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The Fate of Textiles in a War-torn World

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LAST summer a gust of Hitler blew through France, and Paris, the fashion center, quietly passed away. For years Vogue and Harper's Bazaar had been instilling in the American public the Paris fashion myth and the magic of that little word, import.

Paris was not only the source of fashion creation but she was its veritable dictator. If Molyneux lowered her waist line, every American waist line went down. The United States was putting zippers on galoshes and tobacco pouches away back in 1913, but no one thought of putting them on dresses until Schiaparelli brought out a tweed suit in 1936 with pockets closed by bright red zippers.

Since all of Europe was occupied with bombs and black outs, the logical successor to Paris seemed to be New York. New York was already the center of a tremendous fashion industry. Vogue and Harper's Bazaar began raving about American designers and featuring a gigantic fashion nationalism. It all sounded quite simple. Everything would go on just as it had been going on except that the guiding hand of France would be withdrawn.

New York set out bravely in her new role as the Goddess of Fashion. She produced premiers with all of the glitter and stage setting of her predecessor. Her first openings were staggered so that the press could cover seven openings and see a thousand costumes in three days. But, there's a lot more behind this matter of leading the fashion parade than appears on the surface. There's a big question in a lot of minds as to just how well New York will be able to carry on. Can New York assume a similar role?

There has been an entirely different setup in Paris and New York. Paris was inspirational and New York practical. Paris had been creating for the individual. She had a leisure class who had the money and taste to absorb the most bizarre gowns she could create. But, while Paris was creating for the Madame de Whoosis her designers knew that their models would be immediately cabled throughout the world.

New York had been building up a mass production business for the multitude. She had been taking Molyneux' $500 model and making it into 1000 dresses to retail at $50 and 10,000 dresses at $12.99. New York designers hadn't been merely copying wholesale the designs that Paris turned out; they had been selecting and adapting but not creating. As far as sheer creative ability goes there's no reason why New York can't produce it. It isn't fair to say that Nettie Rosenstein, Germaine Monteil and the others can't create when they haven't had a chance to try. But there's more to this business of leading the fashion world than mere creation of a style. Designers have to be able to experiment with their ideas and make them into real dresses. Here is where the important difference between Paris and New York comes in.

In Paris there was the closest cooperation and sympathy between the fashion designer, the textile manufacturer and all of the button, bead and feather makers. The Parisian fabric manufacturer would make up five yards of anything that Mme. Schiaparelli might dream of, take it back if she didn't want it and give her years to pay for it if she did. If Schiaparelli used the five yards of material everyone would demand the same thing. The textile maker could then make his profit by selling hundreds of yards of it to the populace.

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Textiles in a War-torn World

Betty Ann Brady boosts ideas of Bureau of Home Economics for furthering use of cotton

Of all the refugees from the general collapse of world trade, ex-king cotton has had the hardest time making his own living. A lion's share of the large world surplus belongs to the United States. Two bales of cotton are produced for every bale that will be used in the current marketing year. Exports are lowest since the Civil War blockade was lifted.

Farmers engaging in the agricultural program may receive a bonus of stamps for planting less than their previous acreage allotments. These stamps, issued at the rate of twenty-five dollars for each are out of production, may be exchanged for cotton goods at any store. Such a method has the two-fold purpose of cutting production and boosting cotton consumption.

The cotton problem has been turned over to the Bureau of Home Economics. The Bureau originated various stocking designs ranging from plain knit constructions for sport and utility wear to novelty nets and laces for afternoon and evening. Booklets are distributed to stimulate interest in cotton in the hos­telry mills, and today more full-fashioned lisle hose are purchased and accepted than at any previous date. Lisle has an appealing luster, for the fibers from which it is made are combed, mercerized and gassed as long-staple cottons. One plain knit style of stocking has been carefully tested by 68 student nurses. They found it needed larger and heavier foot reinforcements. However, it was shaped to fit the leg, was available in fashionable colors, fitted neatly at the ankle, and had plenty of stretch at the knee.

Other chemical finishes offer promising possibilities of improvement in cotton hose with recoverable elasticity and water repellent qualities. The treatment of "athlete's foot" is advocated by use of chemically impregnated cotton hose.

Experimental suits of printed cotton and rayon are made for the United States army. Colors of this cotton for camouflage are changed to blend with the seasons (as spring green and autumn brown). Cotton linters are used in making smokeless gunpowder.

Not only in work clothes, where a new line of cotton overalls has originated, but in best-dress fashions, cotton is being introduced. A cotton street dress bloomed in a pastel tinted New York luxury trade store window. The "creation" had emerged after six weeks of designing and constructing. Two dozen of them

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Sewing Classes!

See the new stock of washable rayons for your spring quarter project.

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(draperies like jersey) $1.00 yd.

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From Journalistic

Spindles

• All the world reads love notes, memo notes, bread and butter notes and such, but few get to read a milkman's notes. One morning a milkman found in a bottle this message written in scrawly masculine handwriting: "Please do not leave my milk for about ten days, and then start leaving eight or nine quarts a day—or whatever a baby needs."

• Roman hostesses found life simple compared with the poor, distressed modern housewife who wavers between the risk of offending her friends by using paper napkins, and missing bridge club to wash and iron linen ones. The Roman homemaker placed before her guests asbestos napkins which were no trouble at all; she simply tossed them in the fire to be cleaned.

• For once the standard product isn't desirable. As an added service to their customers, one hotel has provided some beds eight inches longer than the standard size, complete with extra-long sheets and blankets for extra long people.—Patricia Craven

War Influences Cotton
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sold for $100 each; fashion in cotton was born. Later the style was adapted and distributed at lower prices all over the United States. The dirndl, a recent vogue, used up thousands of bales of cotton. Cuffs on men's cotton slacks may increase the output of 3,648 yards of cotton cloth. Shortening of women's dresses has an opposite effect.

National defense makes it urgent for America to lead the world's textile research in the months to come. Industrial research pays dividends to the companies participating and may mean a major new source of national prosperity.

At the recent annual convention of the National Cotton Council, use of cotton was emphasized. During the discussion of the possibilities of cotton hosiery a retired broker's wife, who sat in the front row, lifted her grey skirt to display flaming red cotton hose. The ticket of admission to the Council Ball was a cotton dress.

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