

Fashions in a Palace-

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Blenheim Palace, historic home of the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough - built by a grateful country for John Churchill, the first Duke, in the early 18th century. ^{in this lovely setting} came Yves St Laurent- successor to Christian Dior, the youngest and one of the most famous designers in the world. And the Duchess ^{talked to him about} ~~showed him~~ fashion.

He was repaying a visit the Duchess had made to the House of Dior in Paris to see some of the Winter collection which St Laurent was bringing to Blenheim Palace for a special showing which Princess Margaret was going to see.

And when the great day ^{came} ~~arrived~~, 1,700 people ^{arrived for} ~~were present~~ the two-hour show. They had each paid five guineas in aid of the ~~international~~ international work of the British Red Cross Society. The Princess was greeted by the Duchess, who is the President of the Oxfordshire Red Cross. And then the show began.

And what a show! 16 Dior mannequins showing 136 garments for day and evening wear.

And the theme of the collection fitted so well into the 18th century Palace- for it was the high-waisted low-necked Empire line. Black and muted colours predominated for day wear and most dresses had very short matching jackets- with or without buttons. Here, and throughout the collection, bows were the main decoration.

St Laurent used exquisite and lavish fabrics, in exotic jewel colours, as well as black- many thickly encrusted with beads, pearls and jewels. Like a gay wedding cake, this white and silver ball gown was topped with a tiny feathered hat.

All evening wear had little matching crown hats, some with veils, some with feathers- some with both!

Here, black net was used for two very similar dresses with all the tantalising demureness of Napoleonic days. (3)

And here, is a glimpse of the Victorian crinoline.

Blenheim Dress Show-

No collection is complete without a bride- and even her white
satin gown followed the Empire line , with complete ~~simplicity~~
simplicity. ②

Climax of the show was "Blenheim"- created specially for the
occasion. A dignified, white ball dress of heavy slipper satin-
high-waisted and with a wide skirt, literally crowned with a tiny,
jewelled coronet.

After the show, the 22 year-old designer was presented to Princess
Margaret and she presented him with the Society's badge of honour which
makes him a life member of the British Red Cross Society.

She met and ~~talked~~ talked to the model girls- three of whom were
English.

The Red Cross is about £10.000 better off and the people who were
there had seen a right Royal Fashion Show- with a Royal Princess in
the splendour of Blenheim Palace.