The GLITTER and GLEAM of OPERA COSTUMES

Ermine Wraps Worth a King's Ransom

The "Opera Bonnet" a Fad of the Season

JANE

Dark Velvets Embroidered with White China Beads

Little Wraps with Huge Muffs Rival Long Cloaks

Rich Velvets and Metallic Embroidery Make Gowns Gorgeous

A Pretty Bonnet of Violet Velvet

The revelations of horse show and horseshoe come almost synonomously in New York, and great are the preparations made by modistes, milliners, furriers and jewelers for both events; but while the horse show undoubtedly establishes the modes in correct afternoon and street costume, it is to the opening night of opera—to the revelations of the exclusive horseshoe of boxes—that all America looks for confirmation of styles in winter evening dress.

The fashion reporters for all the great dailies have seats of vantage in the orchestra. You meet men and women with scribbling pads in the most sacred precincts of the parterre corridor where velvet carpets, almost ankle deep, subdue the footfall; you catch them lurking at the turns in the great stairway up and down which sweep superb gowns between the acts. Their somber costumes mark strange blots in the brilliant color of the carriage vestibules where lovely frocks and wonderful wraps move in an ever-changing kaleidoscope of tones and tints as their wearers chat, yawn or stand indifferently waiting for the announcement of carriages and motors.

Opera dress is the supreme elegance of costume, the consummation of the grande toilette. One may have lovely dinner gowns, exquisite restaurant and theater frocks, handsome reception costumes, bewitching dancing dresses; but the opera frock is more elegant, more conventional, more expressive of luxury and wealth than any of these. It is, so to speak, "on parade," the cynosure of a thousand eyes. It will be described with more or less exactitude in all the morning papers, and its elegance, cost and effectiveness will be discussed and criticised on every hand.

Velvet Gowns.

The favor for velvets and furs gives a touch of Russian magnificence to this winter's evening dress, and where fur-trimmed velvets are not used one finds chiffon embroidered with beads or weighted with gold and silver embroideries in a very orgy of oriental extravagance. Velvet gowns, however, are the dernier cri in Paris just now, and the new velvets are so beautifully fine and soft and so thin and light in texture that these garments are really no warmer than satin ones would be. It is another story, however, when fur is used generously with the velvet, and one speculates whether some of the women who have ordered superb velvet and fur costumes for opera wear will not rue their bargain in the heated atmosphere of the boxes. But if pride—as the old saying goes—can keep one warm! no doubt it can also keep one cool, and even fur sleeves may be endured with equanimity if the pelt is elegant enough to arouse a flutter of interest in the observer.

A superb gown which is being finished for wear on the opening night of grand opera on the 14th of the month is of black velvet which reaches from bust to heels in perfectly straight, unfitted lines, two widths only of the velvet being used with an uncurved seam down the sides under the arms. At front and back this black velvet slip, which is exactly the shape of an ordinary bolster case, reaches up in a bluntly rounded tab over an upper bodice of white ermine fur, the sleeves—to the elbow—being also of this white ermine, fashioned all in one piece with the bodice. No trimming, no jewels, nothing to interfere with the severe classically beautiful lines of this black and white velvet and fur gown, which will be worn by a statuesque young woman with red-gold hair.

Classic robes, with tunics, peplums and togas, in all manner of styles, promise to be a fad of the winter, and all this because of a French play which was put on the boards last winter. This play, called "Lysistrata," with a scene laid in ancient Greece, gave the opportunity for a display of most beautiful costumes, which were designed by no less an artist than Redfern himself and which produced wonderful effects of pastel coloring and of draperies that seemed to disguise but really revealed the figure. In this play Mme. Laparcerie, who had one of the leading parts, wore a much-talked-tunic, girded high under the arms with of gown, a flesh-colored crepe de chine, which ended at the bust line, shoulders and arms being veiled only with flesh-colored tulle. The draperies were caught up at bust and knee with cabuchons of blue turquoise. Another frock worn by the same actress was of thin, pale yellow satin, with a straight, narrow skirt and a little hip a gold cord tied in a loose knot.

