

WHAT WELL DRESSED WOMEN WILL WEAR



December a Month of Peace in Styles to Average Woman. She Is Not Agitated by Conflicting Fashions.

By Anne Rittenhouse.
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THIS month is a most anxious one to those who depend upon the selling of women's apparel for their bread and butter—and cake, one adds in remembering the luxury commanded by the dressmakers. But to the average woman, the month is one of peace in fashions, for she is not torn by dissensions and new ideas and conflicting fashions.

She has well made up her mind just what she likes in the realm of costume, which, since September, has unfolded before her vision like a moving picture show. She has seen every style tried out to a greater measure than before, because the dressmakers brought home from Paris in September a jumble of styles, whatever their fancy chose from the wartime openings, and throwing them upon the public, found no recognized leadership.

Those who dispute and argue for and against the "American design" question, leave out of it the most important, because the controlling factor, which is that the fashions are not made by the designers. They are made by the women who wear the fashions. A designer may be as great as Paul Poiret, or Callot, or Cheruit, to choose those of opposing schools, and yet, without the guidance of a woman of power, these designs fall flat.

Paris recognizes this controlling factor in the launching of a style, but America has always had a tendency to put the power in the hands of the man or woman who desired the frock. Naturally, much credit goes to that source. The inspiration lies there. But the final success does not lie there. It rests absolutely with the woman or woman who exploit it before a curious and admiring public.

Now a Fashion Is Made.
The actress who wears a Callot frock in a new play is responsible for the fashion for that frock in Europe as well as in America later on, though America may be unaware of it. It is the celebrated woman of pleasure who starts the vogue for the hat that Suzanne Talbot created. It is the leader of smart Paris society who begins the popularity of the evening wrap created by Cheruit and copied in a dozen wholesale houses in lower New York.

Five Lavallieres gave the cachet to the slim boyishness of Poiret's brain children and Isadora Duncan showed how this Greek adaptation is suited to the large figure of many modern women. No designer no matter how great he or she is, is great enough to be independent of one or more women who are in the public eye. This fact is testified to by the importance attached to the appearance at events attended by society, or of the various mannequins who wear the designs created by some celebrated house. And it is well known that any house, possibly excepting that of Worth, has the right to the utmost to present their clothes on a celebrated personage rather than sell them to anyone who wants to buy.

They realize that in this manner, and in only this manner, a fashion is made. It is the fashionable woman in smart European society, who, getting their ideas from Paris, and coordinating them with the designers, and with the line from one frock, silhouette from another, a sleeve here and a sash there, arrive at an individual conception of a gown that immediately becomes the fashion.

By this season of the year the American dressmakers take up later in the season after they have spread broadcast the first, and untried, designs brought over from the August and September openings.

All the various styles shown at the Paris houses are shown in America because our buyers are not sure in their own minds just what the designers have in mind, but are quite sure that it is a question of so many women, so many minds, so they want to be ready to supply a vast variety of people with the kind of thing they may fancy.

If in this country there was any real hardship, such as there is in Europe, no matter through what system, then the autumn and spring would see a shifting down of these styles into one or more that ruled the rest. This is done later in the season, but it is done through the medium of the buyers who have kept in touch with Paris and therefore have found out what the leaders over there have chosen to exploit.

We have no concourse of people here to meet and forecast or settle the styles such as are culled out by the races in France, the Sporting club at Monte Carlo, the tennis at Cannes, the Casino at Deauville. We have gaiety aplenty and all the fashionable recreation that is good for a virtuous, healthy people, but we do not consider that fashions are launched in a serious manner there, unless a woman wears something that is the newest thing in Paris.

And even if she does this, there are not the designers, the dressmakers, the artists, the photographers to take notice, to exploit, to copy. New gowns are noticed only by people in society, who may not even go to the trouble of borrowing a single line or furbelrow, and where interest may end only in comment.

There is no leadership attempted. No one woman has worked over a new gown with her dressmaker and helped create a hat with her modiste, and who then appears in the costume conscious of the fact that she will be copied in every dressmaking house in the city the next day, and set a dozen designers to work imitating it.

