SPRING STYLES WANDER NOT FROM PATH OF LATE WINTER

Spanish and Louis Seize Influences Offer Only Promise of Great Novelty in Color or Line----Season Not One of Guessing, but the Daring Are Yet to Be Heard From

By ELEANOR HOYT BRAINERD.

THE groundhog did not see his shadow. There was not even the remotest possibility of his seeing it. Perhaps that had something to do with the efflorescence of new materials and models during the first week of February.

Of course there's a chance that the merchants merely grew tired of trying to tempt women with bargains in mussy and shopworn winter frocks or furs for which the thermometer argued no need; but it's pleasanter to think that those same wise men of Gotham went through groundhog day in trembling suspense, and when the invisible sun had set behind murky clouds shouted: "Aha! An early spring! Bargains to the rag bag! Spring goods to the counters and show rooms."

Whatever the cause, the effect was there. The French openings not having occurred, though they were close in the offing, a large percentage of the new February models were of domestic design; but, here and there an imported frock flirted its folds, avant courier of things to come later in the month, and many of the domestic models were charming.

This is not one of the blind guessing seasons. Novel details, even novel experiments in line may come; but, on the whole, the chances are that spring and summer fashions will travel the paths the late winter fashions have pointed out. We are not yet through with the full short skirt and the little fitted bodice. We've more to say to the cape collars and the ribbon trimmings and the horsehair lace hoops.

The two strongly marked tendencies are toward the Spanish and the Louis Seize; but many another influence makes itself felt, and the day has gone by when period dressing was an imperative thing. We may dress in any period, from early Egyptian to Cubist, if we but do it effectively, though as the multitude is always sheeplike and must needs follow, certain conventional lines are underscored each season.

Not only that, but daring designers so mingle details chronologically inharmonious that it would be a wise period that would know its own frock.

And what difference does it all make? As we have said before, a fair proportion of the new frocks shown so far are charming, and that should be enough for the critics.

Velvet and fur have faded out of the shops. Light line and summer stuffs have taken their places, and once more the cry of "wolf, wolf" anent attractive materials seems to have been unjustified. Last year, when in the face of seemingly insuperable obstacles imported materials maintained their record, every one said: "Wait until next year." Well, we have waited, and again foreign looms, in spite of tremendous odds against them, have sent us beautiful things. Just what the condition of the wholesale market is in respect to these imported stuffs, trimmings, &c., one does not know; but certainly, for the moment, the retail shops indicate no dearth of supply.

Taffetas are, as the salesmen put it, "going strong," and though we are told that the supply of French taffetas is sadly limited, that news is not so alarming as it would have been a few years ago, for American silk factories are turning out very creditable things in taffetas now—are indeed turning out a good deal of the taffeta that you, madam, are buying as the imported article. The pussy willow type of taffeta is an American product, too, and the newer soiree.

American looms have woven some delightful silks of the radium sort also, and some brocades that are well ahead of any previous achievements, though when it comes to the handsome brocades and novelties we must still yield the pas to Europe and the hundreds of years that have gone to the making of her silk industries.

Striped taffetas of every imaginable sort—one tone, two tone, many tone, regular, irregular, satin and taffeta, chiffon and taffeta, flowered and plain—are offered in all the modish colors, and checked effects, even huge plaids, in wonderfully harmonized colorings follow at a distance.

In woollen stuffs checks are particularly emphasized, and the sheer stuffs show a good many crossbar and check designs, but up to date the silks lean much more heavily toward stripes.

Some of the simpler striped silks are made up into unpretentious little frocks that have a decided air of smartness in spite of their simplicity and that would be very useful in a summer wardrobe. A dark blue and biscuit stripe, for example, in satin and taffeta, was used, as indicated in one of our small sketches, with no trimming save the vest of biscuit and the band on the skirt bottom, formed of overlapping dark blue strips. The handling of the stripes did the rest, and "the rest" was very satisfactory.

Striped models, from the hands of American designers, also often fail because the designer has juggled with the stripes too energetically. The result is cut up, suggests a crazy quilt or a picture puzzle, cuts the figure where it should not cut it, accentuates a line where it should not accentuate it; but handled skilfully the stripe, and particularly the rather bold stripe, has excellent possibilities even in the most inexpensive materials.

The wide, regular stripes in gay color and white are shown in almost every material, from the cheapest of muslins to the most costly of silks.