These metallic cord girdles are a feature of this winter's evening dress, and they are often used with little hip length tunics, which are sweetly Greek and youthful when made of chiffon or other diaphanous material. Some of the French dressmakers call these little tunics "Greek chemises," and this new Greek chemise promises to revolutionize feminine dress and bring back a garment long consigned to the limbo of oblivion—the basque extending over the skirt below the waistline.

Just now, however, all waistlines are high again—quite under the arms in Empire style in many of the evening gowns. Some of the Callot and Paquin frocks for younger women, with straight, gathered skirts, confined at the ankles by bands of fur or embroidery and little high-waisted bodices crossed demurely over the bust in quaint, surplice effect, are bewitchingly pretty, and all of these frocks are cut short enough to show daintily clad feet and ankles quite frankly.

Only the debutantes, however, wear these simple little frocks at the opera. Costumes of a more splendid and formal character are called for on the important premiere night and trailing gowns of velvet, satin and even of cloth of gold, elaborately decollete and accompanied by wonderful jewels will be in evidence in most of the boxes.

The old-style evening bodice cut low all around and appearing to be held on below the bared shoulders by some miraculous means has gone entirely out of style. Usually now the shoulders are veiled; the velling material extending down over the arm to form little sleeves of some sort. But this decolletage, though it appears more discreet, is quite as revealing as the frankly clipped off top of the corsage of other days, for the veiling fabrics is but a layer of chiffon or lace, and the body of the gown beneath comes scarcely to the bust line, so that sometimes the suggestion of nudity, albeit achieved with flesh-colored tulle of quite sufficient thickness, is positively startling. For example, a gown of gold-colored velvet, with a sweeping skirt embroidered to knee depth with wheat-colored silk studded with topaz-colored beads, has a broad girdle reaching from the rather high waistline to the bust in front, while under the arms it slopes downward toward the back, rising at the center back but four inches above the waistline. This girdle is heavily embroidered like the skirt, and from it two embroidered straps pass over the shoulders in suspender fashion. From these straps and extending outward to form a short kimono sleeve is a little yoke of cream lace, embroidered with gold thread, and this layer of embroidered lace is apparently all that covers the shoulders and back above the embroidered girdle. Of course, the lace is laid over chiffon, and this in turn is lined with flesh-tinted gauze, but the decollete effect is daringly realistic.

A coral pink satin evening gown, worn by one of the pretty living models at a recent exhibition of costumes in one of the large shops, had an upper bodice and sleeve of flesh-colored chiffon, and made quite simply with an entire absence of trimming, this coral pink gown seemed to be molded on the beautiful figure of its wearer, the satin gleaming and shimmering as each movement of the limbs in walking drew the soft satin folds into new lines of grace. This gown was purchased to make part of an October trousseau and the avowed intention of its owner to appear in it at the premiere night of opera on the 14th of this month.

Gown With Three Tunics.

From Paul Poiret comes a lovely costume which has been brought across the ocean especially for an initial appearance on opening opera night. This gown, by means of one chiffon tunic dropped over another, has a shaded effect that is wonderfully beautiful, the shading, of course, growing deeper toward the waistline, where all three layers of chiffon come together. The under robe, straight and simple, is of white satin and over this fall the three tunics of pale pea-green chiffon, each a little shorter than the other, and the upper one reaching only just below the hips. Each tunic is weighted with a band of gold embroidery and a cord, and tasseled ends of dull gold outline the waist.

These classic gowns call for equally classic coiffures, and not every woman can wear the Sappho-like knot at the back of the head with happy effect. Fortunately this Greek hairdressing is not obligatory, and many women this winter are taking up the more becoming low parting with the hair dressed at the back at either side of the head behind the ears, or in a chignon of dancing little curls with a soft coil of long hair twisted around the head just outside of this chignon. Two hairdressings fancied in Paris just now are illustrated. One is the cap of white lace with pearl cabuchons over the ears; the other a slightly more matronly style with a velvet cap trimmed with an upstanding aigrette which lends height and dignity.

