

# HINTS FOR THE HOME DRESSMAKER.

## Simple Silk Dresses for Late Summer

By Mary Eleanor O'Donnell



Simple Model in Striped Silk A Novel Feature is the Oriental Dash



Dainty French Coat Suit in Plain and Striped Blue Silk



Charming One Piece Model in Spotted Blue Foxland and Paisley Patterned Cashmere de Soie with Cluny Lace



Imported Model in Natural Colored Tulle with Trimmings of Cluny

HERE are certain styles of frocks which are always called "little." The size may be the largest made, but it is a little frock just the same. It always has a chic simplicity, a demure unpretentiousness and is not designed for formal occasions. Such are the little silk frocks shown on the page today.

This fall these little frocks will be more in evidence than ever. In fact it is predicted that the little frocks, worn with long coats, when the weather necessitates it, will be vastly smarter than the tailored suit and blouse.

Women have come to realize the compactness and comfort of the one-piece frock as compared with the blouse and skirt and they are not willing to relinquish it readily. When the one-piece frock is made with the net guimpe and undersleeves it has all the advantage possessed by the washable blouse.

The first thing to consider in these little frocks is the skirt. Not since the time of crinoline has there been as much commotion made over the question of woman's dress as during the last few weeks. Abroad well known portrait painters have filled columns giving their opinions on the shackled or the hobble skirt as it is commonly called here.

But hobble skirts still continue popular, regardless of the artists' lament, and their general adoption for fall is assured. In all the imported models these skirts are shown, though in a modified form. The skirt when it first made its appearance was a little under a yard wide. It does not take much imagination to see that the average American woman would not long enthuse over a garment that wasn't wide enough to allow her to take an ordinary step. So while the fall styles see the reappearance of the scant skirt it is built along more comfortable lines.

A popular model with importers is a skirt severely tight fitting to below the knees, where it is finished off with a band, and a plaited blouse started from underneath this. Closer plaited skirts caught in with bands are also shown. In fact the new narrow skirts call for the ingenuity of the designer, with the result that there has never been such a variety of styles in skirts to select from as this season.

The sleeves for the little frocks are short and usually finished in the simplest manner possible. They are normally wide and not skin tight.

The peasant blouse style is smartest. These blouses are usually entirely square, the pattern for them are extremely simple. They only require that the material be folded over to the required depth, a circle cut for the neck and straight under arm seams cut in one with straight undersleeve seams. There is really little sewing to do. The undersleeve seams are stitched up, as are the seams under the sleeves and the trimming may be as simple or as elaborate as one chooses.

The narrow skirt the peasant blouse and the waist two inches higher than normal may be said to be the three distinct style features that will dominate the fall fashions.

Organdy transparencies which have been so popular in the summer months are in their continued vogue. Cotton cover continues popular in Paris

Under the same head are included other transparent, such as voile, muslin and net. The superposition of different layers of chiffon or voiles is becoming more and more a feature. There is almost no style of waist or frock that has not its veil or cover of transparent fabric.

The touch of orientalism which enters into many of the fashions of the moment is almost wholly introduced through the medium of fabrics printed or woven

in Persia, cashmere, or Paisley patterns and coloring. Handsome novelties in these materials are everywhere featured.

This season Fashion is more particularly trying in her exactions than for a number of years. The rule of the short-waisted gown, designed for the limited aristocracy that could wear it, is again looming on the horizon with the narrow, short skirt, the collarless blouse, and the immense hat. But there

is one help. "Let gowns be fitted to the figure," says the word from Paris, "but fitted softly." And that is good advice for all. Sharp outlines are a mistake for stout and slender. A certain indefiniteness of contour assists a large figure, for the reason that it makes it impossible to gauge its actual size, but nothing renders bulk so calculable as to see it unaccountably compressed into tight stays or close sleeves. Indefiniteness serves slight proportions, also, and obscures angles and deficiencies with wonderful kindness.

