

London letter

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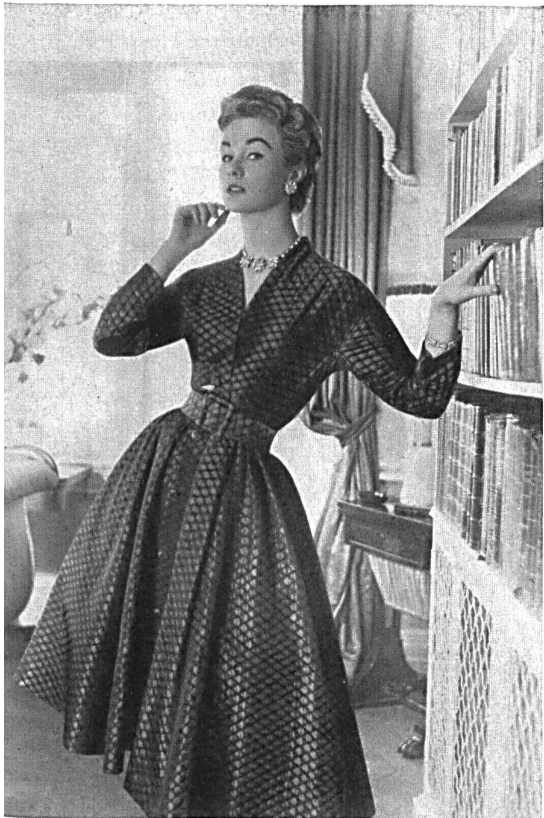
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London Letter



REMBRANDT
Black-shot-bronze
cocktail dress
in Matelassé—
charming new
Swiss material
from
*Heer & Co. Ltd.,
Thalwil*

Photo Promotion
features



SUSAN SMALL
Gold Duchess
gaufre
embossed satin
from
*Haas & Co.,
Zurich*

The big news in fabrics is velvet. An avalanche of velvet everywhere: for evening wraps, afternoon suits, daytime coats; for hats, blouses, cocktail dresses, ball dresses; for trimmings — collars, cuffs, pocket facings, linings. There is lots of black velvet; much coloured velvet, too. Embossed velvet, velvet appliqué with white grosgrain spots; street velvet, uncut velvet; and, at Sherard, a new straw velvet in a lovely spindleberry pink. Another sensation in fabrics for day is Donegal tweed, used more than ever before for greatcoats and suits, sometimes trimmed with velvet or fur. For evening and cocktail dresses there is a good deal of lace, tissue-paper taffeta, jersey. There is rich brocade, silk-satin, lamé, and satin-striped organza. Some suits are worn with blouses of velvet, lamé, organdie or fine lace.

On the whole we saw fewer Swiss fabrics in these collections, although Mattli has a black velvet dress (showing his favourite draped hipline) trimmed with Swiss guipure and a Swiss organdi blouse, and Rahvis is showing a long dress of white broderie Anglaise with black sash and shoulder straps and embroidered with yellow daisies. In the shops, however, there is still a heartening display of Swiss materials. A fine selection of twill silk, serge silk, duchesse satin, ottoman and faille has been imported into the country by Schwarzenbach and others; as well as taffetas in a remarkable range — tartan, façonné, chiffon, some in wonderfully original patterns. We have seen Swiss dupions, côtelés, lamés, damas for wedding-dresses, grosgrains, and uncrushable georgette in orchidaceous colours. Marshall & Snelgrove have a very fine range of these silks.

Some of the wholesale designers have been very successful with these Swiss silks. Rembrandt has a cocktail dress in grey-green matelassé glacé, others in fine grosgrain, and a Pierre Balmain model, made up from the French toile, in black guipure. Susan Small used Swiss satin, black embossed with gold, for a velvet colored coat-dress; and black silk organza striped with gold for an ankle-length ball dress.

Other things we have admired in the London stores have been charming and unusual blouses from Switzerland — Marshall & Snelgrove, again, had these, the most interesting in grosgrain printed with a flock effect; and Fortnum & Mason were showing pure silk blouses embroidered with guipure and eyelet embroidery.

There is a considerable vogue for sports clothes and knitted things from Switzerland. Functional sports shirts in striped cotton Helveticot are flanked in shop windows by woven swim-suits; Harrods have had babies' bonnets, knitted and embroidered with flowers and other motifs; and at both Harrods and Marshalls, Hanro knitted suits and dresses have been enjoying a succès fou. Their fine warm texture, cosy without being heavy, is perfectly adapted to our uncertain summer climate. Another winner was a heavy woollen jacket produced by Victor Tanner, beautifully cut, long and substantial, with big patch pockets in contrasted knit pattern.

Bally shoes are at least as well-known, and well-liked, here as any of the native makes, and we see them everywhere. Tie-shoes go well; and high-fronted shoes are newest favourites — there is a great demand for steeply rising vamps with dipped sides. Ready for the autumn rains — elegant suède booties — high-built shoes, just to the ankle, tying in front. Some are lined with fleecy wool for winter weather. For afternoon, Bally have designed open sandals with assymetrical straps; and a backless house-shoe of gold-bordered black satin with sabot strapping.

Ann Duveen.