

Mrs. Osborn's Letter

Grace and Beauty in the New Skirt—Creator of Fashions for Women of Fashion Indorses the Paquin Model.

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The Graceful Figure is Defined by the Clinging, Sheath-Like Skirt.

Do I like it? Has it come to stay? Will it have a tremendous vogue? Will it revolutionize the world of dress? Does it really possess possibilities? It is like a game of "Twenty Questions" is it not? And it is a game I have been playing ever since I returned from the other side bringing with me a number of models of the new Paquin skirt which have aroused a storm of comment, curiosity and questions.

It is a beautiful skirt, I think, though for a time I stood quite alone in that belief. A skirt that clings so closely to the figure that a strained dragged effect is only prevented by the soft folds over front and back introduced by the master hand of Paquin. It is these folds, suggestive of the lines of a habit skirt, that differentiate the Paquin model from the familiar sheath skirt of several years ago.

I have been so besieged with questions regarding it that it occurred to me that this letter gave me an excellent opportunity to gather my thoughts coherently together, and to give a formulated expression of them to all who are interested.

And that is a large number. For when a change of this kind comes to us—a change so startling, so radical, so diametrically opposed to everything that has gone before it, the natural psychological process is a gradation from amused interest, through reluctant admiration to final enthusiastic adoption.

I will tell you a little incident that occurred at the time of its debut in Paris. It was one night at Durand's. Half the English-speaking world of Paris goes to Durand's, and I was of that half that night. A woman swept across the floor to a table near the far end of the salon. There was no need to ask who she was, and only the innate good breeding of the women loitering over their suppers kept a score of lognettes from being raised in her direction. Madame Paquin at any time with her grace and beauty is an object of interest to Parisiennes, but Madame Paquin in a new Paquin creation holds an insatiable interest for the world at large. There was no question that night nor the next day—when all Paris was talking of the new Paquin skirt—of its vogue or its beauty. The only question every French woman was asking herself was, "Can I wear it?—Will it be possible to adapt it to me?"

When I returned from Paris full of enthusiasm for the new skirt—an enthusiasm inspired, I frankly confess, not so much by Paquin's belief in his own creation as by the concrete example of its effectiveness on the beautiful Mme. Paquin—my ardor was considerably dampened by the attitude of unenlightened and unappreciative America.

American women are too self-conscious. Now I have said something that has been on my mind for a long time. A Frenchwoman will spend hours on her toilette, and when she has finished, her dress is complete, perfect, a part of herself. She dismisses it from her mind, and is no more conscious of it than she is of the gestures of her beautiful white hands, or the inherited vivacity of the Gallic race that plays over her piquant face. But with us! "Are other people wearing it?" is the question that indicates a subservient attitude which would rather clothe itself in inconspicuous mediocrity than take the risk of being original.

And so when I presented the Paquin skirt there were no expressions of delight over the possibilities unlimited which it presented as a medium of individuality for every woman.

"Oh, how very odd!" was the universal comment, accompanied by a

half-concealed smile. "It really makes her look like a top!" and the smile would broaden into a ripple of sheer amused laughter, while my poor model strode from the room indignant at the ridicule.

And then the laughter would stop, and the scoffer be surprised into a half-unwilling admiration of the graceful, swaying figure, its beautiful contour outlined, defined, emphasized by the clinging, sheath-like skirt.

The very woman who will raise an objection to the Paquin skirt will go to a glorious struggle with the surf, accompanied by several men of her acquaintance; and emerge looking like nothing quite so much in the world as a beautiful, unconscious sea-nymph.

Is she immodest? Certainly not one American woman in a thousand—no, nor one in a hundred thousand, would call her so. Yet this same woman will sit down and think for a long time before she will commit herself to a gown that so much as suggests the gracious curved lines of her body. And her French sister, who will deplore with significant gestures of up-raised hands and shoulders the immodesty of mixed bathing, and will be decorously rolled to the edge of the water in her bath wagon, will adopt the new skirt with no comprehension of the qualms of the American.

Perhaps it is because I have lived so much abroad that I can see more easily and clearly from the French point of view than from the American. And then to me the possibilities of beauty in something new appeal most powerfully.