Few of us are satisfied with our type, and so, it would seem, we try to make up to ourselves for our appearance by assuming the manners of the style we admire. Our ideal is, of course, our opposite, and the result of our imitation is often grotesque indeed. And not only do we act the part of another, but we dress for the part as well. Our willowy friend is so picturesque in her narrow skirt, peasant blouse, and frills; surely if we wore the same our short, dumpy figure would almost resemble hers. But while we may hypnotize ourselves, the general public keeps a level head and reads our secret longing to be tall

in every wrong line of our dress. No, there is no help for it; nature has cast us in a certain mold, and those are wisest who learn to make the best of it. Banting systems may aid some and diet kitchens increase the weight of others, but both these are outside my province. Still, any case is far from hopeless, and the most discouraged may raise her head if only she is willing to act like herself and dress according to her needs.

The ground principle of dress is "line." Color counts for much, material is important, but line is essential. Given an instinct or a trained sense for beauty of line and a dressmaker can evoke grace in almost any figure; let her lack this sense and she will distort perfection. Mistakes in dress will continue just as long as we are willing to be puppets in the hands of our modistes.

Let us start with the large figure and see what suggestions, in short space, can be offered her. In the first place she should flee for her life from the hobble skirt. Every important line of her costume should suggest length. The style of her gown should be chosen with a view to long lines that can be emphasized by trimming. This trimming is made more effective in its purpose if it end at or near the hem of the skirt in some pronounced fashion, as in a braided design or in some way suitable to the material used for ornamentation.

The reason is simple to find: Observe any one coming toward you across a room. Your eye naturally is focused on the face, still it takes in about two-thirds of the figure. If you place any conspicuous ornament just at the point where the eye ceases to observe, the figure seems to stop there; but if you emphasize a lower point, unconsciously the eye realizes that the skirt continues down beyond what it can see and gives you credit for the length it only suspects. Any motif or embroidery on the bodice, if at all striking, should come well down on the chest, as this has the effect of making the neck appear longer; but if the figure is noticeably developed, it is best to avoid a large ornament altogether.

Long lines are, of course, easily secured in a bodice by means of a vest or plait, but the width of either is a nice consideration. If it is too wide or too narrow it has the effect of increasing the breadth of the chest. It is unwise to divide this surface into three equal parts by a vest or plait that is just one-third of the width across. If lighter in color than the material of the gown, vest, or stole should be width less than a third of the chest surface; if darker, owing to the use of braid or embroidery, it is advisable to make it a little broader than one-third of this surface.

Perhaps the most essential line for a large figure is one which starts from the middle of the shoulder seam and runs slightly diagonally forward to the waistline. This line may be accentuated by braiding, insertion, tucks, or velvet ribbons. It may appear as the outer edge of a plastron, but it is always effective in diminishing the width of the chest. While directly horizontal lines in material or trimming are disastrous to a stout figure, an overskirt with a dip in front, thus giving a diagonal line at the side, is often becoming, but the point of the overskirt should come below the knees.

In treating a large figure it is wise to emphasize, though not to exaggerate, the width of the shoulders and to have a skirt as flaring as the fashion will allow. In this way the hips are by comparison diminished in size, and the hips are perhaps the greatest problem that a stout woman has to consider.

It is not sufficient, however, to choose suitable lines for your gown; hence, the size and shape of the hat play an important part in the artistic scheme of the costume. If the crown is fairly high and the trimming upward in its tendency, the result will be to lengthen the face and throat, which is, of course, desirable. As a rule brims that surmount a large face should be carefully considered. The height of your hat crown is determined by the length of your neck and will best suit you if it gives height from the shoulders up; the brim, on the other hand, is regulated by the width of your shoulders and has a function in lessening the width between them.

The difficulties of the slender, even the unduly slender, figures are comparatively simple. Personally I do not believe in making a great effort to lessen in effect one's height by a style of dressing. A tall woman, even though she be thin, is attractive if only she be graceful, and I would rather spend my mind and strength in acquiring a good carriage and supple movements than in racking my brains for means to disguise my five feet eight or nine inches. To the stout a final word: Be quiet in your dress, inconspicuous in color. Make lines do their perfect work and do it gracefully; be comfortable, but above all, look so!