The will is not lacking, for as long as women's interest in clothes continues just so long will she desire to wear something different from her neighbor; she may have the originality or persistence to do it, but the desire lies at the back of her brain all the time.

the uniform. Her badge of individuality lies in her ability to differentiate herself from those around her. Until this feeling has a strong foothold here, we will not be a nation of creators in dress.

The blame for our lack of originality is laid at many doorsteps, but much of it belongs by right to the American women, and not to the designers as often as the critics say.

It may be rightfully said that leadership would result in more uniform dressing, and that the sartorial game of follow the leader would end in our looking as though we all came out of an institution. The answer to this is that the presence of many leaders produces many well established styles, and certain things become the fashion

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A SMALL HAT WITH A VOLUMINOUS VEIL



The veil is enjoying more fashion than it has known for months. It can be worn in many ways and one way is shown in this sketch where it is draped over a tight-fitting little turban.

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A suit of biscuit colored cloth is shown in this sketch. It is embroidered with brown and has a brown girdle, with a white vest and a wide hem and trimming of fur. The hem of fur is an expedient adopted in many of the new models.

In a very few weeks, while other styles quickly take their place, must lie in the choice of a vast variety of clothes, and this is probably what America has. Climate, social opportunities, money, necessity, are governing factors in the diversity of styles adopted by American women and shown to them by the shops. Possibly, this condition is better than the other where, in only a few settled fashions, are adopted out of the hundred offered; the reason we succeed in looking as much alike as we do is that there are so many of us that there are not enough styles to go around.

Fashions We Have Adopted.
By this season of the year the styles have been so weeded out that we go about with our minds well made up as to what we should avoid and what we should adopt. We are in an excellent state to be in. We spend money much more freely. We are not apt to be bitterly disappointed. We have seen the gown we wanted in the beginning turn out to be commonplace, and the gown we hated turn out to be charming.

We are exceedingly glad we were not lured into the fashion for the long coat, or persuaded into buying a short coat, or buying a pleated skirt, or selecting one with a panel tunic. Each and all of these styles may be good, but we know now that we would have looked our worst in them.

December brings wisdom, but there are many who have not been made happier by it when it came, for its appearance was too late to do us any good.

What a pity it is that fashions do not continue for at least 12 months in order for us to rectify our first bad bargain! As it is, so eager for new things are the people who buy and sell clothes that no sooner have we paid our cheque for one gown than it is time to consider the question all over again, and bring whatever little experience the season has taught us to bear on the ever renewing problem before us.

It is this merry-go-round in the world of costume that perplexes us, for only the most opinionated person can go from one sartorial season to another with a sure touch. Most of us fumble in the dark as soon as the winter clothes are ushering in those of early spring.

We know that the short skirt is the most fashionable to wear, and that the flaring long coat with its almost imperceptible belt well below the normal waist line and its long, close sleeves, is correct. We have adopted the satin blouse, close fitting, with high wrinkled collar of satin instead of chiffon; we have partly given up the kimono, and agreed that all our garments should fasten up the front.

In hats we have adopted the one with a brim, the black and the dark blue velvet, the scarcity of trimming, the use of the burnt ostrich, the angle of tilting the brim over the right eye and showing more of the back hair than we have done for years; and in coiffures we have become accustomed to the absence of any projection whatever at sides, back or top, unless in the evening we put an open Psyche over the brow.

If shoes we have been looking with a friendly glance on those which Paris borrowed from the Argentine with its tango, and which it has never unduly been able to force on America. We wear colored uppers, as the English do, and change them with short vamped, patent leather, laced shoes, with white kid uppers, and now we are swinging us to high gaiters that keep the leg covered under the short skirt which rules the season.

We have broken our faith with the broad shoulders, always vaunted as Anglo-Saxon, and given our allegiance to the narrow shoulders known as French, and omitted the fullness at the waist line, no matter what the garment. We have dropped the exaggerated empire waist line and are listening to the siren call of 1840 and 1870 luring us from the Russian ballet costumes.

We are unshamed of our large waists, and yet we try to make our feet look smaller by the use of the highest heels that have been worn since Louis XIV's day. As opposed to this practice on the streets, we are adopting the almost flat heeled slipper for evening wear.

