

# Letter from London

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## LETTER FROM LONDON



London

This has so far been one of England's rare fine summers and the pale, flimsy dresses which, because there is so little opportunity to wear them, are the joy of every Englishwoman's heart, have been often seen and much admired. At the Royal Garden Parties, women have worn romantic dresses, tiered and fullskirted, of figured voile or organdie in pastel shades, with big brimmed straw hats and — the special favourite of the debutantes — tiny cloche hats trimmed with daisies, clover and other naive flowers. There is no doubt that muslin is the most popular fabric here; though it must be admitted that on most of our social occasions, too often held under leaden skies, neat suits or dresses of tie silk and taffeta, worn with close-fitting hats, look more appropriate.

Although the pre-war court balls have not yet been restored, this has been the most colourful season since the war. The guards are once more in full panoply of scarlet, brass and bearskin; Ascot and Henley have been particularly gay; and the enthusiasms of the young and charming Princess Margaret, both at these functions and at evening parties, have added an excitement we have not known since the time of the Prince of Wales. Princess Margaret is particularly interested in fashion, she loves light summer frocks worn with a white hat, bag and high heeled shoes; and for the evening she chooses fairytale dresses of tulle and chiffon, in pastel shades and sparkling with jewels.

In the shops materials sold by the yard have been more enticing and more varied than at any time since the war. We have hesitated before bolts of delicate white voile patterned in coloured knots and posies of flowers, or striped in delightful colours, and lingered long to admire broderie anglaise in melting shades of peach and sky blue, or innocent organdies embroidered with flowers. All these delicate fabrics, the specialities of Switzerland, have been the success of the season.

It has been a great year for cotton. We have seen it used for light, filmy

dresses as well as for nightgowns and delightful negligees. Simply cotton frocks, with shirt-front tops and full skirts have also been much worn, even in the streets of London; and at garden parties we have noticed several women wearing cottons and chambrays. There are always a number of elegant women at summer race-meetings; but none looked better than those who had chosen frocks or dressmaker suits in silk or cotton, dove-coloured or grey patterned in white. Other fabrics which are very popular this season are linen (in London black linen has been a great favourite, but elsewhere one sees linen in delicate pinks, lemon yellow or pastel blue), heavy shantung for suits, seersucker for simple dresses, or gabardine for slightly heavier coats and suits. For travelling, or for cool days in Town, gabardine is the ideal fabric, and still the height of chic.

Ready-made clothes in the big stores and in the fashion houses are often made of Swiss fabrics. Shop windows have blossomed forth with blouses; either of broderie anglaise, pale coloured organdie, or batiste trimmed with lace. We have seen some delightful dresses too; one of white silk organza with the neck, waist, and tiers of the skirt bordered with guipure. Another attractive cocktail dress, worn by the Duchess of Rutland, was made of navy blue and white organza with a floppy bow at the neck. Short evening dresses are coming back into fashion; Angèle Delanghe has designed a lovely one with an uneven hemline about fourteen inches from the ground, in blue and white organdie edged with white braid.

Children too, are being favoured with delightful things from Switzerland. In one shop, famous for its muslins and laces, we noticed a beautiful baby's cot which was a froth of apricot spotted muslin trimmed with blue ribbon. The same shop showed some enchanting dresses for children; one of blue and white sea island cotton with eyelet embroidery on the neck, bodice and sleeves, and another for a tot of three in broderie anglaise with three layers of organdie frills, worn

over a slip of peach coloured satin. One little girl's dress was made of white organdie spotted with red and adorned with lace insertions and red ribbons.

Ribbon is another delight which we are very pleased to see again in the luxury-starved shops of London. We have lately been admiring a fine selection of tartan ribbon, striped and spotted ribbon, plain watered ribbon in pastel colours and bordered with satin, all of which most certainly must have come from Basle.

The Swiss in London are delighted with the new premises of their *Schweizerbund*. This club, founded in 1879, was bombed in the war and entirely rebuilt from the voluntary contributions of the members. The new building was opened recently by the Swiss Minister.

Ann Duveen.



Frederick Starke's  
dress of Swiss ecru broderie anglaise.