

FIFTY YEARS OF WOMEN'S FASHIONS

The turn of the century saw the women of America forsaking the exaggerated style of dress for the trim, tailored, dignified style of the Gibson girl. The fifty years since that time have seen Mrs. U. S. A. forsake many styles, finally arriving at a happy medium for 1950.

The clothes that adorn the fair sex today combines most of the best features of the last fifty years, while some of the worst mistakes have been eliminated. Remember the flapper silhouette of the 1920's and the "New Look" of late vintage? The skirts of today are neither too long nor too short, neither too old or too young.

The style makers are not trying for the elegance of the Gibson girl nor the boyishness of the late 20's. Some believe that the ladies are growing up, and that fashions of the future will be graceful, comfortable and natural. However, since dress-makers were born, has there been a time when fashion remained at a standstill. Women soon get bored with the same silhouette, so the future will probably see many old and new horrors appear on the fashion sheets. Skirts will go up and down and waistlines will go in and out of fashion.

The standard of beauty in 1900 was the 18 inch waist, with the stays almost cutting the more determined ladies in half. By 1910 this feature had not changed very much, and the Gibson girl was still the idol.

World War I relieved the women of the corset—the unbelted waistline came by 1920. The flapper silhouette reached its grotesque height in 1926—skirts above the knees, belts below the hips, and the wash-pot hat.

Mrs. U. S. A. soon became bored with ugly flapper, and by 1930 the skirts were down and the waistline was up again. The mid-30's brought the Empress Eugenie silhouette—with dipping hemlines and small hats with ostrich plumes.

As the tension of the times increased, skirts started upward again and by 1940 was back at the knees. With World War II the women found their silhouettes frozen because of government fabric restrictions. By the end of the war they were pretty sick of the short skirt and every other piece of attire—they were ready for anything.

That is probably why they plunged headlong into the "new look," with the awkward ankle length, skirts six yards around the hemline and lacets in their waist. The "new look" was short-lived and a year later common sense had returned, and it looks as if its here to stay.