Cotton gabardines, linens, lawns, voiles, mohairs, marquisettes, chiffons, radiums, taffetas, &c., all show these stripes, and irregular striped arrangements are almost as numerous, while for those who do not like the more striking effects there are plenty of demure, narrow stripes, not nearly so modish looking, but often delightful and much less likely to be commonized.

Among the sheer voiles in wool, silk and cotton there are lovely little stripes of white and color that suggest the daintiest of summer frocks and promise good service too. One line of the sheerest possible silk and wool voile runs the gamut of all the soft, bright colors, the popular rose and yellow and orchid and green and blue tones. The color alternates with white in stripes very narrow, yet wide enough to give value to the color.

An imported model of just such voile has no trimming save some narrow fluted frill of white organdy, a frilly chemisette and a frilly but almost invisible underskirt of the organdy.

There is a good deal of green in the cool, soft, rather light tones among the new materials and the designers seem to be using considerable taffeta in these greens for simple afternoon frocks that are often exceedingly pretty and would be still prettier on a summer day. Organdy, net or lace about the face make these shades becoming, though they are a bit trying in themselves and they are a change from the ubiquitous rose and blue. We are likely to have much yellow too in every shade from mustard to canary and lemon, but with special accent on the topaz and amber colorings and their lighter equivalents. Even in the wool suitings one sees much of these soft brownish yellows.

Porcelain blues are repeating their winter popularity, as are all the soft, medium blues, and dark blue is as usual a favorite spring color, though we have been told all winter that this spring would see a scarcity in dark blue owing to the dyestuff complications. It is true, however, that other colors and mixed colorings are making a strong bid for spring favor, and it may be that the manufacturers have tried to lead us away from our perennial dark blue instead of telling us that we cannot have it.

Grays, which did not receive the support that was promised them last season, appear to be returning to the charge, and some extremely likable frocks are shown in the soft creamy or silvery grays which succeed in being becoming even to women who cannot wear the darker or bluer grays. Very lustrous taffeta in one of these light, soft grays, with relief of white organdy or cream net batiste or chiffon, is often peculiarly charming and there are gray frocks as charming in georgette and chiffon and in other silks than taffeta. The combination chiffon and taffeta frock is often good in these grays too and the combination type of frock grows more and more popular in silk and chiffon or georgette, serge and sheer stuff, broadcloth and sheer stuff.

One Fifth avenue firm has some really adorable little bolero models in soft crepy raw silk and chiffon and in thin cloth and chiffon which are not to be on view before March—full wide hipped skirts of chiffon with folds of the silk or cloth almost hiding the chiffon, soft little bodices of the chiffon with undersleeves and tuckers or collars of fine muslin, short, loose, piquant boleros of the silk or cloth in novel shapes—distinctly youthful models, as are all bolero models, but very jaunty and Spanish in motif, though not aggressively so as regards hip stiffening.

Horsehair lace fulled under the full skirt at its top and holding it out sharply from the waistband over the hips is a detail of construction in some of the imported frocks and the treatment makes the waist look smaller, though it can hardly be said to beautify the average figure. A narrow strip of fine horsehair sewed in the skirt foundation or trimming lower on the hips is another of the Spanish notes and several of the new collars show Spanish influence, though we have had others more or less like them before under other names.

Of the cape we have spoken often, but it continues to demand attention, appearing on all kinds of garments and in all sorts of phases—single capes, triple capes, short capes, long capes, capes with collars and capes without. All are more or less picturesque, but by no means all are likely to be becoming.

In cloth smartly tailored and with some very knowing notes about collar and fastening, a single, double or triple shoulder cape is often very chic with a thin frock of contrasting color or with a thin frock trimmed in material like the cape. This idea was launched at last autumn's opening, but finds echoes this spring, as in a striped dull blue and dark blue taffeta model which has the jauntiest of little shoulder capes or cape collars in dark blue cloth and deep wide cuffs of the same cloth.

The overbodice or sleeveless bodice with thin underblouse or at least thin sleeves is still with us and is too comfortable and useful in a summer season to be dropped. And apropos of sleeveless overbodices we are reminded of a sports model—one always comes around to sports clothes sooner or later. They are especially alluring this year.