Another very fashionable style of headdress, shown in a separate photograph, is the close-fitting cap or "opera bonnet" which is worn through the street with evening wrap, in place of a hat. These coquettish little bonnets are extravagantly popular just now and are made of lace, of velvet or—as in this instance—of rich metallic embroidery. The bonnet pictured here matches a gown of flame-colored chiffon dropped over satin of the same brilliant tone and subdued by a deep flounce and sleeves of velvet a shade darker. This red gown with a gold cord girdle, gold bonnet and the rich gold embroidery on the tunic is characteristic of the luxurious effects of the moment. Beaded effects are also extremely fashionable, white beadings especially being in great favor on chiffons of dark coloring.

Gay Little Wraps.

Those who attend the opera but do not sit in charmed circle of boxes often come in hats with stunning wraps which are retained and draped over the back of the seat. Women who have not far to drive are wearing this winter over the light evening frocks pretty little shoulder wraps of fur or fabric matched by huge picturesque muffs and artistic hats. A wrap of this sort is illustrated, the material being gold tissue laid over silk of the same shade with a border of marabout and a trimming of silk roses in shades of old pink. The hat is of pink silk covered with shirred gold tissue and a trimming of shaded pink and tan feathers.

Gorgeous Wraps.

Most of the handsome wraps which are trailed through the carriage vestibule from the box corridors are fur, and many of these wraps represent tidy fortunes in themselves. White rabbit and coney pelts vie with the more expensive ermine, and some of these white fur wraps trimmed with white fox are rarely beautiful. This year many velvet wraps will surely make a part of the panorama, for velvet is even more fashionable than fur as a wrap material now. Persian and brocade linings, heavy embroideries and bands of fur trim the new velvet wraps, and most of them have the pegtop shape—that is, they are very roomy and broad across the shoulder, but taper into a very narrow width at the foot, making the wearer appear extremely slender and tall.

NOTES AND NOVELTIES.

The Upholstery Counter.

The canny little woman does not go directly to the millinery counter for her fall hat, nor to the trimming counter for the garnishment of her bridge frock, nor to the department where lace robes are sold for exorbitant prices for her daughter's dancing frock. Not she—she approaches these sartorial needs in a roundabout way; in fact, by way of the upholstery store. Nobody dreams until she tries the resources of the upholstery counter what wonderful effects may be achieved with materials priced at about a third of those offered in the regular departments. Bands of tapestry may be picked up as remnants to trim the winter hats, and metallic and silk galloons, just the thing for a bold bit of color on a somber gown may be had for half what such trimmings would cost at the regular trimming counter. The finer sorts of curtain nets are very satisfactory as linings under chiffon or lace frocks, and cost but a trifle a yard. And everybody knows, now, about the wonderfully smart blouses and kimonos which may be evolved from cotton table covers and portieres.

Garter Petticoats.

Under the very narrow gown, banded in at the ankles, the ordinary petticoat slips up and becomes bunched awkwardly about the limbs, interfering with the already restricted walk and making an ugly bulge in the scant skirt. The dressmakers have put their wits to work on the petticoat question for there new extremely narrow skirts, and have at last evolved the garter petticoat—that is, double petticoat, for there are two long, narrow "petticoats" which—one might as well be truthful—are really shapeless trouser legs of silk satin, each attached to a ribbon-trimmed garter. The two garters connected by a six-inch length of ribbon, so the feet may never be placed far enough apart to reveal the bifurcation of this new narrow "petticoat."

The Dinner Pail.

There are all kinds and conditions of men, and one sort evidently is ashamed to carry his dinner pail, for here is a new dinner pail so shaped that it may be cleverly hidden under the coat on the way to and from work. Demand always creates supply, and it is safe to assume that men who carried dinner pails have been ashamed of them else this pride-saving invention would never have been thought of. The "pail" is really a wide and deep tin case, which fits around the side of the body and hangs from a chain hooked into the armhole of the waistcoat. Inside the tin case may be fitted sandwiches, slices of meat, pie and other edibles, and there is a long, narrow tank at the top for coffee.

Hair Ornaments.

Some of the large shell hair pins used to a great extent in holding together the braid or roll can be made particularly attractive by an inlay or overlay of gold or silver. One pretty pair has a seaweed design worked over the shell, and they are connected by a very slender silver chain that has a small moonstone set in the middle. This gives a distinctly oriental effect to the coiffure.

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