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Variety in contrasts

If fashion, in the New as in the Old World, has so attractive and varied a look this year, it is due above all to the imagination shown by the manufacturers of fabrics in their creations which are both charming and new, and to the ingenuity of the designers and great ready-to-wear manufacturers, who assemble and combine the most widely different fabrics, thus creating contrasts and new and unexpected effects.

The unity of line, fabric and colour which generally characterises a season's fashions is replaced this year by variety. The law of contrasts dominates fashion, the most different textures are combined or are brought boldly together, straight lines and curves are found side by side, silhouettes are sheathed or in the form of open corollas. Everything is fashionable for the woman who knows how to choose.

Sometimes it is only the accessories that create the contrast, as for example in an evening dress of poulx de soie by Maurice Rentner with simple sculptured lines, set off by a scarf of light lace veiling the bare shoulders. Another evening dress, short this time, has a full skirt and little sleeves in pleated taffeta completely veiled in lace. A navy blue embroidered tulle dress the front of which is trimmed from top to bottom with dark velvet bows, is worn over pink taffeta: contrast of fabrics, contrast of colours. Or perhaps it is a brown dress, in embroidered tulle placed over an aquamarine blue ground (Will Steinman) or pink and black, or again white lace flowers placed over the black tulle of a full short dress belted in black velvet. Satin for a sea-green dress, the décolleté set off by a strip of dark brown fur.

There are many evening dresses giving the effect of a two-piece, blouse and skirt, like the dress by J.L.F. Originals with a white satin bodice set off with pearl and gold embroidery, a full chocolate brown satin skirt, and a belt of saffron yellow satin.

Full dresses, narrow dresses; short skirts, long skirts. Almost everything is to be seen out dancing in the evening, where the fullest of long velvet and tulle evening gowns are found side by side with sheaths of light satin covered with black lace, placed flat over the narrow hip-hugging skirt (Howard Greer).

The rule of contrasts also applies to the materials for trimmings; a wool jersey dress for the evening is fringed in jet forming a collar framing the round décolleté (Mollie

Parnis). Another evening dress in grey jersey resembling a tweed is embroidered with sequins and pearls on the front of the bodice. Contrasts of tight fitting corselets with the enormous fullness of skirts. Such is the case in the beautiful pink evening dress created by Sophie of Saks Fifth Avenue, all in ribbons plaited like braids. Another typical dress is one of Bendel's in black faille with a bodice high in front and fastened in the form of a collar, leaving the back bare, the short pencil slim skirt amplified by floating panels at the side in a very pale flesh pink, making the black silhouette which they surround appear even more fine and slender.

There is also the contrast between the simplicity of line in the straight and narrow evening dress and the richness of its texture: a dress by Jo Copeland is embroidered all over with white pearls, except for the flat very low neckline in ruby pearls.

These extreme trends in the use of different fabrics enable every woman to find at the moment outfits and accessories perfectly suited to her type. American and imported fabrics vie with one another in ingenuity as regards their texture and finish. They are attractive in all price ranges, from those used in ready-to-wear clothes accessible to women of average means and young women, to the fabrics chosen exclusively for the most elegant models.

In this high quality range, fabrics imported from Switzerland are particularly outstanding. The textile centres of Saint-Gall, Zurich and Glaris produce for American fashions an incomparable selection of fine cottons, embroideries, « winter cottons », rayons and silks, and fine woollen printed challis, that can be worn in all seasons. This is particularly true of cottons which are so popular in America in well heated houses as well as under the heavy fur coats that every woman possesses. Challis of wool or wool and rayon makes the most fashionable blouses this year to go with the tweed tailormade as well as the evening skirt in heavy black silk. The silk manufacturers of Zurich have created for America failles, ottomans, thick shantung, taffetas and brocaded satins of a richness and a variety that are remarkable.

Swiss fabrics have never been better adapted than this year to the taste of the day and the eclectic fashion that reigns from one coast of America to the other, from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

Thérèse de Chambrier.