This particular sports costume was in one of the soft loose woven woollen stuffs of a rose tone not too vivid, a rose with a bloom over its surface, and was made with a very conventional and practical loose tailored coat and ample but not full plain skirt. The coat had a soft shawl collar, belt and deep cuffs of green suede leather, the green in a fairly deep heather tone that blended admirably with the rose. All this was ordinary enough, but the extraordinary feature of the costume was the separate sleeveless coat or jerkin of green suede, which could be slipped on over the rose coat when desired and removed by merely loosening the suede belt.

The jersey cloths, wool and silk, are a mania so far as sports wear is concerned, and are attractive both in plain color and in stripe, but have their decided limitations and a comparatively small color range.

For altogether delectable things in color one must go to the silks and ribbons and chiffons and tulles. Not that there are not exquisite colorings in cottons and linens, but that the sheen and gleam of a silken surface and the cloudy veiling effects possible in chiffon and tulle offer color possibilities such as no cotton or linen or wool can boast.

Changeable colorings among the new taffetas are lovelier than ever, and these changeable silks are being used for the most picturesque wraps and coats that take one straight to the court of Marie Antoinette, and for attractive frocks hinting at the same period. There is the frock of our large cut, in lustrous rose pink shot through in its folds by lavender blue shadows. It has a foolish little apron panel on its skirt front, a full little apron of lavender blue, touched in some lights by rose, framed in silver lace and topped by a narrow frill falling from under the pink surplice bodice.

There is silver lace bordering the bodice edges and, at sides of the skirt are full flounces of the blue silk, headed by carelessly posed flowers. Just a tiny pretence of sleeve in the bodice, but still a sleeve, and some of the latest models show a tendency toward wide but shallower decolletage and at least an embryonic sleeve in place of the sleeveless bodices of the last season. Modesty prices too, forsooth, but not in all bodices.

A gown of striped shantung and a ratine sport suit with a leather jacket.

A dancing frock of net and embroidered silk and one of pink and blue grosgrain with silver lace.

Quaint frocks of taffeta and lace and of voile.

THE CHOICE OF A MIRROR

WHEN selecting a mirror it should be remembered that the mirror is the eye of the room, the most expressive and responsive article of furniture that can be put into it. It heightens the light in a room, responding to changes almost as a living thing. If properly hung it gives a sense of space to a room and adds a quality of richness that nothing else will give.

Because of the importance of the mirror great care should be taken in selecting it, especially if it is to be placed outside the bedroom. A large mirror when wisely used has the power of expressing sumptuousness more than any other one article of furniture. On the other hand, if overlarge for the hall, living room or drawing room, it gives one the feeling of being in a cheap restaurant or dance hall.

A mirror can be disproportionately small as to make the dresser or piece of furniture with which it is placed ludicrous. The best way to make sure a mirror suits the place for which it is intended is to try it. If it is not convenient to do this, a scaled sketch may be made of the mirror and the piece of furniture with which it is to be placed or the space in the wall intended to fill. A third way of course is to consult a reliable interior decorator.

Only a few years ago it was deemed essential that the frame of the mirror should match the woodwork of the hall, dining or living room. The result was often far from pleasing. Formerly it was not unusual to find a wide, long mirror in a massive top heavy frame of walnut built against the side wall of a narrow entrance hall, the wainscoting, doors, door frames and stair railings of which were all of the same wood. To-day in such a hall the mirror would be framed in dull gold and would be oval or square, perhaps, with just enough ornament at the top of the frame to break the severe simplicity of the outline.

Like the pictures in a room, the mirror should bring into it freshness, brightness and variety. For this reason the frame may often be of a style distinctly different from that of the other furniture.

The great secret in selecting a mirror, as in all furnishing, is proportion. Try to get the right balance between your chairs not so bulky as to be cumbersome nor so small as to appear emaciated; your pictures not too numerous and your mirror not too heavy.

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B for After

In this age attention to your appearance is an absolute necessity if you expect to make the most out of life. Not only should you wish to appear attractive to possible friends and satisfactory to those with whom you are well worth your efforts but you should the world in modesty assuming you greatly, if not wholly, by your appearance. It pays to look your best at all times. Permit no one to see you looking otherwise; it will injure your welfare. Upon the impression you constantly make rests the failure or success of your life. Which is to be yours? Simply stated, it is a question of nose. Without entering into detail, suffice it to say that a pleasant, well-proportioned nose adds much to the charm of a face, while a big, ugly nose spoils it. Write to-day for booklet which tells you how to correct all nose troubles without cost if not satisfactory.

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