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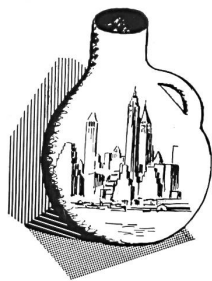
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New York Letter

The new lines for 1960 are so varied and so different that they allow much wider individual interpretations than might be imagined in this day and age of standardisation. It is mainly the great abundance of American and imported fabrics that offers ready-to-wear manufacturers such extraordinary scope today for varying their creations while restricting the cut of their garments to a few simple basic styles, carefully thought out and planned to please the vast American market. Once again the trend of American fashions is towards simplification, the shirtwaist style, but with a new look adapted to the general lines dictated by Parisian haute couture and the international fashion centres. And we may be sure that the host of shirtwaist models we have already seen in printed fabrics for this winter's tropical cruises are but the harbingers of the multitudes to follow for the spring and summer, which will be in brocaded cotton fabrics of greater elegance and richer texture.

The fashion, newly arrived from Europe, for cotton Jacquard fabrics has swept all over America. The silks printed like squares and scarves have considerable appeal, enhanced by the freshness and gaiety of their colours. Lavish use will be made of them for jackets, beach outfits and dance dresses; the whole summer will be bright and gay with them. The borders of the scarves are generally used to emphasise the construction of the jacket, beach outfit, tunic or full skirt. Surprisingly enough, these printed silks are admirably suited for making into garments which, besides being amusing and original, are functional and well made.

Blouses, which are widely used all the year round now since the present-day speed of travel has made it possible to catch up with summer in a matter of a few hours' flying time, benefit — like the dresses — from the wealth of fabrics and the beauty of the novelties that are being shown for the spring. The cut of blouses also tends towards simplicity, uniformity almost. And yet it is impossible to speak of uniformity when confronted with such countless variations on the same theme. The fabrics, which differ so greatly from one another and are so new, create the diversity that makes us forget the infinite repetitions of the shirtwaist style. This year, it is definitely the fabrics and embroideries that will give blouses their particular elegance. More than ever before, the quality of the fabric will be decisive for the elegance of blouses as well as dresses, whose cut has been simplified to the utmost.

In this era of man-made fibres, great progress is evident in the mixed fabrics for 1960-1961. Greatly improved synthetic fibres, more nearly perfect finishes, more skillfully blended mixtures of natural and synthetic fibres, all these factors help to give a rich harvest of really eye-catching novelties. In addition, these new fabrics are pleasant to the touch, beautifully soft and have a silky look, an even texture and a well-designed structure.

« Helanca » stretch yarns have already led to great progress in the practical field by making clothes so much easier to look after. These magic yarns are rapidly passing from purely utilitarian spheres to those of haute couture. They are used now for the creation of brocaded fabrics, matelassés, Jacquards, crinkly fabrics and novelties for the most varied purposes. They not only allow fabrics to stretch, but give them a softness and draping qualities that are ideal for dresses, sportswear and beach clothes, swimsuits, etc. It is not surprising therefore that they are being used more and more widely.

There have never been so many cotton organdies, batistes, voiles, satins and chiffons as this year. In addition to these light fabrics there are silk organdies, which are enjoying great popularity and are used even for making little girls' dresses. Linen is also back in favour, in plain, brocaded, printed and figured qualities, with the traditional distinction of this noble fabric.

Swiss printed fabrics in fine combed cotton are well to the fore in all the American collections. Among them is a white crush-resistant cotton chiffon, printed with black flowers and foliage (Stoffel). The floral designs of the « Nelo » fabrics contribute a fresh note to fashions, with their apple and cherry blossom, wild rose, daffodils, narcissi and cyclamen, bringing a breath of spring and alpine meadows to the very heart of New York. Organdies of cotton and silk together with satins are decorated with relief embroidered clusters and sprays of flowers, as well as applications of Venetian lace and guipure, or are woven with open-work designs.

For summer suits, for traveling and spectator sports, there are firm textured Jacquards and cotton prints like one satiny ottoman with a tapestry type design, blue on a white ground (Nelo), or an attractive fabric in golden yellow cotton with moiré motifs obtained by alternating mat and mercerised yarns, which guarantees the permanence of the finish (Stoffel); there is also a very intricate Jacquard — a Moorish design with tight black arabesques, set off beautifully by the white ground (Mettler), and a bouclé with a rustic texture and a two-tone striped ground which has beautiful roses printed on it in warm shades (Fischbacher). A very new organdie (Reichenbach) is made of cotton mixed with silk and viscose rayon; the ground is a streaked yellow, with small tight clusters of relief brocaded flowers standing out against it.

Lingerie trims will be used to highlight summer dresses this year. There will be blouses with frills, with bows of embroidery, and embroidered dummies with new effects of open-work broderie anglaise on an opaque ground alternating with the same design embroidered in relief on a transparent ground. Guipures will be made in open-work stitching on hexagonal lattices, the flat foliage enhanced with appliqué flowers in relief (Union). Thus even the most traditional embroideries are continually renewed.

Dresses for children, tiny tots, young girls and preteenagers follow the Victorian tendency, which is even more emphasised this year. Embroidery will be greatly in demand for dresses with full gathered skirts as well as for the white aprons to be worn over dresses in pastel shades or in dotted Swiss, and, in these small sizes, only embroideries of very good quality can give that permanently fresh look and perfect finish that characterise better ready-to-wear clothing for children. In the heart of New York, St. Gall offers an incomparable choice of the allover embroideries (M. E. Feld), the embroidered or scalloped braids that are indispensable for decorating the late Victorian style models which will be all the rage this year for children and young girls. However the model little girls of America will have no need to worry about creasing their lovely dresses. All these embroideries and fragile fabrics have been specially treated and made crush-resistant so that young American mothers can choose them cheerfully without any fear of having to spend hours starching and ironing them, as in great-grandmother's day. They are as easy to look after as the simplest of cottons.

Thérèse de Chambrier