Yet in reality the Paquin skirt is not new, nor can we claim it as an exclusive invention of the twentieth century. More than 100 years ago the French recognized its possibilities and developed them into what have come down to us as the Directoire styles. Not of the skirt alone is this true, but of the coats that accompany it. Short-waisted affairs they are, with full cutaway skirts, overelaborate, fanciful if you will, but graceful and charming nevertheless.

It may take a little time before the American woman will give the Paquin skirt her generous, unqualified approval. But I am optimistic, and I firmly believe that year by year we grow in appreciation of the beautiful, in a broader conception of the true significance of lovely lines and colors, and that, given time, we eventually accept the best that is offered to us.

In reverting to this older type of dress I can frankly say I am glad of the change, not that I like change merely because it means novelty, but because I welcome it when it stands for esthetic development. And so I say very emphatically that I do like the Paquin skirt; that I hope, though I cannot prophesy, that it will have a long-lived vogue. Paquin has adopted it, and Paquin leads Paris as Paris leads the world. You and I follow, but not, I hope, like poor stupid sheep. Examine it for yourself, and if anything I can say helps you to view it more intelligently and more appreciatively, well and good. But if your taste and judgment reject it, my dear madame, remember that you have quite as good a right to your opinion as I have to mine. Indeed, I have an honest contempt for the woman who will adopt a fashion merely because it is fashionable and decried it as hideous, unsightly, impossible.

Louise Wilson Osborn

Velvet Medallions.

The making of the velvet medallion is a thing which a woman should understand if she is going to do her own dressmaking. The medallion is shaped like an oval or a circle, and is worked in colored silks, and is used as a skirt trimming. Half a dozen are placed around the skirt at regular intervals and connected with bands of velvet. No dressier trimming can be found for the suit of broadcloth.

For the Hostess

"Advice Shower" Is Latest Novelty Evolved for the Benefit of Bride-to-Be—Amusement for Children on Sundays

An Advice Shower.

Quite the newest thing for the bride-elect is the "advice" shower. Not that the fair young creature is supposed to profit by it, not in the least, for she, like the rest of us, must learn by hard, cold experience. Such an affair was given recently; it was a luncheon and the young woman was the guest of honor.

The hostess sent with the invitation slips of gray paper of a uniform size, with the request to write a bit of advice for the benefit of Miss B—. All the guests were married—young matrons of about a year—and all sure that they knew just the proper way of managing "John," "Jim," and "Sam" in exactly the very best way.

When all were at the table, which was done in pink chrysanthemums, with a great fluffy "mum" at each place, the guests were asked to read the quotations on their cards, which all savored of love and good wishes for the honored guest. Then, when the coffee was brought in, the hostess asked the guests to read in turn the advice which they had brought. These selections were exceedingly clever, and kept the party in gales of laughter. They were all given to the bride, after having been slipped into a dainty cover of tooled leather made for the purpose.

One bride of six months had written: "Never offer to mend your husband's clothes or press his trousers; if you do he will soon be asking you to make over his whole dress suit." Another one said: "Always play the part of the clinging vine, for it makes husband act the part of the sturdy oak." One matron, quick with her pen and wits, had written a set of "The Wife's Ten Commandments." The "shalt not's" were roundly applauded.

For Children on Sunday.

The following questions have been asked Madame Merri: What do you think about children having guests on Sunday, and what can you suggest to amuse little folks in the hour before supper?

It is not a bad idea to let the children ask a guest or two occasionally to share their Sunday pleasures and the pleasant tea afterward, but as a rule it is better to keep the day sacred to the family, for in most families it is generally the only day parents really have time to devote to their children. I heard a father say once that he did not know how he would ever get acquainted with his little boy and girl if the wise Lord had not provided Sunday.

Not Kimonos.

Giddy as those most intimate garments designed to electrify the privacy of a woman's own boudoir are the new evening coats. They look exactly like kimonos. A whole menagerie of gold dragons and purple lizards and green snakes crawl up the back and down the sleeves of these oriental wraps, which are made of silks and satins, in loose Chinese cuts, in black, buff, orange green, blue or white. A theater-going crowd so arrayed will bear the aspect of a fancy dress ball.

Half-Length Coats.

