

For Sunny Sands

A letter from our Paris Fashion Correspondent

Etats-Unis

DEAR MRS. LITTLE:

I have just been on an unusual shopping tour and I must tell you all about it. A friend who would much rather swim than eat and is never so happy as when she is loafing on sunny sands, asked me to take her on a personally conducted tour to the houses that have made beach clothes this season. She follows the sun north, beginning on the shores of Africa and visiting all the coasts in turn, including the Scandinavian. She specified that the things she bought must be practical both because she tries to keep her baggage to reasonable proportions and because she has a horror of picturesque clothes on the beach.

First we went to Vera Boréa's because I had told her about the sportswoman's new invention called a "beach kilt." This is an ingenious little affair of cotton, bright red or blue dotted with white, and begins with a brassière top and a short skirt attached to hidden trunks. She ordered this in navy and white because she could turn somersaults in it if she liked.

Then we went to Schiaparelli's. Here we found beach clothes of two entirely different types—eccentric and intensely practical. My friend, who prefers sensible things, jumped at the white linen coat sketched for she said she could wear it almost any time of day or night at a beach resort. It is shown in the salon over a navy blue swim suit with a hat of blue and white striped glazed cotton very like a ship's ventilator or like Tenniel's picture of the oysters waiting to be eaten in Through the Looking-glass. She also bought one of the new short full-skirted dance frocks that look like engravings of the ladies of 1830. There are, as you know, versions in butterfly-printed and silver-striped organza but she chose the one in a new waffled white piqué because, again, she could wear it for other occasions besides summer-night dancing.

She ordered it with Padova's white kid sandals with low heels for day wear and high ones for evening.

After that we went to Marcel Rochas who shows some of the most practical beach clothes in Paris. Here she chose the trim tailored outfit in Rodier's pink flannel pin-striped with white which you see here. The shorts look exactly like a pair of trousers cut off at the knee and the jacket is severely plain with big pockets for make-up and matches. She ordered a plain short flannel skirt



Vera Borea

with this so that she could wear the suit away from the beach and the navy linen blouse that goes with it. I went with her later to a blouse shop which specializes in pull-overs of fine lacy white wool, embroidered here and there with naïve little bright wool sprigs and flowerets, not Tyrolean, thank goodness! More like Dresden china. For warmer weather she chose the two-piece frock of fine white piqué with its divided kilt-pleated skirt set into a deep yoke, pointed top and bottom, the top one buttoning to the pleated bodice and showing off a supple slender waist to perfection. She left off the decoration of a chain of dark blue linen strips so that she could vary her color schemes by knotting gay handkerchiefs round the neck. We looked at a novelty, a suit of jacket and knee-length shorts in unbleached linen, the shorts covered with long knotted fringes of red and green string; and we were tempted by a suit of slacks and jacket, the slacks in blue and white striped flannel, the jacket in indigo linen with a backless waistcoat of the stripes under it instead of a blouse. But the *vendeuse* made the mistake of saying that this had been much ordered, so my friend decided against it.

Nevertheless she said she must have some slacks, for nothing that the dressmaking mind has invented really takes their place, in her opinion, especially on a boat. So we went to Madeleine de Rauch, another specialist who really does all the sports she makes models for. She had a perfect suit of jacket and long trousers in heavy creamy tussore, the sort that comes from the East. I did not have it sketched for it is really too simple to draw. The trousers are just like a man's and beautifully fitted and the jacket is strictly tailored and buttoned with two buttons. It is shown with a yellow linen blouse, with a high round neck buttoned at one side and cut low in the back. Again, she ordered a skirt to match, for plain white suits in tussore or flannel have suddenly appeared again for resort wear and no type looks nicer. She looked long at a Scotch kilt suit in red plaid, short pleated culotte and attached top, with a jacket in ecru linen exactly like a High-



Schiaparelli

lander's; and also at a good yellow linen coat—yellow will be seen on many beaches this summer—with a small hood that fitted closely round the face like the ski-jackets of last winter. This was worn over a romper play suit in brown and white checked linen. There was also a plus-four suit (you remember that a few European women wore them at resorts last summer), trousers in brown linen and blouse in checked red, green and white; but we agreed that while plus-fours are well enough with heavy ski-boots and gaiters, they often look ungainly when worn with bare feet and beach sandals. "Anyway," said my friend, "why not have the trousers full length and be done with it?"

She decided that the beach frocks we saw had changed so little in essentials that it was hardly worth while to order new ones. There are some in novel materials, certainly, including Rodier's printed piqués, a new printed cotton ottoman, the ubiquitous rainbow stripes, the new piqués, one of them embossed with a rose design, and the dull-surfaced rayons in this year's shades of pink and yellow, besides the ever successful white. But we found some very new ideas at Maggy Rouff's, inspired by an Eastern cruise that she took last winter. A sort of tunic or tabard frock worn over a conventional bathing suit and a full knee-length cape draped in various ways was the basic idea of many of them. Maggy Rouff has not hesitated to use bright plaids or bayadere stripes or brilliant prints like batik or Egyptian bas-reliefs for some of them. My friend, however, compromised on the model sketched, a knitted suit in yellow wool, quite plain and simple, and over it a tabard of white wool, thin and looking like a native Eastern fabric, slit up the front and up the sides, buttoned in front and very easy to get into. Over this goes a cape of the same white wool, lined with yellow wool jersey, which can be worn thrown over one shoulder or draped back like an Italian officer's.



Maggy Rouff

The story of beach clothes runs like this: the couturiers invent new things and adaptations of old ones every spring. The best of these are ordered by their clients and worn in various individual interpretations at the European resorts during the summer. There they are observed by fashion scouts from all over the world, studying what "they are wearing" for our own southern winter season. So the beach cycle runs its course, ending nearly a year later at Palm Beach. That's why I thought it worth while to describe our expedition and its fruits to you so fully in this letter. It may hold ideas that COMPANION readers can carry out in planning their sports clothes—not only for this summer but for next winter as well.

Affectionately yours,

Charjoie Howard