

At the Sign of the Maple

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On Clothes—Why Should Paris Design Them For Us?

A FRIVOLOUS subject for war-time? That depends upon whether you bracket food and clothing or whether you lie awake at night planning costumes that will outclass those of your neighbours. Even in war-time we want our food good and well-cooked and temptingly served, and we have the same standard for our clothes. But as in war-time; we think it advisable to cut down expenses in champagne and caviar, so we ought to economize in imported luxuries in the line of dress.

WHY should far-off Paris design clothes for us to wear? Why should French model gowns be eagerly sought after by Canadians? The fearful and wonderful costumes that decorate the pages of our newspapers and periodicals are not frequently seen in Paris—were not even before the war except in the most fashionable hotels and restaurants. Their wearers rode in closed limousines and lead a life of luxurious ease, but the costumes designed for the idle rich of Paris are bought by the busy well-to-do of Canada, who wear them any time and anywhere. A French model gown! By all means, let us show ourselves in it as much as possible! This in the face of the fact that Paris labels them "fashions for neutrals," and the former wearers of these wonderful creations have donned a costume quite different, though they are still well-dressed, with beautifully laundered linen caps and aprons, and well-fitting shoes. A really well-dressed woman is never anything else.

IN due time we shall probably adopt a more nearly uniform way of dressing, not necessarily aping the clothes worn by men, but adopting styles that are suited to our activities. Would a hospital nurse look half so attractive on duty if she wore a satin and velvet creation of a French modiste, or a girl on horseback appear to advantage in a flower-trimmed hat? Yet I have seen Canadian women driving motors in large velvet hats trimmed with ostrich feathers, playing golf in sheath skirts, and tobogganing in their best tailored suits!

FRENCH women have not won the reputation of being the best-dressed women in the world because of the amount of money they spend on their clothes, nor from their promptitude in adopting the prevailing mode. Far from it. The poorer class make no pretence of keeping up with the style, but their clothes are neat, their skirts hang right, their blouses do not lack a button, and there is never a safety-pin in evidence. The amount of pins and brooches worn by an American girl is a source of wonder and amusement to the French, whose costumes are always adequately supplied with fastenings, and the uncovered heads and well-groomed hair of the poorer women is far more becoming to them than the most fashionable millinery could possibly be.

PARIS is the home of the exquisite woman; New York is the stronghold of the stylish woman. The average New York girl thinks she might as well be out of the world as out of the fashion, and no matter how cheap and shoddy her clothes may be they are always of the latest cut. She carefully removes all individuality from her appearance and tries to resemble a fashion plate as nearly as possible. I am sorry to say that this applies to many young Canadians. There is something even worse than the stylish woman and that is the person whom we describe as "Dressy." When you meet a dressy woman you notice her clothes first—and often you don't notice anything else—they flaunt themselves in your face with their elaborate trimmings and laces and furbelows. But the woman who outclasses all others is she who has "a style of her own."

CLOTHES should develop the individuality of the wearer, not conceal it. Why should Fashion arbitrarily decree that short fat women should wear

the same styles as tall thin ones? Not for many years have styles been so elastic. Even in New York there is considerable latitude this year. Some of the newest suits have skirts just wide enough to walk in comfort, while others are as wide as possible. Hats are broad and flat, small and high, and boots—well, the high light-coloured ones are so conspicuous that we are inclined to think everyone is wearing them, but, after all, the vast majority of women have either too much sense or too little money to indulge in these eccentricities of fashion. When we are buying clothes that will last for several seasons it is well to have the skirts of a reasonable length and to avoid awning stripes and violent checks of which we soon tire.



Miss Grace Hyman, of London, Ont., from a drawing by herself. Miss Hyman, who has specialized as a poster artist, is now designing exclusive costumes for wealthy New York women.

In London, the wearer of too fashionable garments will hardly pass unchallenged. Some small boy is sure to chant:

"She's the army contractor's only daughter
Spending it now."

But the clothes we purchased before August, 1914, will not last forever. We must have new ones occasionally; then let us turn aside from the latest fads which the saleslady assures us that "everyone is wearing," and choose clothes that will harmonize with our face and figure so well that we may cheerfully wear them as long as they will hold together.

IN one of the most successful plays last winter the variance of the present styles was admirably illustrated for each of the four celebrated actresses that appeared in the all-star production of "The Great Pursuit" was dressed in the style that became her most. Piquant Jean Eagels wore skirts as short and full as possible with flat, broad-brimmed hats; statuesque Phyllis Neilson-Toner wore long, straight clinging gowns; dainty, plump, Marie Tempest wore

crinoline and high hats, and Cynthia Brooke appeared in handsome trailing gowns which suited her middle-aged figure. It was a lesson in the gentle art of choosing clothes for the style-worshippers who witnessed the performance.

SUDDEN and radical changes of style have popularized cheap and flimsy materials, for clothes of good material are never worn out, they become helplessly out of style. How long are we going to remain the slaves of fashion, and unprotestingly clothe ourselves in draperies according to decrees made in foreign lands? Few of us have sufficient talent to plan clothing for ourselves, but why not let Canadian experts design clothes for Canadians? Surely they know best the kind of clothes we want for the kind of lives we need? We are doing it—gradually. One of our largest stores has a staff of women designers and the profession will soon be adopted by many. But to achieve success two requirements are necessary. You must be first an artist, and, second, a dressmaker.

MISS GRACE HYMAN, of London, is an accomplished artist, who had the benefit of continental training, and was for some years a designer for "Harper's Bazar." She has shown great dexterity in making clothes, and her friends say that whenever she is invited to a particularly nice party she designs and makes a new gown the night before; also, they say, if you locked her in a room with nothing but a stove and a rag carpet she would emerge in a Parisian costume. Since the war she has combined her two talents, and is now designing clothes for other people. Simplicity is their keynote, and it is combined with elegance, for they are to be worn by the fastidious patrons of Wannamaker's, New York, and her designs are executed by expert French tailors and dressmakers.

NOT only in fashionable garments is Miss Hyman a success. She has also a taste for the bizarre, and has designed many posters where eccentricities of style are elaborated. A fancy dress ball gives her an opportunity to create wonderful effects, and two costumes worn at the recent Beaux Art Ball in New York, though sketchily executed a few hours previous to the ball itself, were amongst the most admired costumes on the floor.

ONE of the most charming national costumes is the Japanese kimono, and it is very distressing to see that so many Japanese men have adopted Western clothes. One reason for this they say is because they are less expensive. Now a dress reform is being discussed in Japan with a view to making the kimono more practical and more economical. Prizes have been offered for the best models of kimonos of all sorts—for men, women and children, and we hope they will be able to achieve the desired results without sacrificing the graceful lines and artistic embroideries of their dress.

War Work

VIEWED from the standard of a pageant the great procession of women in Toronto on Dominion Day was not everything to be desired, but there was a great spirit underlying the parade. It was not so much a glorification of what women have done for the country in war time as a suggestion of what they are able to accomplish. The sight of the marching women who have given their sons and husbands to their country, the floats that epitomized the ceaseless labour of many lands for the comfort of our soldiers, the women volunteers who have offered themselves for war work, and those who are busy making munitions, inspired many to consecrate themselves to the service of the nation. The procession was headed by a military band, and a flag guarded by girl guides, while other bands were in

(Concluded on page 18.)