For the severe tailor-made suits the style for this fall which will be most frequently seen is a half-length coat, cut away sharply in front, and sometimes edged with a wide silk or mohair braid to match the cloth. The sleeves are full length, and a smart touch of color is seen at the collar, cuffs and buttons. The skirt will be short length and plaited, though the plain circular model also promises to be in vogue.

There are many valuable books which will greatly assist the mother in her entertainment for the seventh day, and I most firmly believe in making the day a looked-for occasion, and just as happy as possible. Then there is a game composed of a hundred cards, all the questions taken from the Bible. It is played exactly like authors. Pictures to be cut out and pasted into scrapbooks for poor sick children is another good occupation. Children are devoted to pastepots, paints and scissors, and if there is a hand to guide, and a dear mother to give directions, this amusement will fill a good share of the before-supper hour.

Little children always love Bible stories, with highly colored pictures, but a mother should exercise much care in the reading matter, for impressions made now will last forever. In fact, if the stories are told, not read, it is very much better. The inflexion of the voice and the personal interpretation is the most lasting in its impression on the eager little listeners.

The China Wedding.

After 20 years of married life the china wedding may be celebrated. About this time the average housewife welcomes any addition to her china closet, so there is no question about appropriate gifts for the occasion.

There is really not much decoration to be done except to eschew cut glass and silver as much as possible, using china in its place.

Doll cups or plates may be used for almond and bon-bon holders and, if the purse permits, a small cup and saucer or china spoon, such as may be found at the Japanese stores, may be given as souvenirs. The names of the guests can be written on little china plates to use as place cards if the affair is a dinner or a luncheon.

I heard of one couple who celebrated this anniversary by giving a Chinese party. The house was decorated with lanterns, they wore costumes made from gay Chinese cotton crepe, and rice was served with chop sticks. A regular Chinese supper was served, the viands having been purchased from a reliable chop suey place. This was a jolly, informal affair, hugely enjoyed by all fortunate enough to be present. Red and yellow, the favorite colors of the Chinese, were used in the decorations, and "joss" sticks were burned. These so-called joss sticks were only the long incense sticks with which we are wont to fight mosquitoes in the summer time.

MADAME MERRI.

Attractions in Collars.

Dainty turnover collars were never more popular. Although they are seen in all varieties, perhaps the most attractive are the hand made. The person who is handy with the needle may well exhibit her skill, for all sorts of designs in needlework are employed on these turnovers. Wallachian is still popular as is also the English eyelet. Either alone or in combination with the solid embroidery furnishes a multitude of designs. Collars designed in sage green, dull blue or golden brown cotton are worn with a tie corresponding in color. Many very elaborate collars can be made for the small sum of 35 cents, and often much less, and very becoming and attractive.

Shaped Belts.

There is a decided novelty in belts known as a shaped linen belt. They are made in linen and silk, and come in many oriental colors and shapes so as to fit the waist closely.

Simple Monograms



The girl and woman who wishes the touch of individuality given by her monogram can easily embroider both her underwear and household linen, if at all clever, with her needle.

By selecting the initial of the first name and simply combining that with the initial of the last it is not nearly so difficult to evolve one's monogram as is generally supposed and costs nothing but the time it takes. Then use soft filling cotton to trace the letters, using a little chain stitch to give a padded look, and the work with fine mercerized floss that comes for the purpose; the result more than pays for the small amount of time, trouble and cost, the latter only the few cents for the working cotton.

French hand-made underclothing is always attractive and expensive as well, because of this very fashion of fine embroidering. Any girl may have her own quite as dainty if she will. One's name in script is sometimes used; the writing should be heavier to make the embroidering natural.

Millinery Modes



MAUVE VELVET HAT

One rather extraordinary thing to be noted about the hats of this season is that the models were all originated last spring in the mushroom shape and, while by now there are some few departures from this idea, still the style of the round, turned down brim is the prevailing shape for the winter.

