

London letter

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LONDON LETTER

London

In London, as in other centres of fashion, the winter collections revealed no revolutionary line; new trends are confined to details, and to fabrics.

Most important in the new silhouette are the great collar and the double skirt. There are rolled shawl collars, deep cape collars; or conversely, stiff collars turned up to the ears. Almost always the collar is the main feature of the coat: and the hats, of necessity, remain small and tight — fitting. Some of these coats are fitted, but the majority are loose: not nearly as overwhelming as the great tent-shape of two seasons ago, but flowing and loose enough to go easily over a suit made of heavy silk or even of smooth black facecloth, this loose day — length coat can go on in the evening, too, and solves the problem of what to wear over the new short dinner dresses.

Skirts are narrower than they were, but seldom simple. The sheathlike line is softened with tiers, with back or side drapery, or with the panels of a detachable overskirt. There is a great fashion this winter for detachable overskirts: you see them on day dresses, on cocktail or evening dresses. One example is Spectator Sport's evening dress; a sheath of black Swiss satin with a clover pattern, the skirt covered with black tulle, to which is added a longer skirt of black tulle attached to the broad black satin belt.

Englishwomen have begun to adopt the short decolleté evening dress, with its own close-fitting jacket to wear over it at a theatre or a cocktail party: but for big dances there are still a great many beautiful, full-length ball gowns.

The new trend in fabrics is for the raised surface: hairy tweeds and rustic woollens with slubbed or knobly weaves; and in silks, brocaded patterns, raised spots, cloqués and façonné velvets.

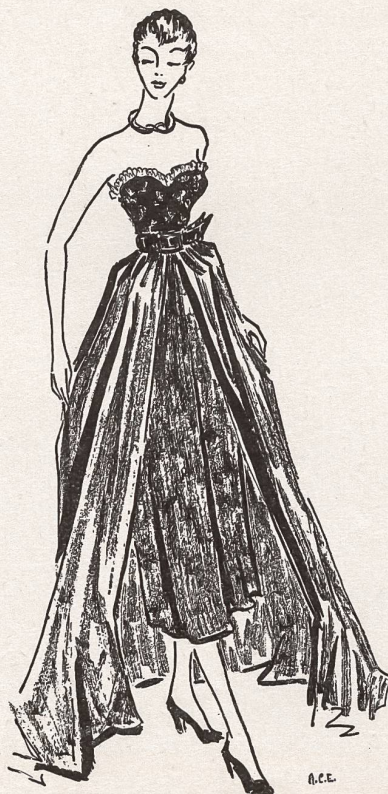
Colours are still muted on the whole, though there is some vivid red and a good deal of tartan. One sees black, brown, green, and toffee-colour: brown with black is very smart, so is black with midnight blue. And there is contrast in fabrics as well as in colour — velvet with wool is particularly popular. Pleating is in high favour at the moment. Roecliffe and Chapman, who made the evening dress of Swiss plissé satin, for Miss Venessa Lee (the new star of Ivor Novello's successful musical play « King's Rhapsody ») use pleating a great deal. Roecliffe and Chapman are always enthusiastic about Swiss fabrics and use some, both organdie and silk, in every collection.

Dorville is another of the designers for the wholesale market using Swiss material this winter. Their new, loose

hip-length sweaters, of which one with diagonal stripes, is reproduced here, are made of Swiss fabrics.

Indeed, in spite of troublesome restrictions, English buyers do find that they are able to get quite a reasonable amount of the Swiss fabrics they love — muslins from Saint-Gall, soft woollens, and rich Zurich silks — in the clothes of the English designers. Swiss woollens were seen here recently to particular advantage when a dozen countries sent the pick of their wool fabrics to an international fashion display in London. Switzerland's outstanding contributions were reversible material for topcoats, and tropical suiting; and the models were worn by pretty Sylvia Stussi, a young Swiss girl who was doing her first job as a mannequin in order to show off the fine fabrics made by her father.

Ann Duveen.



Spectators Sports, Londres.
Evening dress of swiss satin and tulle.



Roecliffe & Chapman, Londres.
Evening dress of swiss plissé satin.