

Daring "Sheath" Gowns That Startled Fashionable Paris Shown for the First Time in America



There is a momentary passage to black

Even tailored skirts are skimpy

Hats continue large and are adorned with many plumes

Long of skirt is the tailored gown



To-day's fashion demands "no petticoats"



The Small Box of Tulle is one of the prettiest of the season's fashions



Quite conservative in cut and fit

Great Fashion Show at Longchamps Races, Reproduced on These Pages, Forecasts the Coming Styles in Women's Dress

Special Correspondence of The Journal. PARIS, May 23.

THE only interest of the moment is the sheath gown. From an historical standpoint these startling innovations in feminine apparel are just due. Fashion runs in cycles, and about every third generation sees a rejuvenation of an old style. But, for all that, the time of the French Revolution was the last period when skimpy gowns of classic cut were worn. Still later, under the Directory, another classic style was decreed, called the "Greco-Roman gown," but it was too much a mixture of styles to be either attractive or becoming, so it was soon discarded. Furthermore, in those days they had not a wide choice of materials, while now there is nothing to hamper the most vagrant fancy, and the advent of a new era in dress is inevitable.

As long ago as last January the fashion creators decreed "no petticoats," but winter weather postponed the obedience of even the most enthusiastic. However, spring at last has come to their assistance, and the race meeting at famous Longchamps brought forth the latest and skimpiest fashion in all its entirety. By the time of the Grand Prix every true Parisienne will be the proud possessor of a silhouette costume, and then the fashion will be confirmed. Silhouette, by the way, merely means tight and clinging, so all the present fashions come under that classification.

Longchamps is, after all, only a sort of trial fashion show. It remains for the later races to prove what has been accepted and what has been rejected.

The sheath gown is a combination of both the empire and the princess styles, with a little of the ancient Grecian thrown in for good luck. It must be made of soft and supple material, wound and draped round the figure, with one end fastened just below the shoulder blade in the back. It is always worn with transparent guimpe and sleeves, and it cannot be spoiled by petticoats. On this foundation of three characteristics the sensational garments are built, though each may have some distinctive feature all its own. Here one beautiful costume of soft liberty satin has a skirt only one and one-half yards round, which is split to the knee, not only to allow the ensheathed lady to walk in a natural human manner, but to show just a glimpse of satin trousers and a silken stocking to match the gown, fastened below the knee with a golden garter. In the middle of the front, just below the knee on the wrong side of the dress, there is a ribbon strap, to which is fastened a heavy weight, so that no line of the figure may hide beneath an accidental fold. The gown is long both front and back, and it is finished in a half-long, pointed train, so that, when the wearer is standing, there will be one straight line of material reaching from shoulder to hem, giving height to the figure and detracting from the width of the hips, which commodity the present-day woman cannot afford to have, or to acknowledge, even though provided with them by an unkind fate.

The guimpe and sleeves of the gowns are well worthy of notice. They must be of chiffon or net, the yoke quite without a fold, but the sleeves are shirred, so that the selvage of the chiffon forms a ruffle all the back of the arm from shoulder to wrist. A woman of a really practical turn of mind might manage to make one satin frock do for all day and all evening. In the morning a lining under guimpe and sleeves; in the afternoon, the same unlined; in the evening, the guimpe removed entirely, leaving a very décolleté gown of the latest cut. What could be simpler?

The hats for these artistic costumes must, of course, be in keeping with the whole, so the always popular Gainsborough is the favorite. This permits of broad brim, high crown and many ostrich plumes, while, to give a little variety, a large aigrette may be added.

Scarfs and sashes must not be overlooked, for they form an important part of the costume of today. The former may be attached to either shoulder, or both, and may hang down back or front; it may also hang from the back of the neck to the end of the train, or it may be worn like a stole or like a choker. The technical names of the sashes at present are far too numerous to mention. It is enough to say that some are modeled after the one worn by Cleopatra; others resemble those of the gipsy on his native heath; while still others seem to be copied from the sole garment of heathen tribesmen. Just so there is some soft satin depending from a spot somewhere above the waist line, either at the side of the back or the front, it really does not matter what size, shape and style it may be.

Fringe has returned again, but this time it is used after the fashion of a Carmen. It is sewn to the edge of some soft Oriental crepe and allowed to fall as it will and wherever it may happen to be. Cameo pins are employed as decoration, and these are used at neck or waist line in back or front. Other jewels are taboo, save the heavy armlet worn with evening dress and the jeweled garter, not always visible.

Not only has Fashion decided that the cut and finish of gowns be changed, but she has also decreed that woman, to be fashionable, must learn to walk and stand. The only method of parambulation allowable is a sort of gliding motion, so that the light skirts will not become disarranged. Standing is an art only acquired by practice, for one must make a complete revolution so the train will wrap round the feet, giving the desirable Naimova line.

So much for the gowns of satin which encwrap and ensnare the figure, but



Ostrich is still in high favor



Synthesized in Soft Satin of Fine Make



Quantities of Small Flowers are woven into voluminous wreaths