Hats, and large hats at that, composed entirely of ostrich feathers, are to be seen in the various fashionable shades, and delightfully new and decidedly smart are these latest models. A toque of the new bottle green ostrich plumes, enlivened somewhat by a stiff aigrette on the left side or a tuft of gaura feathers, makes an attractive complement to a costume of chiffon velvet of the same superb shade of green. There are also many wide brimmed velvets, satin and felt shapes, with the crowns completely covered with ostrich feathers, one long plume being carried about the brim, with the tip allowed to fall just a little over the edge on the left side. Long, sweeping Gainsborough plumes are seen on a number of the large picture hats.

Visiting Costume in Greenish Blue Cloth

The dress is in a pale greenish-blue fine cloth; the skirt is cut with a slight train, and is trimmed with wide silk braid the color of the cloth, forming diamonds at regular intervals.

The bodice has a round yoke composed of lace insertion, the material joins the yoke without fullness under a trimming of the braid like the skirt.



The jacket is of fine white serge lined with silk—it is open-fronted; the kimono sleeves and the basque are cut with deep points, each being finished with a silk tassel; a pattern of fine braid is worked round the edge of jacket.

Hat of satin straw the color of the dress, trimmed with wide ribbon and a long ostrich feather.

Material required for the jacket: 4 yards serge 46 inches wide, 6 yards lining silk and 5 silk tassels.

Season's Styles Are Bemoaned by Some

Some of the recently imported cloth costumes for visiting are giving great delight to stout women, but flat chested, long limbed women groan inwardly when they see them, for the powers at Paris and Vienna are devoting their talents to the emphasizing of elongated effects, cunningly arranging the seams of the coats and the lines of the skirts in ways calculated to decrease the apparent breadth. A new skirt which has this effect, and which is specially in favor with smart dressers, is the one with a central front seam.

When bordered cloths are used for visiting costumes the material is so cut that the border edges the skirt bottom, but if serge, English mixture or plain broadcloth is used most women prefer bias bands of cloth put on to form large squares or points, their corners emphasized with buttons or chenille ornaments, to the absolutely plain skirts on the same model, which are being made up in lighter materials for house and dinner gowns.

As to colors, the dull blues, browns and grays which are so artistic have always a host of adherents. Purples are very fashionable, and so are mauves, and there are seen any number of pomegranate and prune shades, their dullness relieved with self-colored velvet collars, cuffs, vests and innumerable ornamental buttons. Blond, one of the new light shades, is prettiest of all in fine broadcloth, and most effective when combined with black velvet or dark brown fur. One beautiful costume shown lately is of blond cloth, with a tunic skirt edged with sable, a bodice of cloth and self-colored lace, and a toga shaped cloak of blond cloth lined with sable. The same effect may be produced for much less money by using squirrel fur stained in sable shade.

Dress of White Silk for Child Bridesmaid

Finely spotted white silk is used for the dress itself. The bodice is slightly long waisted and is gathered to a square yoke, composed of strips of the silk finely tucked, divided by lace insertion; the yoke is then outlined by



a deep frill of fine net lace, headed by narrow insertion. Frilled lace equelettes fall over the silk-puffed sleeves. The full skirt is covered by three frills of deep lace to match that used in the bodice.

The hat or bonnet is of white crinoline, lined with drawn ribbon; it is trimmed with white soft ribbon and ostrich feathers.

The Woman Beautiful

Lemon juice and sugar will clear the voice. Singers often eat an apple just before singing, as this helps also to clear the voice.

Buttermilk used as a wash or made into paste with talcum powder will both prevent and cure sunburn and hot water comes into play here also, as it must be used when cold water would only set the burn.

Next to water, perhaps the best fluid complexion maker is lemon juice. Taken internally, alone or with hot water, it is generally beneficial; and, externally, cut in half and the lemon, rind and all, rubbed over the face, it remedies sunburn and light freckles.

Women who want to be beautiful must pay attention to their diet. Buckets of lotions, pounds of creams and skin foods, boxes of flesh brushes, complexion rollers, soaps—nothing can produce the slightest effect in helping to give the right color and glow to the complexion that has been spoiled by improper food.

Did you ever notice how American women are beginning to take on flesh after they reach the age of 30? The slender, aristocratic type of middle age seems to be disappearing and obesity of greater or less proportions is to be reckoned with and conquered if possible, says a writer. This requires courage and self-denial, but it is worth while both from the standpoint of health and beauty.