

NEW YORK FASHION LETTER

New York, June 11.—The athletic girl is more than ever the queen of the season and due consideration must be paid to her wants in regard to appropriate costume. The girl of the day is more or less addicted to golfing, lawn tennis, boating and other outdoor sports and is cultivating a taste for park promenades and cross-country walks. For each of these healthful diversions she must be properly clothed and in the case of a woman properly means not so much in conformity with the practical requirements than handsomely and effectively. The growing tendency in favor of outdoor sports and exercise has done more than anything else to develop the possibilities of walking skirts and suits. There was a time when walking skirts were worn by business women only and even by them only for practical reasons and when it was absolutely necessary. The walking skirt at that time served only a practical purpose and there seemed to be no demand for softening the severity of the stiff and simple lines. All that has changed. The value of the walking skirt has been more generally recognized, its practical advantages are more thoroughly understood and at the same time the women are beginning to appreciate the fact that the walking skirt may be made dressy, handsome, attractive and even luxurious, without the necessity of curtailing any of the essential features which make that kind of skirt so eminently practical for walking and outdoor sports.

Walking skirts no longer offend the artistic taste by the ultra plainness and severity of their lines, no longer do they confine themselves to the fulfillment of a practical duty. In accordance with the general drift of fashion toward a greater elaboration and ornamentation the walking skirt has developed into a garment as useful as ornamental. At the present day there is scarcely a material used for any other kind of dress that is not also used, at least to some extent, for walking skirts.

There was a time when only the darkest colors or black were considered appropriate for walking suits. That limitation no longer holds good. Even white will be worn for walking suits this season, especially in serge and mohair. The Eton model will be the favorite either the tight-fitting

or the loose style. White braids, either plain or with a touch of gold in them will be used for trimming, and in some cases a velvet collar and cuffs of colored material will be added to give a touch of brilliancy.

For more serviceable wear medium or dark colors, either plain or in checks or stripes will be used extensively. Particularly small checks will be in great demand, in light and delicate materials of the thinnest substance, as well as in heavier tailor's woolsens. Then there will be soft cheviots, chiffon cloths, steiffennes, and various silks and cloths. Madras and linen, not to forget batiste and kindred materials, will also be extremely popular.

The fact that short walking skirts will be worn a great deal will not be without influence upon the styles of footwear. That is perfectly natural. If the skirts are short and a display of the shoes cannot well be avoided, care must be taken to make the footwear as attractive and neat as possible. It would never do to wear a pair of unsightly shoes or slippers with a pretty walking suit. It would completely spoil the general effect. Patent leather shoes, with the upper part of material corresponding in color, or, if not in texture with the material of which the suit is made, will be extremely fashionable. The style will, undoubtedly be quite becoming to many women and add considerably to the smartness of the general effect, but not every woman will find it advisable to follow that fashion. Shoes of white or light-colored material may be very becoming to women with small and well-shaped feet, but women who are compelled to wear shoes larger than No. 3 should not try the experiment of wearing light-colored shoes. Their feet will look twice as big as they would in black shoes. The shoes to be worn with walking suits should be of a substantial character and equipped with stout and serviceable soles. Slippers do not go well with such suits.

Among the many new or semi-new materials for summer wear that have come out this year and are shown in the shops are some fine weaves of grass linen, which are remarkably silk-like and lustrous. They wash well, stand considerable wear and will undoubtedly be quite popular. The material is not very expensive

and can be made up in a variety of styles most becoming and attractive. Another new and very handsome material is Silk Egyptian gauze, in spite of its name a genuine American product. Trimmed with Oriental lace and hand embroidery and edged with a beading run through with black liberty satin over a ground of cream taffeta, one of those gauze dresses made of straw-colored material, attracted considerable attention by its charming and harmonious effect.

Black gowns will not be worn much this summer. For young or middle-aged women, dresses of very thin black material are quite becoming, especially if white lace is used for the yoke and the sleeve puffs. Persian embroidery and black velvet applique also look well with such material. The dress should be made quite full and over black lining. There is nothing more unbecoming and vulgar than one of those diaphanous dresses in black over a white or light colored foundation.

If anyone doubts that the wave of extravagance which characterizes women's fashions this season extends beyond the gowns, waists, jackets hats and other outside garments and has actually reached the mysterious regions of the invisible part of a woman's outfit, let him go to one of the fashionable shops and gaze in admiration at the display of petticoats. Some of these garments are more elaborate and more extravagantly trimmed with all kinds of costly materials than a great many gowns and their cost runs into the hundreds of dollars. There is scarcely any rich and beautiful material used for dress wear that is not also used for petticoats. Velvets and jeweled passementeries are probably the only exceptions. There are petticoats of silk and satin, of brocades, India linens, silk muslins, the most delicate batiste, the thinnest lawns and trimmed with all kinds of laces and the most exquisite needlework. Of course, not all petticoats are so extravagantly elaborate or of such costly materials, but it may be said that even the plainer lingerie petticoats of the present season are far more elaborate than ever before. Embroideries and lace insertions or trimmings are used to a great extent. The excuse given for this remarkable extravagance is that the shortness of the outer skirts now in vogue makes it necessary to pay more attention to the appearance of the petticoats and compels the women to trim and ornament them more lavishly than ever before.

In most cases the upper part of the petticoats, between the waist and the knees, is rather plain and simple. The petticoats must fit snugly down to the knees and, for that reason, must not be encumbered with trimmings that might destroy the tightness of the fit. The lower part, consisting of flaring flounces, makes up for the simplicity of the upper part. There the wearer's fancy and extravagance may run riot. Some of the petticoats are so arranged that the lower part is attached to the upper part by means of hooks or buttons and can be taken off and exchanged for another lower part.

It is quite remarkable that the war in the Far East has not influenced fashion this year more than it has. Whether it is lack of interest in the war, because this country is not directly interested in the fight, or some other reason, it would be difficult to decide, but the fact remains that while in former years every war caused a perfect wave of military styles to sweep through the realm of feminine fashions, the present war has scarcely caused a ripple. It is true, a mild interest in military styles of coats and dress trimmings has been revived, but that is about all, excepting perhaps two novelties in hats, that may be attributed to the war. There are two new styles in rough straws, called gunboats and torpedo. However, these hats, notwithstanding their warlike names, scarcely suggest any military style and are not even original enough to be odd. The handsomest of these hats have trimmings of narrow velvet and steel buckles. Some of them are decorated with a tulle and ribbons and are decorated with a paradise plume in front or on the left side.

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