

commemoration booklet on the fiftieth anniversary of the Swiss String Works of Flurlingen, near Schaffhausen, and of its allied firm, the Swiss Linen Industry Co., Ltd., of Niederlenz, in the canton of Aargau.

Ever since the Middle Ages, and for centuries afterwards, the cultivation of flax and hemp has formed an important branch of Swiss Agriculture. It is not surprising, therefore, to find the manufacture of linen yarn and linen fabrics established on Swiss territory as early as the 13th century. That industry, though thriving during more than one period, began, however, to decline as soon as cotton made its appearance. Not before the second half of the 19th century was there any revival of it. Then it was that a factory was founded at Flurlingen, near Schaffhausen, for the manufacture of strings by machine; and ever since its foundation, in 1874, that factory produced not only strings and ropes, but also boot and shoe-laces, linen yarn and other such articles. Its normal output was 1,100 kgs. a day. From the outset, that enterprise was placed on a rational footing with such machinery as could turn out articles adapted to the requirements of customers. The total value of goods sold in the course of the first year of its existence amounted to 400,000 francs, Switzerland absorbing for her own needs a quantity worth 190,000 frs., Germany coming in for a share of 210,000 frs., and various other countries for 40,000 frs. Following on such a promising beginning, difficulties soon arose. As in other Swiss industries at that period, the disposal of the products of the Flurlingen Works was seriously checked through the putting up of customs duties in Germany, France, Austria, etc. In spite of this, the quantities exported amounted up to the year 1884 to 40 or 50 per cent. of the total output. Owing to various difficulties, it became necessary in 1896 to re-organise the firm on a new financial basis, which allowed an improvement in the means of production and inaugurated a new era of prosperity. In 1906 two factories, producing linen and hempen yarns and fabrics, were purchased at Niederlenz and at Schleitheim (Ct. of Aargau), the latter of which was closed and the former enlarged and finally made self-supporting and independent in 1918 under the title of "Swiss Linen Industry Co., Ltd." The effect of this aggrandisement, coupled with a new technical re-organisation, was both to strengthen the position of the enterprise as a whole in regard to foreign competition, and to increase its production. The capital of the Flurlingen Enterprise was, after several successive increments, raised up to 6 million francs. During the Great War, both works were kept pretty busy generally, although great difficulties had to be overcome in regard to the supply of raw materials. After the war, the competition of countries with depreciated currencies constituted no small obstacle. But the gradual recovery of exchange, coupled with the readjustment of prices which ensued, made it once more possible for the enterprise to find a ready outlet for its goods on the international market. Its export trade has developed even to a greater extent than before the war. In addition to the above historical survey, we hope some of our readers will be interested in the following information as to the present situation of the Flurlingen and Niederlenz Works so far as production is concerned.

The buildings and plant have been insured for 10 million francs, while the stocks of raw materials and manufactured articles are covered by an insurance of 6 million francs. Six hundred workmen are employed by the enterprise, and its consumption of electric energy amounts to 2 million Kw. per annum. The yearly output is 2 million kgms., total value 7 million francs. As regards raw materials, hemp comes chiefly from Italy, jute from India and flax—in order of importance—from Belgium, Holland, Lettland, Russia, France, Checo-Slovakia and Ireland. The consumption of home-grown flax amounts to not more than 30 tons per annum. The variety of specialities produced by both works is worth noting. It is as follows: The Flurlingen Spinning-mills produce hempen and jute yarns, destined not only to be used for the manufacture of strings in the same works, but also for sale as twine to saddlers, shoemakers, upholsterers, etc., yarns for the weaving of belts, carpets, hose-pipes, etc. The spinning-mill at Niederlenz supplies sewing yarns, yarns for the weaving of cloths, both at the works themselves and for sale. The manufacture of strings and ropes includes all species and kinds in that line. The Flurlingen factory has about 180 different kinds in stock. The Niederlenz weaving works specialise in coarse linen and hempen fabrics for technical and domestic use, e.g., sail cloth, waterproof canvas for awnings, as well as certain kinds of coarse mixed linen and cotton fabrics, especially for aprons, kitchen cloths, etc.

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