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Autor: Chambrier, Th. de
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Perplexity of choice

One more of life's little complications have arisen this year to trouble the well-dressed woman of New York and other large cities in the States. And, Heaven knows that life was already complicated enough before in these vast towns! The latest difficulty which prevails today in the shopping centres in all stores both large and small, at least offers the compensation of unwonted and quite certain pleasure: because it is nothing more nor less than — *perplexity of choice*. Yes, indeed, perplexity reigns at the textile counters which are brimming over with an infinite variety of novelties: an unlimited choice in the blouse and dress departments — all the models are charming, practical, attractive as never before. Faced with such generous abundance, the most reasonable and thrifty of women must restrain themselves to limit their purchases, and turn the cheque book thrice over in their hands before giving way to the many temptations dangled before their dazzled eyes.

The summer season is all too brief; why can it not be prolonged so as to give one time to wear all these lovely creations in voile, organdie, piqué, chambray, shaded cotton, cotton tweed, dainty check, transparent and printed rayon, cotton damask — the latter so new and luxuriantly novel in effect — twill for beach wear, gabardine for the tropics, shantung and the whole elegant range of silk; linen for luxury cruises and upper crust country clubs; and, last but not least, organdie for evening wear, printed and embroidered; plain organdie, too, for all-day wear, flattering under tailored, waisted summer coats.

The magnificent choice delights the hearts of teen-agers selecting graduation gowns and of brides-to-be who are devising « The Dress » of their life. There is an incredible abundance of fine, gossamer-thin, transparent materials, to suit every taste and every purse. Voile is extremely popular, whether

plain, printed or embroidered. As for the organdies, they have become more indispensable than ever, since they have been adopted for dark-hued little frocks, classically styled in navy-blue, black, brown or green, for all-day wear in town, at the office, dining out and dancing. Crisp and washable, smarter than the heavier cottons, these delightful organdie dresses are ideal for hot summer days in the city or for the cocktail hour in the garden. Organdie is used also for new tailored coats worn over light-weight frocks. Piqué and organdie are cleverly combined in two or three-piece interchangeable ensembles, as practical as they are flattering to the figure.

Could it be that UNO is influencing fashions? The fact remains that every nation and every culture in the world seems to have been ransacked to provide the designs and patterns for this summer's fabrics. No one influence really predominates: there is harmony in the Javanese batiks, Malayan sarongs, primitive Dutch designs, Chinese patterns, Islamic geometrical shapes, Persian scenes, English posies, naïve Provençale linens (the Americans call them « French Provincial »), St. Gall roses, embroidered or printed on numerous materials, Cashmere designs on silks, Scotch plaids, and so on.

Amongst this incredible wealth of novelty and design, the American woman shows admirable good taste in her choice. She goes straight to the goal she has set herself and limits her fancy to the kind of life she leads or to the climate of her summer vacation land. If work keeps her busy in town, she selects the fabric best suited for the convertible two-piece she wears in the subway, at the office and for business interviews; the ensemble is also eminently suitable for the evening dinner and dance. If she intends to go to Cape Cod or to a resort in Maine, she heads straight for the gabardines and twills. But, she does know that, whatever her intentions for the summer to come, there is always room in her wardrobe for those youthful and becoming cotton frocks.

In New York, as in Detroit or Cleveland, every woman can be tastefully elegant, without extravagance. Would that be the true essence of democracy?

Th. de Chambrier



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