In adopting any of these particulars of dress you can feel sure that you are right, and wear them contentedly until the Christmas season is over, but after New Year, what?

The buyers have already gone to Paris to look around, and from their verdict it is probable that the designers will go on with their February openings as usual. If they do, then we are in for a new series of styles, and there is little doubt that they will be military.



A yellow satin frock with a blue velvet sash and a pink rose to add variety to the color scheme.

coming fashions which warrant our attention.

In evening gowns there is a tendency to opaque fabrics and the pendulum swings away from the oriental in coloring and in transparency. Women who are ahead of the fashions of the masses do not look as undressed as they have for three years. You may not have noticed the change, but it is very apparent to an onlooker who studies the game. It would not be surprising if the serious months which the world is going through will result in a far more sober style of costumery. An interesting fact if it happens, don't you think?

When Praise Is Becoming.
But the business man who comes home at night and tells his wife of a coup of his that day, should be praised for his cleverness.

He is as hungry for that praise as the little boy of the family who has been the school bully, even though he emerged from the conflict with a discolored eye, or the little girl who has made her first doll dress, testifying little forefinger. For the business world is a place of many hurts

TAKE YOUR PRAISE FROM COLD STORAGE

Truckling Is One Thing—Honest Praise Is Another and Worth While.

By Ada Patterson.

She is a successful hair dresser. She is wise. That is the reason she is successful. She came in to her neat and popular little shop, breathless from hurrying, and ordered her assistant to get the brushes and tonic ready while she towed off her hat. She had respect for, and is economical of, the time of others. Another reason she is successful. It is well to glean the rules and methods of others, by the way.

"I've just come from a dear little woman whose hair I dress every morning," she said. "She is 74 and lives alone. She was wearing a pretty little boudoir cap trimmed with old rose ribbons. I told her how pretty the rose ribbons looked against her white hair and asked her to notice the glow they gave her cheeks. She is a strange silent little woman, but I saw she was pleased at the compliment. They never get too old for that."

Worth of Success Praise.
While the hair dresser brushed my hair with long strokes, burnishing it by the magic of her skill, I thought as I have often thought, how great is her practical wisdom. At least half the art of getting on consists in treating persons well. I was about to say "handing people," but there are those who would object to the phrase. It has too much of the savor of hypocrisy in it. Truckling, cringing and Urah Heeping are one thing, but sincere praise is another, a very different other.

Don't keep your supply of praise in cold storage. If you didn't take it out with your furs for the winter, get it out at once and give it plenty of exercise for the rest of the season. The winter will be far pleasanter for you and you will make it pleasanter for others. Unwillingness to praise is generally due to two traits, the fear of being classed with flatterers, and a mental laziness that makes us put off the compliment to another day, a day that somehow never comes. I will not insult any reader of this by charging him or her with the meanest motive for withholding praise, which is envy. More persons withhold praise through carelessness than through unkindness, through shyness than through selfishness.

The words of praise that can be

truthfully spoken should never be withheld. On the streets of the South American cities this rule is so zealously followed that men as they pass beautiful maidens or matrons on the streets inform them of their admiration. The custom would not be a safe one in North American communities. We would better place that dangerous custom among the exceptions, to be avoided.

and bruises. Some men have felt those hurts and bruises so deeply, that they have been killed by them. So when the man tells you what he has done down town today he isn't bragging. He is setting up the milestones of his life to make some unusual effort and he will be humbly grateful to you for a bit of praise.

The woman of the comb and brush, the tonic and the word of honest praise, uttered wisdom. "They never get too old to like a word of praise."

She might have added that they are never too young. The pudgiest, newest baby soon understands that a smile is praise and reflects it in his

Brown and blue are often combined in the new models. In the one sketched here there is a brown skirt and over that is worn a blue velvet jacket.

toothless way. The child at school works better for it. The woman in her home, the man in his shop or office, he who is at the splendid summit of life, they who are slowly slipping down into the shadows need it. It is a need of the soul as great as the body's craving for food or the heart's famine for affection. Variety is a trivial trait. Love of approbation is a strong and useful one. Be as lavish with it as the earth is with food and nature with sunshine.

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