remains that (ever since the first fur was worn) clothes are an adventure

for women and their one great opportunity for self-expression.

Manufacturers and buyers should be constantly sensitive to this, the first should be more alert and daring and the second should have greater opportunity for using their own individual judgment based on experience; after all the successful buyer is one who knows how to empty her rails quickly and not keep them cluttered up indefinitely and so tie up financial resources.

This is not a time of year when one can find much in the way of Swiss textile goods in stores and shops since the autumn deliveries have not yet been effected but I did

have the opportunity a few days ago of seeing some of the new cotton fabrics (Mettler) for next spring. I openly confess that I was spellbound; never have I seen such exquisite effects, colours and designs in cotton — whether printed or woven. If the prices of some patterns are rather high for extensive sales in the British market, they are more than compensated for by the sense of fashion adventure and stimulation which they will unquestionably give to some fortunate wearers. Some of the designs which gave me the greatest pleasure were woven Jacquards with floral or geometrical motifs; combed cottons with a satin finish appearance and gay, crisp designs — some in half linen — so fascinating and becoming for teenagers.

In the footwear trade, Bally shoes, of course, maintain their foremost position and for the autumn they are introducing two ranges new to this country — „Haute Couture” and „Avant-Garde”. The fashion interest is centred on the heels which are slender and elegant, often decorated with jewels or gilded metal. On the whole the designs have slightly higher sizes, which add importance to the slender toeline featured in the various styles from cocktail to sportswear ranges. As may be expected black continues to be the most important colour and it is consequently followed by the darker tones of brown, red and blue.

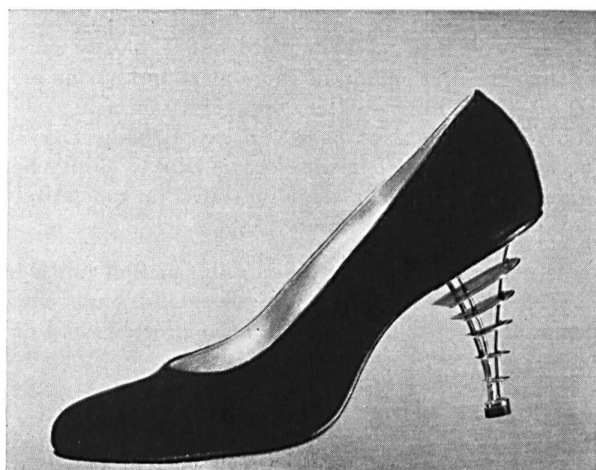
From shoes there is but a short distance to stockings where stretch nylons continue to hold the greatest interest. Helanca yarn is now being used quite extensively by a number of the major manufacturers, particularly for service weight stockings (30 denier). It is also being used in increasing quantities for underwear, men's socks etc.; in this connection it has just been announced that the British Olympic Men's Team at Melbourne is to be provided with white and grey Helanca socks.

*Ruth Fonteyn*

**BALLY CHAUSSURES S. A.,  
SCHOENENWERD**  
(modèle déposé)

Black suede pump with gilded heel,  
lined with gold leaf kid.

Photo Wallace Heaton Ltd.



**BALLY CHAUSSURES S. A.,  
SCHOENENWERD**  
(modèle déposé)

White satin mule with gold kid buckle

Photo Wallace Heaton Ltd.

**BALLY CHAUSSURES S. A.,  
SCHOENENWERD**  
(modèle déposé)

Suede and grograin court shoe with  
elasticised sides.

Photo The London News Agency Photos Ltd.

